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April/May 2001

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list you on our website!

1. New World Water

From *Barron's* aptly named "Precious Liquid" feature in their most recent issue to Mos Def's song "New World Water" (from the *Black On Both Sides* album), water is a hot topic these days. While the former proclaims water as the next big commodity for venture capitalists to cash in on, the latter laments "used to be free, now it costs you a fee." Will the environmental damage we've done to our water supplies create a world where those with the most fresh water will rule? And will water shortages instigate war?

We've decided to focus this issue on water because these days are not far away. Already Middle Eastern and African countries are fighting over water supplies, while bottled water is one of the largest beverage growth industries in the West. The scarcity of safe drinking water isn't just an issue for developing countries. (Sub)urban sprawl is threatening drinking supplies by stifling plant cover and wellands with asphalt and modular housing. In rural areas, like the one *CLAMOR* hails from, the water supply is contaminated by the obscene amount of pesticides and herbicides absorbed into the earth and drained off into the water supply.

What you'll read here in *CLAMOR* is the real-life, down-to-earth version of how water consumption, contamination, and scarcity affects each one of us: from Brian Matthews' story about water contamination possibly contributing to the premature birth of his child, to the advent of caffeinated water, to examples of how we all live, work, and play around this most basic of liquids: Sunfrog's column on living in rural America reminds us how much we take basic plumbing for granted, while Theo Witsell's article on the winter's ice storms shows us the destructive power of water. Beth Barnett explains some of the history and process of treating our water supplies while Martha Riecks reflects on the cultural phenomenon of water filtration and bottled water.

All in all, water is now, most certainly, a commodity, co-opted by corporations and turned into water parks and bottled water or redirected from its natural course to serve the needs of economic privilege. One thing that shouldn't be lost in the discussion of water ownership and commodification is that this life source should be a commons for all. In the words of Jean Roberts (author of *Water is a Commons*) "If access to water were to be governed by the law of scarcity, its price would skyrocket in such a way that the poor would not get a drop of it. Even if it seems wise to impose high water tariffs on industries, agribusiness and private over-consumers, the poor's access to gratuitous water must be guaranteed."

2. Why Corporate Marketing Firms Are Parasites at the Bottom of the Food Chain.

Recently, the PBS news program Frontline aired an episode called "Merchants of Cool," discussing how advertising interacts and influences culture, primarily in the United States. It's no secret that there is virtually no distinction between "art" and product when it comes to mainstream music, television and even film to some extent. What is startling is exactly how intimate marketing executives and the culture creators (nice ring to it, eh?) are with each other. "Merchants of Cool" detailed exactly how marketing executives have perfected a well-honed machine that targets the disposable income of youths not by cultivating brand loyalty, but by commodifying the elusive element of "coolness." By latching onto the "cool kids," marketers can claim ownership of the next cool thing and simultaneously cannibalize it, making it "uncool" as soon as they get their hands on it. Only in American consumer culture could such planned obsolescence be considered successful.

Throughout the entire episode of Frontline, you get the feeling that teens and young adults are all dupes of marketing gurus. The narrator asks if there is any room for kids to create a culture of their own, and we both thought about our readers and contributors as the kids and adults that are making their own way in this increasingly mediated culture. That is what *CLAMOR* is all about, as well as zines, underground music of all kinds, and activism. Listening to a marketing director at Sprite lay claim to hip hop's popularity is enough to make anyone puke, but fortunately there are people like you to counterbalance such crass consumerism.

3. May Day

Although we don't have any articles specifically about May Day, this May 1 is a good time for each of us to sit down and consider what role work plays in our lives. As we have both fluctuated between hopelessly unemployed and horribly overemployed in the last year (yeah, three jobs at once isn't necessarily a good idea), we've had time to reflect on what work means to us. Neither of us is earning a living off of *CLAMOR* at this point, though we will welcome the opportunity when it presents itself. Dissing work as a drain on our lives is often dismissed as laziness or lack of motivation, but the critique runs deeper. Many of us would work our fingers to the bone if it were meaningful work that captured our interests and expressed our creativity while also having a direct impact on our selves and our communities. So, this May 1, take a moment to reflect on how your work is or could be meaningful and fulfilling.

As always, thanks for reading.

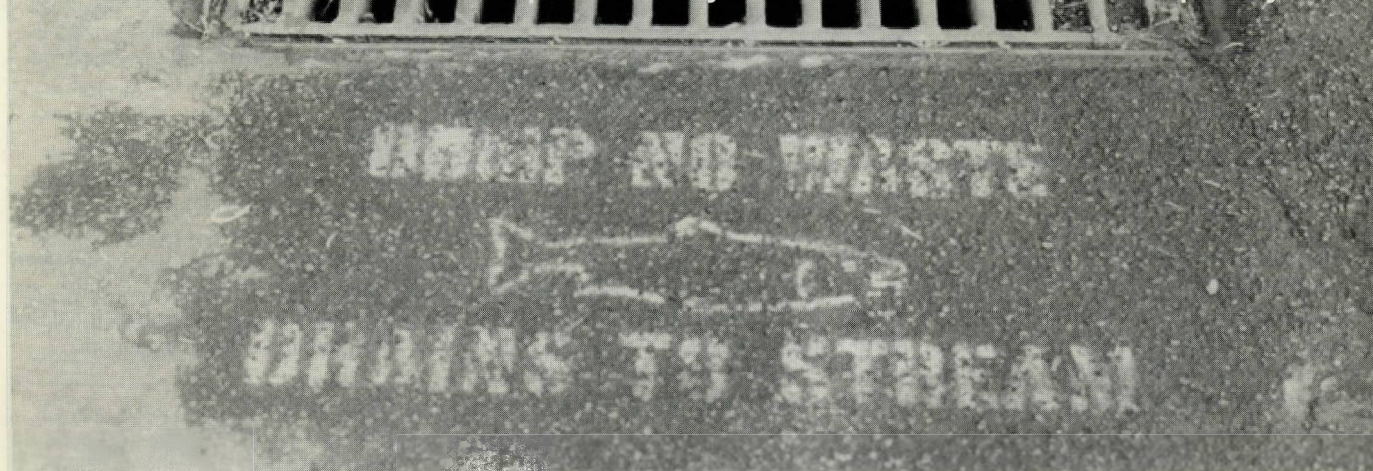
Jason K. Jen Angel

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PS. Special thanks to the Black Swamp-No Borders collective for their contributions to the water focus.

New World Water

CLAMOR • A Loud And Continued Uproar Of Many Human Voices • Number 8 • April/May 2001



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Throughout the layout, watch for contributions from the
Black Swamp-No Borders Collective



Letters

please address any correspondence to letters@clamormagazine.org or via USPS at PO Box 1225 Bowling Green, OH 43402

To John Gerken and Vincent Romano,

I would like to make the following comments in response to your criticisms of my article on travelling/experiences in Africa ("Alive In Africa" Oct/Nov 2000). I would see the letters that were written as being valid if *CLAMOR* were simply a political magazine. But it is not. It is a magazine that embraces many facets of life. This includes politics, but also embraces culture, relationships, the arts, sexuality and travelling. My article wasn't in the 'politics' section. It was in the 'places' section.

If I wanted to write about "the issues of being a wealthy white person traveling abroad," or colonization, or privileges or any such topics, then I would have. I wanted to write about how it feels to see things in Africa. How it feels to experience them. If I had wanted to write a political commentary on global capitalism, then I would have. I didn't want to write about that. I wanted to write about travelling in Africa, and that's exactly what I did.

As well as their criticisms being insulting to me; I thought it also insulting to Africans. I interacted with the people that I met on an individual level. There is, of course, a political/race/gender background to all interactions. But they also stand on their own. Are they mutually respectful? Are they mutually rewarding? Are they about a connection and a moment shared between two people? Yes they are.

If I had wanted to write an article discussing the juxtaposition between wanting to enjoy a vacation, getting as much out of the experience as possible, and feeling like a white middle-class, privileged person ravaging a country/culture in a selfish manner, then I would have. The article may have been more "radical" but it would have been a different article. I simply wrote about my feelings and my thoughts whilst travelling. *CLAMOR* publishes travel pieces and I wrote a exactly that. It may not have been the travel piece that some people wanted. But you know what? Maybe they should go to Africa and write it themselves.

Vique Martin, Los Angeles, CA

CLAMOR,

Issue #7 (Feb/Mar 2001) contained a delightful mix of diverse content... I have but one major criticism to raise... The article quoted on the back cover ("Words as Weapons" Feb/Mar 2001) stated that "the government specifically knows that poor people don't know the real situation". The article goes on to assert that: "the people accept this garbage [candy or capitalism] because of their ignorance". Accompanying quotes imply that this ignorance stems from the poor lacking awareness, education and the money to buy newspapers...

While I doubt that such elitist sentiments were the overall intentions of the article—the work seems out of place within a publication which does such an exemplary job of amplifying voices which are often marginalized, represented or silenced.

The poor, due to their meager resources and valuable insights should (continue to) have their own insights presented on the pages of *CLAMOR*... For the poor (like everyone else) understanding the "real situation" requires no privileged doctrines... Each individual's accumulated experiences of liberation and oppression combined with dialogue, action and reflection provide the diverse designs for an ever-emerging realization of freedom... The poor realize, as we all will, that corporate culture offers nothing but misery and death...

m/sz
Toledo, OH

Greetings Clamorites,

Not4Prophet of Ricanstruction here. I received the latest issue of *CLAMOR* with the Ricanstruction interview ("Ricanstruction: The Politics of Music" Feb/Mar 2001) in the mail yesterday. Thanx much. As usual, the mag is nothing less than great and exceptionally informative. Keep up the excellent and necessary work.

It's funny, just today we were contacted by a teacher of "at risk" students at a high school in Queens New York, who reads *CLAMOR*. He read the interview and called to

ask if Ricanstruction members would come speak to his students about life, politics, and la lucha. Don't know if we're qualified, but we'll be speaking to them next month...

hasta la victoria,
Alano a.k.a. Not4Prophet
New York City

CLAMOR:

I love the magazine and think you're doing a great job. Your aspiration to make the zine community accessible to more people has served me well. For me, *CLAMOR* is a great compliment to more intellectual/analytical publications like *Z*, providing tons of useful/radical cultural commentary (as well as kick ass political analysis). ¡Muchas gracias!

John
Mexico City, Mexico

Corrections:

- The comic on page 7 was unattributed, but was actually submitted to us by Mat Defiler
- Recently, when we switched web servers, we lost some of our email. If you submitted a letter to the editor and have not received a response, please contact us again.
- Bob Banner's contact information was incorrectly stated in the last issue. You can reach him at POB 15609, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406 or hopedance@aol.com.

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Resist Corporate Globalization in Buffalo, NY! Protest the FTA! No NAFTA For the Americas! Join us in Buffalo, NY from April 20th-22nd for large-scale, highly visible actions to protest the FTA meeting taking place in Quebec City and the destructive effects of global corporate rule. This will take place at the foot of the historic trans-national Peace Bridge, connecting the U.S. and Canada. For more information: www.a22buffalo.org / www.stopftaa.org / www.a20.org

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Noam Chomsky "The Mythmaking of Democracy and Prosperity" Recorded on January 11, 2001 at Northeastern Law School. Available on audiotape for \$11.00 and VHS video for \$20.00. Make checks payable to Roger Leisner and mail to Radio Free Maine, PO Box 2705, Augusta, ME 04338

Noam Chomsky "Freedom, Sovereignty and other Endangered Species." Recorded November 13, 14 and 16 at Columbia University. All three lectures available on audiotape for \$33 or video for \$60. Make checks payable to Roger Leisner and mail to Radio Free Maine, PO Box 2705, Augusta, ME 04338

Do you publish a zine? Consider donating a copy of each issue to the newly established collection at Minneapolis college. Zines will be available for public use beginning summer 2001. To contribute zines or for more information contact: Minneapolis College, Library Zine Collection, 1501 Hennepin Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55403 or call Tom Eland at 612-341-7090.

RARE! WEBSITES BUILT! That's right, I do things like web sites, and other shit, for neato prices. I even made the web site for the publication you're holding in your hand! And a bunch of other nifty people and things. How's that for bomb-ass cool you silly shit? So come check the wares at <http://www.pangea.ca/~cooper>. Okeedokee then.

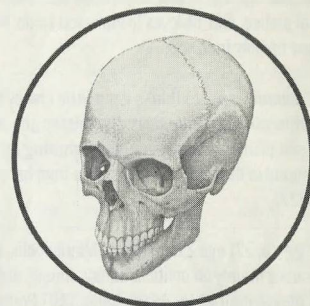
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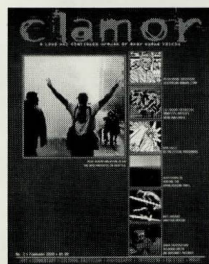
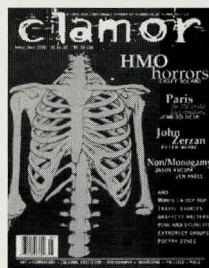
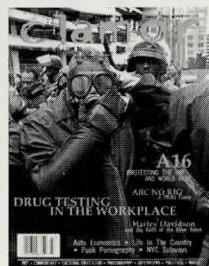
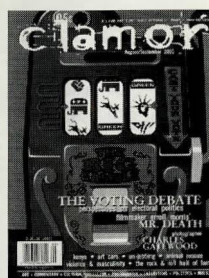
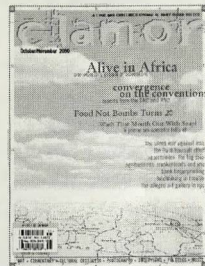
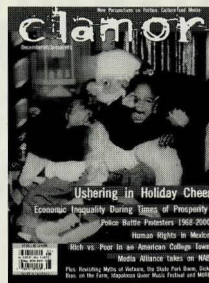
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clamor contributors

Beth Barnett (p. 64) studied history and geological sciences in college and is in the long process of planning phase II (life after school). She infrequently publishes a zine called *Eight Items or Less*, frequently looks in the paper for more appropriate employment, and is presently living in Corvallis, Oregon—an immigrant from the Midwest. Contact her at bethbee@usa.net or through *CLAMOR*.

the *Black Swamp-No Borders Collective* (various) is loosely ann•ben•bruce•hialu•michael(s)•m/sz•peter•phoebe•robert•steve•sarah•terry

Joel Bylsma (p. 18) is just some dude who likes to surf, play music, get involved in issues of justice, and he loves to make you smile. Write him at lifesurfboards@hotmail. He'd love to hear from you.

Libby Chenault (p. 15) thinks it's a little creepy to have so much sunshine in Washington this winter. Some days she misses the rain and worries about drought but mostly she picnics while dreaming of growing an avocado tree in her backyard. She can be found in the bathtub across town from her po box (number 2998) in Bellingham, wa (98227).

Nate Dogg (p. 37) age 21, resides in Minneapolis, and writes a zine called *Ad Hominim* that focuses mainly on politics, humor, music, and Abraham Lincoln. If you would like a copy, please mail \$3 to: *Ad Hominim*, 1401 Portland Ave. S. #C303, Minneapolis, MN 55404.

Rus Ervin Funk (p. 56) is a longtime activist and organizer on issues of anti-sexism, anti-racism and anti-militarism. He has written widely about these issues, and helped to organize dozens of direct action groups including the Washington Area Clinic Defense Task Force, DC Men Against Rape, White Folks Against Racism, Men for Gender Justice, 1000 Sparks of Dissent, and The Coalition for Justice. He is currently on the Board of Directors of the DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence, on the National Committee for the War Resisters League, and actively fundraises for the DC Abortion Fund. He can be reached at rusfunk@erols.com.

"**Pavlitto Geshos**" (p. 9) is the pen name of an author who describes himself as an aging activist and amateur political theorist. In his early years he was active in the anti-Vietnam-War movement and has spent most of his adult life as a labor activist and free-lance writer for pro-labor and leftist publications. The pen name he has chosen is taken from a now-deceased internationalist volunteer who fought in the Spanish Civil War (1936-39). Mr. Geshos chooses to remain anonymous to conceal his identity from certain friends/colleagues in various dogmatic leftist/socialist parties who would not approve of either his unorthodox thesis, here presented, nor of his submission of this article to a magazine such as *CLAMOR*. Mr. Geshos has strong ties to the working class community in Toledo, Ohio. He can be reached care of *CLAMOR*.

Jordan Green (p. 87) is a dissident journalist and poet who lives in the Republic of Brooklyn. His website is www.summersault.com/~jordan or www.summersault.com/~jordan. He can be reached by e-mail at dickee59@hotmail.com.

Jon Hillson (p. 31) is an airline worker, member of the International Association of Machinists, and longtime partisan of the Cuban revolution. He's written for numerous publications on and from Cuba, and is co-director of a Fall, 2001 U.S. campus speaking tour for Consuelo Elba. Those interested learning more about this effort can reach him at Jonhillson@aol.com.

Dustin Amery Hostettler aka UPSO (p. 48) is fond of making sweet love, and drawing pictures of hands. He can be reached at www.upsodesign.com. He would like to wish everyone a happy life.

Scott Indrisek (p. 78) lives in New Brunswick; he used to be employed, but has since lost his job for under-age drinking at the restaurant where he worked. He's currently writing a thesis on Colombia and dreaming up ways to leave the country. Send him your best wishes at bigmonkeycar@aol.com.

Kevin Keating (p. 29) is a fiction writer and 16mm. filmmaker. He is also the main person behind the Mission Yuppie Eradication Project, an anti-capitalist direct action effort combating gentrification in San Francisco's Mission District. He can be reached at makhno@onebox.com

Kari Lydersen (p. 38) is Associate Editor of *StreetWise* newspaper in Chicago, works for the *Washington Post Chicago Bureau* and writes for various other publications. She can be reached care of *CLAMOR*.

Tess. Lotta (p. 72) is a freelance writer and musician based in Seattle. She is co-founder and current president of The Hero Sisters Project, a career mentorship non-profit organization. She co-founded SOLOPLEXUS, a community building, bi-monthly showcase of musicians experimenting outside their comfort-genres—the website is almost live so watch for dates and playing guidelines. Contact her at tessdot@hotmail.com for submission guidelines to her zine *Fresh Peach*, or herosisters@excite.com for info on HS.

Brian Matthews (p. 27) is a concerned father and first time writer. He can be contacted care of *CLAMOR*.

Richard Gilman-Opalsky (p. 50) Studies philosophy at one school, while teaching philosophy at another. "I like to play 'musical activism' with my comrades, *Countdown to Putsch*. And I spend my time with Robyn (human), Spartacus (small, squishy, orange cat), and Ramona Africa (chubby, squirmy, caramel cat)... Struggling to transform thought into action." Email to thoughtandaction@yahoo.com.

Louis Rastelli (p. 34) spends his time: publishing a zine called *Fish Piss* (\$3, box 1232, Place d'Armes, Montreal Que.); stocking a vending machine that sells zines in his native Montreal; working part-time for the man; fighting the gentrification of his neighborhood; researching 20th century history; supporting the local scene; and trying to figure out how to save Canada from being worn smooth by globalization.

Marth Riecks (p. 71) recently relocated to Northwest Ohio along with her proofreading duties for *CLAMOR*, she works as membership coordinator for a botanical garden. She loves animals and lives with a wonderful cat named Max. She can be reached care of *CLAMOR*.

ailecia ruscin (p. 77) is an american studies grad student at the University of Kansas in Lawrence. She is available to do photography work for small zines. She writes a personal-political zine called *Alabama Grrrl* and keeps busy doing radical community organizing. She is one of the coordinators for the 3rd annual Southern Girl Convention, July 20-22, 2001 in Auburn, Alabama. Ailecia is also helping with the midwest convergence to protest the FTAA, April 21st, Kansas City, MO. Her zine is \$2 from P.O. Box 297 Lawrence KS 66044 or ailecia@hotmail.com.

Now a regular *CLAMOR* contributor, **sunfrog** (p. 16) is a poetic amphibian who loves water and just about everything about it, except pollution. To arrange a skinny dipping trip in Tennessee, e-mail him at sunfrogj@hotmail.com.

It took **George Sweetman** (p. 60) 4 attempts, 3 years, 2 interviews, 2 destroyed cassettes, 2 tours, 2 magazines, and a 3000 mile hitchhiking trip to see his Submission Hold interview come to print. He says y'all better enjoy the dang thing. He can be contacted care of *CLAMOR*.

Mike Taylor (p. 47) often takes on too much responsibility, yet when granted "free" time, paces about, making grumbling noises and grinding his teeth. He can be reached care of *CLAMOR*.

Despite his political leanings, **Kristian Williams** (p. 84) has never been convicted of a crime. A federal judge recently noted that "Williams appeared credible on the stand, but his actions... suggest a significant hostility toward the police." He can be contacted care of *CLAMOR*.

Theo Witsell (p. 20) is an ecologist and writer who lives in the Ouachita Mountains near Roland, Arkansas. He is currently working on a book entitled *Under Blue Mountain: 365 Days in a Vanishing Landscape* which documents the biological and cultural diversity being lost to urban sprawl. He sporadically publishes *Spectacle Magazine* and co-edits the *ECOzine* with his pal Chris Tracey. Contact him at p.o. box 241387 / Little Rock, AR 72223-0007.

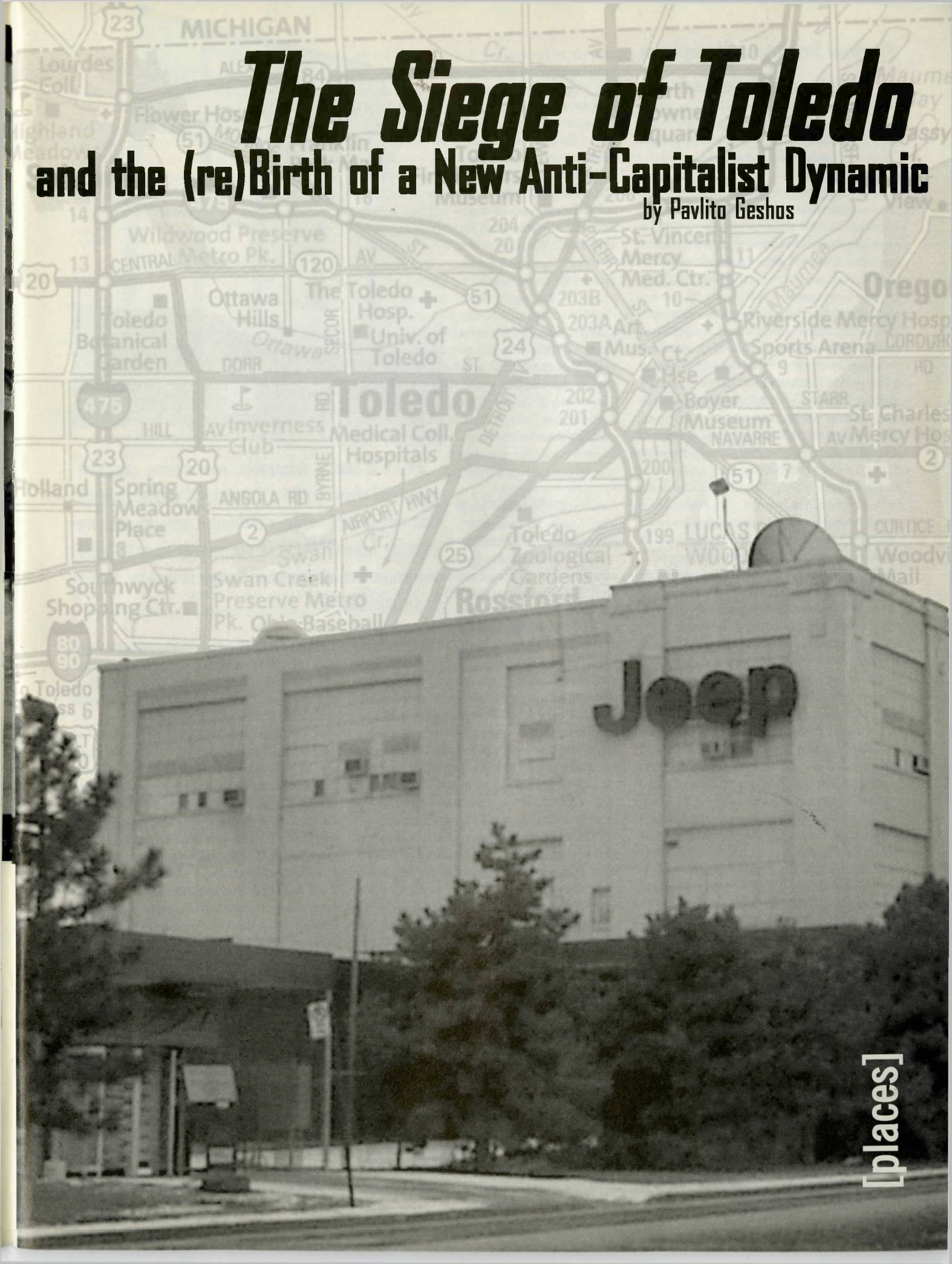
DMYankowski (p. 83) is a writer and poet living in the Washington, DC area. To contact him write: DMYankowski@excite.com.

jit yost (p. 27) is a freelance illustrator living a dangerous life in Austin, Texas. His cat, Linus, couldn't seem to purr without opening his mouth last night. It's online portfolio can be viewed at <<http://www.jityost.com>>www.jityost.com, and any requests or threats can be phoned in free of charge at #1.800.745.7013.

Eric Zass (p. 42) works for City Lights Books and Publisher. He can be reached at zhaus@hotmail.com.

The Siege of Toledo **and the (re)Birth of a New Anti-Capitalist Dynamic**

by Pavlito Geshos



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Protracted Struggle, Non-Moving Target

In the days of the great Spanish Revolution, or Spanish Civil War (1936 to 1939), young progressive men and women formed or joined International Brigades and traveled to Spain to help defend the Republic against the Fascist armies of Francisco Franco. Spain, as a protracted struggle, became a celebrated cause for the whole world and it became a point of attraction for those who saw themselves as internationalists and progressive warriors of their day. Conceptually speaking, Spain was essentially a non-moving target and those who went to fight against fascism did not answer a particular call to fight in any one specific battle or another. Rather the internationalist volunteers traveled to Spain when they could and then went to whatever battle front needed them. This is not to say that Spain was the only place one could go to fight against fascism, but it was in Spain that victory against the expansion of fascism seemed possible. It seemed possible because unlike Germany or Italy, the Spanish people had risen up on a massive scale and had literally fought regiments of fascists with their bare hands.

These elements of a protracted, on-going struggle, a non-moving target combined with the critical and decisive nature of a struggle to stop the expansion of some evil dynamic, all seem to be missing from the experience of the movements against global capitalism today. In other words, except for Chiapas, Mexico, there is no place that you can go, whenever you are available to go there, and be put directly into whatever battle is happening at the time. If we consider this historically, we can see that we live in a rather unusual time because episodic and diffused struggle is not really the norm. Actually, historically speaking, protracted and concentrated struggle is the norm and it is safe to assume that history will return to its usual mode of statement soon enough.

The so-called "Battle in Seattle" was a one-shot, episodic effort at a single moving target called the WTO. True enough, the WTO took a hit but it was not finished off. Furthermore, the WTO simply moved itself to a new location, its agenda only postponed until such time as it could find a safe place to meet and conspire. Since this historic convergence of "Teamsters and Turtles" in Seattle, there have been many 'calls' to action against the appendages of global capitalism, against the IMF, World Bank, Trans Atlantic Business Dialogue and so forth. No matter how effective such actions were in raising consciousness and delivering blows against these appendages of capitalism, there was no irreversible and decisive victory against capitalism.

Convergence for Concrete Victory

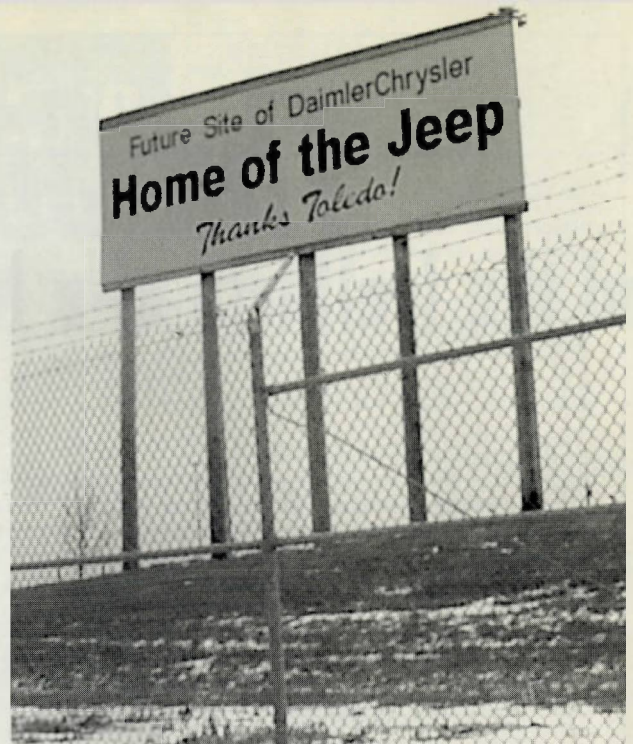
While today's activist is correctly concerned about the global evolution of capital-

ism, we must recognize that massive global economic dynamics will produce specific local atrocities both in advanced capitalist nations and in the under-developed world. The nature of these atrocities can be environmental and/or social, but it is upon these specific experiences of injustice that local people galvanize and form or join movements against the source of these crimes. Searching for these local atrocities that are linked to key dynamics in the evolution of capitalism is the first step in the process of focussing on a static, non-moving target. The next question we should ask is: *What vulnerabilities exist for a particular appendage of global capitalism?* Thus, we want to imagine a scenario where something like "The Battle in Seattle" makes a permanent change in the city of Seattle (or whatever city is in question). We want to consider scenarios in which the city of Seattle (or whatever city)

could never return to business as usual after all of the "out-of-towners" have left the area. Furthermore, we want to see a decisive end to a particularly ugly dynamic of global capitalism, to stop it in its tracks so that it can proceed no further. In essence, we would be looking to mobilize in one place, in one or a series of actions as a convergence of forces in a protracted struggle. The goal would be to produce an irreversible defeat for some anti-social or anti-ecological dynamic of capitalism.

In other words, can a massive national convergence of progressive forces, induce a local insurgency as an intentional outgrowth of the intervention of outside forces? Can this local insurgency, combined with repeated national mobilizations to that city or location, actually stop some unfolding dynamic of global capitalism? These are intelligent questions to ask, specifically if we hope to see a full blossoming of the movement that began in Seattle in November 1999. Such a victory that wins by uniting the forces of the environmental movement, anarchist movement and the labor movement in one small place, could show the way for similar victories in other leverage points on the globe where capitalism is quite vulnerable. Rather than think of a convergence of these forces to merely deliver a moral indictment of capitalism, such as raising consciousness against the WTO, IMF and other institutions, we should begin to seek real, irre-

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...we must find a vulnerable, non-moving capitalist target and create (nr join) a protracted struggle against that target until we take it down. I propose that we consider Toledo, Ohio to be the point or place to begin our protracted struggle and I propose that the target be DaimlerChrysler.

versible victories at key leverage points where these victories will be defended by a garrison of local people who have suffered the particular atrocities of a specific dynamic of global capitalism.

We must think of the convergence of Teamsters, Turtles and Black Blocs as actually stopping the wheels of capitalist machinery, not just throwing mud at the well-dressed controllers of that machinery. We must pick one head of that capitalist hydra, converge our forces on it and lop it off. We must think of ways to distill or crystallize a global issue into a local rebellion by way of addressing these local atrocities of capitalism. We must find points and places where a particular dynamic of global capitalism is just beginning to pick up steam, mobilize against it and stop it irreversibly. In a very real sense, the movement born in Seattle must produce a concrete victory soon or it will dissipate itself in an effort to repudiate *all* of the millions of moral evils produced by the current evolution of capitalism. To put it simply, we must find a vulnerable, non-moving capitalist target and create (or join) a protracted struggle against that target until we take it down. I propose that we consider Toledo, Ohio to be the point or place to begin our protracted struggle and I propose that the target be DaimlerChrysler. I do this because I see a point of vulnerability for a new evolution of capitalism as DaimlerChrysler

launches a new and untested dynamic of production in Toledo. Furthermore, I see the raw materials for a local insurgency in Toledo, Ohio. In fact, one can say that a certain form of 'protracted struggle' has already been set into motion due to the level of local atrocities experienced by the people in that city. You just may not see it yet, but other national figures, such as Ralph Nader, have seen this and they do understand the potential for struggle and victory in Toledo, Ohio.

The Case For Toledo, Ohio

Toledo, Ohio is the quintessential melting pot of ethnic and minority groups. There are Polish, Greek, Hungarian, Irish, German, Hispanic, Arab and African-Americans in Toledo. Each group celebrates in its individual cultural heritage yet the citizens of Toledo consider themselves to be loyal, God-fearing Americans above all else. The Toledo skyline is still etched with industrial smokestacks and religious spires and steeples of all faiths. While these physical things speak of Toledo's heritage as a multi-cultural, blue-collar town, the hidden corporate agendas and political plots that are guiding this unique city's future all seem to undermine the very working class foundation upon which the city was built. Toledo has endured many plant closings as jobs and machines went south to the exotic wage rate nations of Latin America and Asia.

The Labor Compromise

Blue-collar labor (and the union wage rate associated with it) is really an endangered species in Toledo. Labor unions, particularly the UAW, have long suffered from the 'factory flight' threat and the unions have continuously made wage and benefit concessions to the big capitalists. Thus, the big capitalist who has the ability to move his factory south has found that he can make more money from wage concessions *by threatening to move south* than he can *from actually moving south*. In this way, Toledo's blue collar workers have tightened their belts just to keep their jobs. They have patiently followed a labor leadership that sold them the idea that a 'fight against the capitalist' would ultimately mean a 'flight of capital and jobs' out of the city. This fear of factory flight has been a powerful deterrent to open labor struggles in Toledo. But the dynamic of 'factory flight' is just about over and the advantages of exploiting highly skilled labor at bargain wage rates, combined with huge municipal tributes from taxpayers, makes Toledo an attractive place for global corporations to come and to stay. This is especially true for global corporations that are looking for an American base of operations, distributions and production.

This is why DaimlerChrysler chose to build their new technological wonder, their al-

most fully automated, roboticized production facility for Jeep production, in Toledo, Ohio. There is free land, free money and a highly skilled labor force ready to work at bargain wage rates after two decades of plant closings and union capitulation. Most importantly, there are Toledo labor leaders who are willing to openly collaborate with global capitalism, at least on a local level, to both provide a fig-leaf of unionism to a policy of super-exploitation of Toledo's workers. These union leaders are to serve as public salesmen for corporate policies both on and off the shop floor. Thus it is not surprising that Toledo's UAW Local 12 leadership is not really concerned about the massive job cuts that will result from the transfer of all Jeep production to the new Jeep plant. No, the first priority of Local 12 leaders is to pitch 'the smooth launch' of the new Jeep "Liberty" vehicle. The fact that thousands of Jeep workers will be pushed out of the production process into the jaws of unemployment is just a minor detail, an unimportant footnote, to the glorious launch of this new vehicle to be built with new non-human technology.

A Long and Noble History

Yet our assessment of Toledo's potential for massive labor resistance cannot be based solely upon the current state of affairs. Toledo is actually the birthplace of the UAW, born from the energy and leadership in the great Toledo Electric Auto-Lite Strike in 1934. True enough, the UAW was formally declared in Detroit one year after this strike, but the Toledo Auto-Lite Strike clearly demonstrated that autoworkers wanted to form and join unions to fight collectively. The majority of the UAW's national leadership in 1935 were veterans of the fight on the picket lines in Toledo in 1934. The rowdy defense of the picket line by thousands of union members at AP Parts in 1984 is another inspiring piece of evidence that the Toledo workers have a capacity and willingness to fight. Toledo was thrust into the national limelight as news footage showed workers battling cops, scabs and hired goons at the AP Parts plant who's workers were members of UAW Local 14. It is noteworthy that the majority of union men in that battle were UAW Local 12 Jeep workers who eagerly went to the defense of union jobs against an insertion of scab labor. The sad fact, however, is that if one picks up a copy of the official *History of UAW Local 12 and Region 2B*, there is not one word about either the Auto-Lite Strike or about the battle at AP Parts. Thus, the business unionism and the collaborationist strategies of Local 12 leaders, has relegated such incidents as Auto-Lite and AP Parts to the status of embarrassments, not proud accomplishments. But the very fact that such things did happen in Toledo, almost in spite of the business unionism of the official leadership, speaks volumes about the potential for massive resistance around

union issues in Toledo.

The Toledo Police and Labor

Most importantly, Toledo Ohio is lacking some of the negative attributes that exist in other cities. By this we mean that Toledo has no active and organized racist or reactionary groups that prey upon emerging progressive movements in the city. There are no well-organized, irregular, reactionary forces that serve as the mad dogs of capitalism and jingoism in Toledo. Furthermore, the spirit and tradition of 'unionism' even extends into the police force itself. Police are often more sympathetic with union pickets and strikers than they are with the capitalists who's property they are ordered to defend. This often means that high seniority officers shy away from assignments that involve escorting scabs or arresting union members. It simply is not wise, in the long run, for a Toledo cop to be identified as being actively and enthusiastically anti-union. Thus, there is a certain minimalist attitude among Toledo cops about obeying orders to crush union picket lines or herd scabs into factories in the middle of a labor dispute.

In 1995, the city fathers began to worry about certain 'union attitudes' in the police department. They rolled out the royal red carpet for a pathetic demonstration by the Ku Klux Klan in downtown Toledo. The city spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to defend the KKK's free speech rights and yet encouraged all good citizens to boycott the KKK event. The fact is that dozens of city blocks were cordoned off, police snipers perched on high points in skyscrapers while a handful of KKK kooks basically pitched their rhetoric to a captive audience of police who were ordered to work overtime in defense of the KKK rally. The Klan did not boost its presence within the Toledo police by any means, however. The KKK rally was a fiasco. It has never been repeated and nothing like has been subsidized by the city fathers since. The Klan's message simply did not go over very well with the average Toledo city cop. It was obvious that the Toledo cop was not anything like cops in other cities.

While it is true that Toledo cops were known to be part of the nationwide campaign against the Black Panther Party in the late 1960s, it simply isn't the case that a large allegiance to racist ideology or anti-union sentiment exists in the police department of Toledo, Ohio. In fact, in February 2000, some 3000 construction trades union workers simply took to the streets of downtown Toledo, blocking traffic with no official permit, to protest a gathering of 'union-busters in the building trades' at the Wyndam Hotel. The cops simply tolerated this with no arrests. Most cops clapped and cheered at the speeches of union leaders. The 'union attitude' has also been demonstrated by Toledo city workers who are not associated with law enforcement. In 1978-79, the city of Toledo was essentially brought to a stand-

still by city workers who went on strike. Garbage remained in the streets, fires went unquenched and even drawbridges over the Maumee River remained open, thus cutting the city in two. There is even a certain militancy among the school teachers who are organized into long established teachers' unions. It is also worth noting that Toledo Ohio is the home base of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC), which has a long history of successful organizing struggles for the rights of farmworkers and cannery workers in the region. FLOC is now a union organizing effort for farmworkers in many states, not just Ohio.

So, the case for a focus on Toledo Ohio is simply that it is a union town with a proud tradition of struggle (even if the incidents of such struggle are an embarrassment to certain union leaders). Furthermore, union leaders who have made careers out of corporate collaborationism have just about exhausted the allegiance of their members. Jeep workers are slowly realizing that all their years of sacrifice, concessions, two-tier wage rates, years of forced overtime at nine or ten hours per day, six-days-per-week, has not really produced the so-called "Job Security" that was promised to them. Still, everything in Toledo remains calm and quiet. People seem sedated within the inertia of their own individual concerns. But there is a storm brewing and the stirring of the elements for struggle has begun.

The Case Against DaimlerChrysler

Imagine, if you will, a scene at the finely paneled, palatial suits at the Chrysler headquarters in Auburn Hills, Michigan. We can see that the corporate big shots are extremely concerned about some matter of high level im-

portance. Strict security measures are in force. Meetings are held in closed, guarded rooms, and corporate executives squirm at the thought that their loyalty might be under suspicion as a mounting succession of leaks of corporate plans is recounted. Are these leaks related to the fact that the great Daimler chessmaster, Herr Jurgen Schremp, has been proven a liar for characterizing the welding of Daimler and Chrysler into a so-called "merger of equals"? No, everybody knows that was a lie and Chrysler investors are suing Daimler over this blatant misrepresentation of the Chrysler takeover. Are they worried about the disclosure in a British newspaper about Herr Schremp's plans to suck the juice out of Chrysler and spit out the emaciated hulk for the American and Canadian governments to give a transfusion of taxpayer's money? No, nobody reads British newspapers nor cares about that. Besides, all Herr Schremp has to do is lie about it now and deal with it later.

What are these captains of the auto industry squirming about? Why is the strictest level of security invoked? The answer is that these men are discussing leaks regarding their plans for the Jeep plant in Toledo, Ohio. That is why strict security measures are in place. The fact is that the "Jeep" trademark is the second most widely recognized trademark (after "CocaCola") in the world. In other words, if you randomly picked any adult person off of the face of the earth from any random point on the earth, no matter what language that person spoke, there is a high probability that this person would most likely be able to recognize the word "Jeep" coming from your mouth, and know what you were talking about. The Jeep trademark is a valuable thing and the great chessmaster, Jurgen Schremp, knows this above all else. The great

chessmaster cannot afford to telegraph his moves regarding Jeep, because there is too much at stake, too much time and money invested in a plan that has taken years to develop. The new Jeep plant and the vehicle that is soon to be mass produced is top security. This then is the vulnerability of DaimlerChrysler. The awful truth about Daimler can hurt it badly while plans remain in motion and goals have not been reached. Daimler, as the vampire sucking the blood from its Chrysler victim, is vulnerable on many levels both globally and locally in the city of Toledo.

DaimlerChrysler's Anti-Labor Policies

At the Jeep plant in Toledo, Daimler eagerly embraced the two-tier wage rate concept, with new workers being super-exploited through the creation of perverse labor hierarchies. There was no longer such a thing as *new full-time employees* at Jeep. Since the 1997 UAW-Chrysler contract, new workers were to be part-time-temporaries (TPT's) or vacation replacements (VR's), both of whom could be paid less wages and benefits. A set of sub-wage TPT's could easily replace a full wage Jeep worker at a handsome labor cost savings. Furthermore, the part-time status delayed the new worker's acceptance as a fully recognized and fully represented union member in the UAW. The company encouraged the psychology of separation of these new versus older Jeep workers. Jeep workers who took sick leaves returned to their jobs only to find that more and more work was added on to their old routine. Why? Because while this older full-time worker was home sick, the TPT's and VR's, having no rights or union representation, were given more and more



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work. Under the duress of their second-class status, these TPT's could each endure one or two days of part-time over-work and let their bodies recover during the remaining idle days of the work-week. However, the older worker who was expected to perform at high speed and intensity of labor, could not endure a five or six day work-week with the expanded job assignments.

The rift between older worker and the second-class status, new worker had been manipulated by the company. Many older Jeep workers spat insults at the younger TPT's, calling them scabs for eagerly performing all the tasks on over-loaded jobs. DaimlerChrysler had found a way to divide up the work force and introduce, essentially non-union labor into a union shop and make it compete with union labor, in the same factory. The TPT's were not only working more for less, they were also allowing the company to re-time and redesign job assignments so that some jobs could be overloaded and other jobs could be eliminated at the Jeep factory. The tragedy and atrocity of these super-exploited new Jeep workers does not end with this part-time farce. No indeed, Jeep decided to create a fully disposable sub-category of labor when many of these part-time workers were offered full time work at Jeep. After all, the new Jeep factory, the technological wonder of the new age, would be open soon, and the Jeep labor force would essentially have to be decimated since a village of robots would literally take the place of a regiment of workers.

The logic of creating a sub-class of part-time workers at Jeep seemed to apply wonderfully to the idea of creating a sub-class of disposable full-time employees. The reasoning goes thusly: if a sub-class of full-time employees could be created to meet the higher demand for Jeeps in 1999 and 2000, then this sub-class of workers could be painlessly

eliminated. If this sub-class of workers has no rights and are not recognized as union workers, then when this sub-class of workers is put out on the street, it technically does not count as any sort of layoff. This was the logic of a disposable workforce. The 370 so-called 'transitional' workers could be crossed off the books and their numbers could be subtracted from the official total of laid-off Jeep workers when the new plant, a village of robots, replaced the regiment of workers at the old Jeep plant in Toledo, Ohio. Never mind that the whole twisted scheme of creating the sub-class known as the 'transitional' Jeep workers violated several sequins of the 1935 National Labor Relations Act. It was implemented by Jeep management anyway. As of yet, the NLRB has failed to do its duty and severely fine Jeep for the blatant violation of US Labor Law. In fact the NLRB has not had the guts to even begin a formal investigation in this atrocity.

The real honor and glory of the people labeled as 'transitional' Jeep workers, is that they fought back and organized themselves to demand their rights. This meant a fight against the union leadership who allowed their super-exploitation to happen, as well as against Jeep management who carried out that super-exploitation. In a very real sense, the 'transitional' workers at Jeep have fought for their dignity as union members and as honorable workers. The inevitable job holocaust that will come to Toledo, when robots replace workers at Jeep, squarely faces each and every 'transitional' worker. Yet even in the face of their inevitable disposal into the jaws of unemployment, the 'transitional' workers refused to give up on the fight for their dignity. They refused to give up their fight for bid rights, for recognition as union members in good standing and for rights to be listed as employees with a specific seniority date. This last benefit (specific seniority date) gives employees a right to be recalled, when and if jobs ever return to the Jeep manufacturing system in Toledo.

The Great Land Grab

Perhaps no other episode of DaimlerChrysler's legacy in Toledo Ohio so aptly fits the scale of the term, 'corporate atrocity', than the great land grab of private homes in the neighborhood known as the Pomeroy Addition of North Toledo. In 1997, there was anxiety in Toledo over the fate of the old Jeep plant as Chrysler (not yet consumed by Daimler) began scouting for favorable locations for the new Jeep plant, the technological wonder of the new millennium. Toledo was on the list of possible sites at that time, but it was not a done deal by any means. The UAW, the city and local businesses in the Toledo area united for a vague public campaign with the precise intent of lobbying Chrysler to "Keep the Jeep" in Toledo, Ohio. Banners, stickers and public marches

appeared declaring that "Toledo Loves Jeep" and the message was clear: *If Chrysler pulls Jeep production out of Toledo, that would upset the entire Toledo community.* While it was not clear that Chrysler really had any intent other than to build the new Jeep plant in the city of Toledo, it was clear that the "Toledo Loves Jeep" momentum dovetailed well with the plan to politically isolate and physically devastate the lives of some 83 neighbors from the thriving Pomeroy Addition neighborhood. This North Toledo neighborhood would block the magnificent view of the new Jeep plant from the Interstate highway and so it had to be leveled for the sake of cosmetically maintaining the proper image of Chrysler in the new millennium.

Yes, Chrysler agreed to build its new Jeep plant in Toledo and furthermore, they shrewdly translated community anxiety into a form of corporate, economic blackmail. In November 1998 an agreement of sorts was negotiated between the mayor, Carty Finkbeiner and Chrysler. In this corporate-municipal pact, the city agreed to a massive tax abatement for Chrysler (totaling some \$281 million over a ten year span), a specific transfer of real property (\$28 million in property, much of which the city did not actually own yet) and promises to share or fully assume the responsibility for environmental clean up of the site of the old Jeep plant. In exchange, Chrysler would build the Jeep plant and promise to invest some \$1.2 billion in it (Chrysler has yet to reach that \$1.2 billion in total investment, however). The goal and underlying foundation of the great campaign to "Keep The Jeep" was to save jobs, yet in this agreement between the city of Toledo and Chrysler, there was no legal commitment by Chrysler to provide even one job at the new Jeep plant.

Technically, Chrysler could build the new plant, enjoy the tax breaks, assume full ownership of the land grants and simply import foreign laborers to actually do the work of building Jeeps in the next century. There was no language in the corporate-municipal pact that prohibited this nor specified that Toledo UAW workers should be hired, in any numbers whatsoever, at the new plant. The only written agreement relating to jobs was the 1997 UAW-Jeep collective bargaining agreement (which expires in 2002) that called for about 4900 jobs to exist when both the old and new Jeep plants were running concurrently. Mayor Finkbeiner quickly grabbed this tally of 4900 jobs and touted it as one of his accomplishments as if it were set in stone within the text of the corporate-municipal pact he negotiated. Thus, the "land for jobs" juggernaut was assembled and it would only be a matter of mobilizing one set of Toledo citizens against another to carry out the massive land grab of the homes that would block the view of the new Jeep plant.



In 1998, the drive for 'corporate cleansing' of the Pomeroy Addition neighborhood had begun. The plan was to use the authority of 'eminent domain' as the quasi-legal rationale for taking private homes and business and giving them to Chrysler. Like unsuspecting Czechoslovakians after the Munich sell out in the Hitler-Chamberlin pact, the people of the Pomeroy Addition neighborhood woke up one day to read of their fate in the Toledo Blade. They were to be bought out and shipped out. The city quickly declared the thriving neighborhood to be a 'slum' and thus brought it under the auspices of the 'slum and blight' language of the municipal codes. The tragic-comedy of the affair was that homes in this neighborhood were still to be taxed under their non-slum values, but they were to be purchased by the city at the artificially depressed valuations under the 'slum and blight' laws. The duplicity and blatant misapplication of tax laws and 'eminent domain' authority did not slow down the land grab juggernaut.

The "Toledo Loves Jeep" forces were set in motion in coordination with a well orchestrated media campaign to ridicule the one champion of Pomeroy neighborhood. That one champion was Mr. Ralph Nader who made numerous attempts to break the media barrier, both locally and nationally, to spread the truth about the unfolding corporate atrocity. The combination of Ralph Nader with a group of North Toledo neighbors was trivialized with a peculiar form of bourgeois, journalistic jingoism, and the 'Nader plus Neighbors' equation simply became "Nader's Neighbors" (a play on the "Nader's Raiders" moniker from the 1970s). Suddenly, a collection of honest working people trying to keep their homes and businesses became the latest addition in the spate of 'touchy-feely', left-liberal, nut-causes. Jeep workers were led to believe that these Nader's Neighbors were all Washington busy-bodies trying to stop the new Jeep plant from being built (and thus forcing the elimination of all of their jobs). The false contention/dichotomy between Toledo jobs versus Toledo homes was played to the hilt by the local media outlets. Jeep workers who had marched for the "Keep The Jeep" movement were suddenly mobilized as the irregular forces of corporate cleansing. "Get out or we'll burn you out" was the battle cry shouted at the Pomeroy neighbors by the Jeep workers who easily fell into line with the media hype in 1999. It was the first ugly face-off of Toledoan versus Toledoan in the developing Siege of Toledo.

All of this was shrewdly calculated to meet the schedule for the municipal tribute to Chrysler (now DaimlerChrysler). The shameful buyouts for the corporate welfare package were eventually completed, the homes demolished and only one businesswoman remains defiant against the land grab juggernaut. Kim's Auto and Truck Repair remains a final hold-out against the tide of corporate greed. It is

worth noting that Kim's property is not even remotely essential to the completion of the new Jeep plant. Now, in 2001, the plant is built and ready for production. Even so, a deal is a deal, and the city of Toledo is zealously prosecuting a legal case, as well as an extra-legal utilities shut-off campaign, to ruin Kim's business and seize Kim's land so that it can be delivered to the corporate masters at DaimlerChrysler.

The 'Adapt a School' Campaign

The case against DaimlerChrysler, it would seem, should stand alone on the basis of these atrocities but there is so much more. The very fact that DaimlerChrysler has manipulated massive corporate welfare packages from the city and motivated quasi-legal land grabs, all of which were done for the hidden motive of replacing UAW workers with robots and underpaid non-union contractors, is astounding enough. But the scale of future corporate domination of the city and community of Toledo Ohio has yet to be fully appreciated. The entire nature of the school system and the economic tax base upon which the Toledo schools are supported is about to be Daimlerized as well. Schools that were once the recipients of Jeep taxes and Jeep worker taxes will now be subjected to the status of begging for corporate hand-outs. Schools in Toledo will ultimately be forced to seek corporate sponsors and democratically elected school boards will simply become the economic pawns of corporate executive boards.

The plans for an 'Adopt a School' campaign are already in motion. Thus, Toledo, Ohio has seen the compelling logic of 'factory flight' come full circle into the logic of the extension of the factory system into practically every aspect of public policy. This means a corporate extension of factory logic into the school system itself. New crops of 21st century techno-workers must be created through the Toledo schools, in great over-supply, to promote worker versus worker competition, so as to depress the wage rate for highly trained workers to baby-sit robots and automated systems. Young minds must be corporatized and molded to the techno-mentality long before those young bodies are ready to claw their way past their fellows to that robot babysitting job of the future. The great over-supply of these future techno-workers will reshape the wage base of Toledo to fit Daimler's wage-cutting, as well as payroll-cutting, schemes.

Truly, Toledo is about to be Daimlerized, all under the vague assertion that Toledo's youth must be prepared for this new 21st century techno-dynamic of global capitalism. The result will be a transformation of Toledo's blue collar reserve army of unemployed laborers into a white-collar reserve army of techno-educated workers who will compete and scramble

for the few jobs available at the new Jeep plant. Whatever Daimler donates to the schools in the 'Adopt a School' program will be repaid many-fold in the form of depressed wages generated from the over-supply of young techno-workers in Toledo. If Daimler does it there, in Toledo Ohio, it will only be a matter of time before the recipe for the corporate blackmail, corporatization of the schools and pauperization of blue collar workers will be tried somewhere else by someone else. Without a doubt, Daimler is on the path of a great new economic dynamic to combine 21st century technology with 19th century labor policies. The trend to make unions and city governments the pawns of the dominant economic power in a community is thus begun. The path to the enslavement of a community to serve the interests of a new technology will be clearly blazed by the pioneering efforts of DaimlerChrysler in Toledo, Ohio.

Just as the great technological innovation known as "the cotton gin" transformed the cost structure of the cotton industry in the early 19th century, so too, a new sophisticated robot technology will transform manufacturing in this century. Yet this new technology can only work so long as a specific 'condition of labor' can be cultivated. Just as the cotton gin was based upon a certain condition of labor known as 'slavery', so too, 21st century technology will be based upon the super-exploited, super-brainwashed condition of labor, such that massive reserve armies of unemployed corporate-minded, techno-labor must be created. Those who have jobs must work long extended workweeks while their neighbors sit idle, waiting to be called to replace anyone who is fired for asking to be treated as a human being instead of a machine.

One must ask the social question: *What benefit does the community reap from new tax-free technology?* What benefit did the slaves reap from the wonderful labor-saving technology of the cotton gin? Did the slaves get to work shorter hours? Did the slaves receive better clothes, more food to eat? No, all the benefits of the labor-saving technology from the cotton gin went into the profit columns of the slave owners. This same dynamic will apply to the innovations of the 21st century. All of the benefits of tax-free, community financed, robot technology will also go into the profit columns of the manufacturers. None of these benefits will be translated into shorter workweeks, the creation more jobs, or higher paychecks for the techno-workers of the future. This, dear readers, is the new economic dynamic, that we must mobilize against, for if it is not brought to a standstill in Toledo, Ohio, it will spread to a thousand new communities in this country and abroad. ★

Part two of this piece will appear in the next issue.

[places]

Bathtubs I Have Loved

by Libby Chenault

A chance to be wet without being in swimming lessons; a time to play with my mermaid doll and empty plastic bottles; a place to conduct experiments with soaps and bath beads—as a kid, baths were just good clean fun. In junior high, showering became not a once a week pleasure but a chore of hygiene, a battle with new smells and hair, and an effort to fit in. Sunday nights in my first communal house we lined up for each of our turns in the increasingly dirty water, conserving as much water as possible and often experimenting without soap or shampoo. I became obsessed with the “natural” state of my hair, constantly scratching and sniffing myself. Not bathing became a rebellion and a statement—and a chore.

But bathtubs are little pools of privacy and pleasure, providing space to dream in weightlessness, to be refreshed, to feel innocent or glamorous, to pamper our inner goddesses and rock stars. From around the world to someone’s backyard, here are five of my all time favorite baths.

Banera

In my memories of Peru, all else pales in comparison to the bathtub. Purest of white porcelain, cobalt blue tiles and golden fixtures, it was a bath for a princess. A tiny window could open and let in a fragment of deep orange from the building across the alley. The bath was a place for me to unwind from the delicious stress of traveling with my father. I let the water cover me until I heard my heart beat in my head, silencing the sounds of Spanish drifting up from the street. In a country where we had to buy potable water and often pay to use questionable toilets, the bath was an extraordinary luxury.

On the road bathrooms, and bathtubs in particular, are sacred spaces—a time when you are encouraged to shut the door and not chit-chat or entertain/be entertained. I lose myself in all that is familiar and exotic, delighting in shampoo and towels and scrubbing devices my hosts offer. Bottles read as if they were poetry or magic potions (in the case of Dr. Bronner’s soap they are!). I slather my body with lotions and oils just to feel my skin, to remember who I am in the new landscape.

The Smell of Summer

One rural summer a funky smell kept creeping in with the water. At first, we didn’t worry since the cistern filled by rain was just for washing, never drinking. However, when it smelled so much like death that nothing felt clean, we had it drained. The frogs and insects that lived in the cool cement cave found new homes while the adults scraped off slime molds and patched holes. I spent the day playing with the children in the upper field until the cistern was clean again,

clean and empty.

We needed a downpour to flush out the gutters and fill the tank. That summer the infamous Washington rains would not fall. We prayed for rain. We begged. We cried. I never hated the sun so much. The kids got cranky, licking dust and grime from their lips. Wading in our own muddy pond covered us with muck due to the low water level. We drove to other ponds. When we were invited over for dinner, we asked if we could shower. Luckily, this dry cistern was on an island where neighbors help. They saw our desperation; they smelled our frustration. The family who owned the winery filled their tanker with water and blessed us with the abundance from their spring. Our cistern was full enough for a bath. With silent ceremony, I filled the tub, thankful it no longer smelled like old fish and frog piss. I stayed long after the bubbles popped, soaking until I found my body still alive beneath the smothering dust of summer.

Starry Night

Years ago when Ned and Dylan moved into a little cabin down the street from me; a claw-footed bathtub waited for them under a plum tree. They fixed the brick foundation and stovepipe so that a proper fire could be built underneath. It was literally a hot tub; so hot that we sat on a wooden board in the base of the tub to avoid scorched cheeks. We sprayed ourselves with refreshment from a garden hose while the tub returned to a moderate heat. In the spring, white plum blossoms floated down from the tree under whose branches we bathed. Whether crammed full of bodies or alone, it was the perfect place to chat and dream. Gazing up through the naked branches, we watched the winter stars. Naked in the middle of town yet cloaked in green and darkness, we were magic in that tub. I wonder who lives there now, if they feel the enchantment of bathing in plum blossoms. I blow kisses to the bathtub, looking for a thin stream of smoke and dream of sneaking back for one more bath.

Southern Hospitality

I journeyed three days across the country by bus to visit my friends. When I arrived in South Carolina in June, I felt more disgusting than ever in my life. My own sweat chilled into a rank film by cooling systems of recycled air. Crusty eyes and lips resulted from troubled and all too brief



dozing. I wondered if those moist towlettes really cleaned our hands after using the sloppy toilet in jerky motion across the nation. My body contorted by seats where so many had sat for hours restless before me spilling pop, coughing and crumbling corn chips.

At the home of some my friends’ parents, I was told to make myself comfortable. I locked myself in the bathroom: scrubbed, soaped, soaked and submerged. Right outside the window everyone was talking and laughing on the back porch. Floating between places, I lay weightless in the water, letting the ghost of the bus slide off my skin before I joined the party. I savored the privacy and stillness. The folks were tickled that I felt comfortable enough to spend an hour in the bath before even grabbing a beer and being introduced around. I am at home in the bath.

Home Sweet Home

In my apartment now we joke that we pay rent for the bathtub and all the other rooms are a bonus. The Jacuzzi-type jets turn a drop of soap into mountains of foam in a tub large enough to comfortably fit both our hefty bodies. Skin glides across skin; we are fish. I slip beneath the white fluff, practically drowning in fun. Then we charm ourselves sipping sweet black cups of coffee with foamy moustaches. I pretend to be the elegant women on soap operas who bathed in nothing but their diamond earrings and bubbles. Every week we make a date for sudsy play, to remember that bathing doesn’t have to be a chore. ★



Water Sports:

rural living, skinny dipping, and my philosophy of everything wet, an *aquafesto*
by sunfrog

Water. An essential element. We drink it, bathe in it, shave with it, excrete it. Most of our bodies are made of it. While people say that "blood is thicker than water," blood itself is mostly water. Water is also part of piss and snot, cum and wine. Spiritually speaking, water is associated with the west and is undeniably feminine. It invokes the oceanic womb and the woman's monthly flow that makes human life possible. Water conjures images of Aphrodite and Poseidon, Scorpio and Pisces, lily and lotus, emotion and intuition. In one pagan creation story with striking resemblance to the Genesis myth, our collective fall from bliss involved drinking from a spring rather than eating a piece of fruit.

We need water to sustain life but we take it for granted. It's no longer big news that the water of our planet is severely polluted by human and industrial shit, and that one day soon, our very survival may be threatened due to a lack of clean water. In two science fiction novels I've read in the last few years (*Parable of the Sower* and *The Fifth Sacred Thing*), water—and the scarcity of it—furnishes a main source of conflict. These prophetic texts offer important parables; without good water, the fate of humanity and life itself hangs by a tenuous thread.

Rather than listen to feminist prophets like Octavia Butler and Starhawk, we ignore the obvious environmental evidence and continue to turn on the tap, flush the toilet, and drink bottled water, rarely pausing to consider what life would be like without this precious,

priceless liquid. While I once wasted water like the average American, moving to the country five years ago profoundly changed my personal relationship with water. I now have a much deeper reverence for that clear, allegedly tasteless liquid on which all life depends. What follows is the story of my rural life in relationship to water, told through anecdote, reflection, and random philosophical observation.

Country plumbing and crap in the creek

When we first inspected the 120 acres of our Pumpkin Hollow farm in early summer 1996, everything seemed sufficiently lush and breathtakingly beautiful. Even the run-down cabin appeared romantically ramshackle. I figured all the training I needed for homesteading had been gained through years of camping and visiting other rural communities. We didn't suspect that water would be a problem since—as the real estate agent assured us—"that spring never runs dry." Our spring, hardly a gushing geyser, was in a sort of cave about a quarter-mile from the house where a muddy moisture seeped from the ground. We found an old stone spring box—full of water, frogs, and crud.

Dreaming of rural paradise during a rainy June is different than moving onto land in the dead of December. Once gutted by the disgruntled tenant who had to give up his \$50/month rent and ample privacy because we'd bought the land, our cozy country shack looked pretty dismal. (Dismal, by the way, being the name of the dot on the map closest to our new home). Taking stock of our meager amenities,

we examined the system used by the former residents to obtain water. Thus, we discovered what I call "country plumbing."

Our predecessors in the house had running water fed by a steel tank that sat slightly uphill, adjacent to the cabin. They didn't harvest the spring water but brought city water in on a truck. A hose from the tank took water to the house. At the house, the hose met a fitting that fed three more garden hoses. One hose went to the kitchen sink, another to a toilet, and one more to a rusty, electric, hot water heater that fed the bathtub. That is country plumbing in a nutshell. The flush toilet, however, was not hooked up to a septic system but a large plastic drain pipe that emptied itself in a creek bed behind the house. Any guilt I had about "evicting" the former renter vanished when I discovered that he and his family had been shitting in the valley. That creek only flowed during the very wettest days of winter and spring, but when it did, all the downstream neighbors had shit's creek flowing by the front door.

Rather than continue that horrible practice, we immediately disconnected the pipe to the creek and only used the toilet for piss when it was too cold to go outside. Later, we removed the toilet to make more room for a new shower. For poop, we switched to a primitive composting toilet comprised of a five gallon plastic bucket and a toilet seat. We added sawdust after each use and made a special, contained compost pile as instructed by *The Humanure Handbook*.

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Without the steel tank, the garden hose plumbing was not functional during our first winter. We collected water at the spring in large plastic jugs and hauled it to the house in our trucks and cars, about 25 gallons at a time to meet all our cooking and washing needs. Questioning the purity of the spring, we drank a lot of bottled city water at first. While we never had our water tested by a lab, we've been drinking our spring water for almost 5 years now, and no one's gotten sick. That initial winter, when our sparsely bathed bodies began to smell ripe, we showered at various locations, dependent on the hospitality of friends and family. Caught up in the adventure of homesteading in the beginning, I don't remember minding our lack of running water, though at least one of our early residents found the system (or lack of one) intolerable.

However, by April 1997, we installed a 500 gallon tank at the spring and ran about 1600 feet of black plastic pipe to the house. While we only had a slight decline in elevation between the spring and house, the distance provided the necessary water pressure. Although I understand the basic science of it, gravity-fed water systems still amaze me for their efficiency and simplicity.

Our water system is not perfect. We never buried the pipe and have had problems with leaking, freezing, and breaking pipes. Once, a section of pipe even caught on fire when a cardboard and woodscrap blaze got out of hand. Eventually, we installed a large gas hot water heater, an auxiliary 150 gallon tank, a washing machine, a filter at the kitchen sink, and "real" PVC-pipe plumbing in the house. Despite some problems, I'm pretty satisfied with our water scene. And the realtor was right, so far. Even during the driest of dry spells, we still have at least a trickle at the spring.

It's even hotter than you are

Tennessee summers can be sweltering, to say the least. When sheer heat and humidity combine, the impact on the body can be intense, especially if you expect to get anything done. While I must admit to finding refuge in a movie theater or even at work just to cool off from an August sweat, back at the hollow, I don't do air conditioning. If the water tank is full, I often end up at the spring on a steamy day. As we lack the creeks and waterfalls of some of our neighbors, an old bathtub under a buckeye tree provides the best swimming hole

on the land (excluding a natural cold tub in our creek bed that is only wet about ten days each year). Though the water in the black plastic pipe can quickly reach hot shower temperature, the stuff in the tank stays cold, really cold. Even on the stickiest of summer afternoons, a soak in the tub by the tank offers certain, icy relief. As for the solar heater in the pipeline, this can give us a great outdoor shower whenever we have a spigot. After we had the pipes working but before the new bathroom and hot water heater were installed, I used to love taking a hot shower in the herb garden with Dr. Bronner.

Skinny-dipping with Jesus

While the huge swimming pools and waterparks of the city offer abundant summer recreation, nothing satisfies the summertime itch for the wet and wild more than a naked dip in the creek. We're lucky to have numerous swimming holes and creek beeches with nicknames like "redneck Riviera" nearby. Depending on the place, the time of day, and the day of the week, a crew of hippies and faeries hoping to bare all might encounter some more conservative neighborhood folk. Out of respect, I usually won't strip down to the skin in such company. Just as the local Baptists might find skinny dipping offensive, I've seen some swimming habits that I find even more unusual. I've seen whole families jump into the water fully clothed. Such a shameful habit might have some religious rationale. Since God is always with them, maybe they don't want Jesus to see 'em nekid. Who knows!

A most interesting skinny dipping tale came with a transsexual who was visiting the area. As for her appearance, this male-to-female tranny preferred androgynous grrrl-punk to uptown glamour dame. After some medical alterations, s/he had small, firm breasts, liked to dress in t-shirts, and successfully "passed" as a "real girl" among most of our crowd. She looked like a young dyke who might work as a bike messenger and play guitar in a place like Seattle. Her choice is to identify as tranny, and her successful transition stopped short of any significant changes between her legs. So, when s/he joined us for a swim, we had our own scene reminiscent of *The Crying Game*. A person who can pass like this can easily blend in and be accepted as female among straighter folks. But the genderful faeries of middle Tennessee are the type of folks who can usually read more subtle messages and

affectations, but she had most of us convinced until we went swimming!

If it's yellow, let it mellow

One thing that's certainly changed for me since moving to the boonies is my attitude about taking a leak. Really, I think I'd be happiest if I never pissed in a conventional toilet again as long as I lived. I love to urinate outdoors. My daughter describes her ritual squat of relief as "giving mother nature her vitamins." When it's really cold or the middle of the night, the postmodern bedpan (a recycled bucket or jug) serves me just fine. When I visit my more civilized friends, I earnestly hope they practice the "let the yellow get mellow" policy rather than flush every few ounces of piss with gallons of water. Even then, I often find myself sneaking into the bushes while smoking a cigarette rather than standing at the porcelain throne. Now, I know that this attitude about human waste did cause some serious health problems in places like London in times past, but I think there are plenty of safe and non-destructive ways to "make water" without modern plumbing.

Talking about the politics of piss would be incomplete in this rambling aquafesto without some mention of that refined erotic game from which I draw my title. Playing in my partner's piss is a beautifully simple gesture of slippery devotion, but until very recently, it was only a fantasy. I don't know much about the history of watersports, but for lovers who enjoy showering and soaking together, it can be a dynamically dripping release of both biological and emotional energies.

Going with the flow

In closing my ruminations on H₂O, I'd like to look at this annoyingly overused adage, "go with the flow." As a sort of pop-psyche-neo-Zen attitude, it refers to bland "don't worry-be happy" detachment amid the bitter demise of human and planetary freedom. But in thinking about water, I think that one problem with technocratic civilization is that it does not "go with the flow"—but against it—in a seriously detrimental fashion. Both literal and allegorical notions of "going with the flow" suggest keeping the garbage of big business out of our rivers, lakes, and oceans. Creatures of the sea cannot "go with the flow" when their native habitat is being destroyed. Living on land with its own water source, I can "go with the flow" and drink from the spring when I'm thirsty, water the garden to help plants grow, or skip that shower if the tank is low or the pipes are frozen. While not everyone can move to the hills and embrace a more simple less harmful relationship with water, the industrial societies of the world must learn to "go with the flow" and stop polluting our water and air or face the fact that one day, what flows will be so spoiled that we would hardly call it water at all. ★



Salt-Free Surfing

Nearly six years ago I moved away from my sunny home in Stockton California, to attend school in the cold and gray city of Grand Rapids, Michigan. At the time I had left, I had only recently began surfing the frigid and sharky waters of California's north coast. Although I fell in love with it immediately, I expected surfing to be an activity in which I could indulge only on the occasions of holiday visits back home. However, some few months into my first semester of school, I was introduced to a guy who grew up surfing in the nearby beach town of Grand Haven. The idea of surfing on a lake seemed quite humorous to me at the time, yet my interest had most certainly been taken captive by the possibility of nearby waves. My only problem was that I lacked all the essential elements for surfing in lake Michigan: no surfboard, no wetsuit, no transportation, and no time. Besides, it was already getting to be colder than I ever thought possible and I was having enough trouble just going outside, let alone into that cold lake. Because of this, my freshwater surfing debut was to remain wishful thinking for about a year.

My second year of school was ushered in with a few changes for this "I hate cold Michigan" California transplant, and maybe they would benefit my sanity or quite possibly they moved to further dislodge it. Whatever the case, I had arrived in Michigan with a car, a surfboard, a wetsuit and as much time to surf as I was willing to afford. I knew nothing of what to look for as far as weather patterns or winds that would compliment a wavy lake but I did have a friend, Eric Rydbeck, who wanted to try it out too. So we just drove out to Grand Haven, not knowing what to expect. Miraculously, somehow, we timed it perfectly, for as we pulled up to the beach, there were small, nicely shaped, waist-high waves. Even more surprising than that was the sight of other surfers out there, already exploiting the waves. Eric and I only had the one board between us, so we took turns on it for the next four hours, surfing and talking to the other guys (who were very friendly) until the sun finally offered itself to the other side of the watery horizon.

Over the four years that have passed since that first freshwater session and I have become deeply involved in the community of lake surfers around the region, gaining an understanding of the unique differences between surfing a lake vs. an ocean, learning the history of lake surfing and finding many great friends who also share this rather unknown activity.

Surfing on the lake is very similar to and yet very different from surfing in the saltwater ocean. To begin, one is much less buoyant in freshwater than in saltwater, making a thicker surfboard ideal, given the lake conditions. How-

ever most surfboards are made for saltwater conditions and thicker boards are hard to find, especially when looking for a new board. There are a few surfboard shapers in the region who make freshwater boards, and I've tried my hand at making a few as well but, all science put aside, just about any board has the potential to work fine.

Another key difference is that the lake's waves are formed by local heavy winds, resulting in very choppy conditions. The waves surfed in the ocean are usually born by storm winds hundreds or thousands of miles away so by time they reach shore they have "cleaned up" quite a bit. Clean waves are the ideal waves to surf, but you have to take what you can get on the lake. Never take the lake's good days for granted because they don't happen too often. The water temperature of the lakes tends to fluctuate on a scale much wider than most ocean surf spots; Lake Michigan can be as warm as eighty degrees in August and then frozen in February, while Santa Cruz will stay near fifty-five degrees all year long. The lakes offer the benefit of shark-free waters in which to surf, but most surfers would be willing to sacrifice that for the better waves the oceans offer. These and other differences have always put lake-surfers into a class of their own, often leaving them open to the laughs and ridicule of ocean surfers. Yet at the heart, the two share the same basic identity: respect for these vast bodies of water and a celebration of riding their waves.

When surfing began to take place on the Great Lakes in the sixties, it only partially served as an echo of the sport's somewhat mysterious past. Although the exact dates are not known, historians believe that primitive forms of surfing may have developed as early as 2000 BC. Westerners first witnessed the activity late in the eighteenth century, when Captain Cook made voyages to the islands presently known as Hawaii. Surfing first appeared in the mainland U.S. in 1887 when three Hawaiian princes rode the waves in Santa Cruz, California. The legendary Hawaiian native Duke Kahanamoku helped to popularize the sport twenty years later, attracting some thirty people, a number that had grown to several hundred by the fifties. All of the surfers up to this point in history shared a common reason for surfing: they simply enjoyed it. It was never a trendy fad to follow; in fact, surfing was looked upon with a relative amount of scorn, for surfers had the tendency to break the cultural norms by not becoming hard working citizens. Surfing remained quite unknown in the U.S., a rather underground activity taking place far from the reaches of most of society. But, this was all to change in 1959 with the release of the film *Gidget*. This Hollywood movie introduced surfing to the nation at large and in a few short years,



introducing the freshwater surfing community

by Joel Bylsma

[places]

with the help of other beach movies and surf bands, the surf scene became the in-scene for a generation of youth ready to undress the stiff, moral clothing of the fifties and put on surf trunks and bikinis.

Kids in the Midwest were no strangers to the East and West Coast surf hype, possessing an equal amount surf film and surf rock exposure as their coastal counterparts. While most simply settled for the new look and revised slang offered by the surf culture, a few thought that they might be even more hip than the others if they surfed in their nearby lakes. People began to get boards and those who rode them were the coolest of all . . . for a few years: the surf culture quickly died out in the late sixties and almost everyone was trading in Beach Boys albums for the Beatles, and their bikinis for bongs. Aaah, the hippies.

There were a few small remnants of lake surfers who did beat the odds though. What started out for them as a fad became a way of life. These are the ones who identified and embraced the pure elements of surfing while the rest of the surf culture filtered out of "cool." One such fellow was Grand Haven resident Robert "aquadoc" Beaton, who, in 1962, was first introduced to surfing by the cover of the Beach Boys album, *Surfin' U.S.A.* In 1963, he and his friend Dave Wagemaker had a board shipped to his home and before long, they were cruising along on the same waves that for years they had watched breaking, un-ridden. It didn't take long for several more boards to find their way to the lakes and underneath the feet of many young surfers eager to get into the water.

In the years that followed, clubs and associations were formed, beginning in 1964 when Rick Sapinski founded the Great Lakes Surfing Association (GLSA). Based in Grand Haven, the GLSA held contests and printed out newsletters that it sent to its members as far away as Detroit. It served to give the lake surfers sense of community, a means though which communication could be easy; the success of which can be attested to by the fact that the association has been in operation ever since and is perhaps now at its highpoint of effectiveness. Echoing the sentiments of the GLSA was the Wyldeewood surf club of northeast Lake Erie, founded in 1965 by Magilla Schaus, Don Harrison and John Fracella. A year later Kerry Kessler began the Dunes Beach Surf Club in Waukegan Wis. Although most of these surfers from the different regions did not know each other, (traveling to other regions or even just an hour away was uncommon) the sense of a lake surfing community began with the formation of these small clubs.

For the next few decades, lakesurfers often toyed with the idea of following weather patterns to predict where waves might be the best, and then going there. They began to run into more and more surfers, constantly finding new spots and all the while the lake surfing scene seemed to be consolidating. The GLSA continued to have contests and other get-togethers while people

began to find community with both those who lived four blocks away and those 400 miles away.

The nineties helped to further this development of community with the aid of computers. Buoy reports, wave forecasts and even webcams of several spots are now available to all. On Lakesurf.com an open forum is offered for surfers to communicate, making it easier to plan meetings with others to surf, brag about the waves that day, plan trips with others and more. Computers have not only brought lake-surfers closer together, but have opened the eyes of the rest of the surfing world to the fact that people really do surf the lakes. That is not to say that we aren't still laughed at by many of them, but who cares? We have fun!

One benefit of this expanded recognition



above: Travis Porter suits up in a rain-soaked parking lot to join others in Grand Haven, Michigan.
opposite: the author trims the shorebreak in South Haven, Michigan.

of lake surfing is that the pro-environment Surfrider Foundation has finally recognized the Great Lakes as a valid surfing location and opened up a lake Michigan chapter to help in its fight against the pollution of the waters around the globe. Pollution is an issue at the heart of surfers everywhere, and those on the lakes are no exception. Lake Michigan is polluted by both the industry-dirtied rivers that feed into it and the industry located immediately on her shores, in the form of steel factories and nuclear reactors. For years, lake surfers have been involved with small environmental groups and in beach cleanup efforts, and now with the addition of a larger group common to surfers, who knows what effect may be had on the cleanup effort of the Great Lakes.

The GLSA continues to serve as a positive tool helping to unite the lake surfing community. Currently headed by Rick Boss of Holland, Michigan, the association provides a base through which many activities of the community originate and flourish. Four times a year, Rick publishes the *Great Lakes Surfer*, a zine that includes

stories, photos, fiction and more, all by the lake surfers themselves. The GLSA continues to have contests, but because lake waves are so fickle, the contests often become get-togethers with more talking and less surfing. They are fun for all involved, and a great chance to catch up on each other's lives.

It is probably not far-fetched to assume that most surfers prefer to surf in warm water rather than in cold. The lakes do warm up in the summer time, sometimes even nearing eighty degrees, but, unfortunately, this is the least-likely time for the surf to be up. The weather patterns of the summer are usually not significant enough to create the strong and enduring winds that cause waves. The spring and winter both offer great waves, but the water is quite cold. . People do

surf all year around if they are able to, even in the winter, but this usually requires a very thick wetsuit and a certain degree of insanity. Icicle formations on the face are not uncommon in the winter and the water is often littered with icebergs. Fall is generally agreed to be the best time to surf as the water is still warm by lake standards (above 50 degrees) and the waves are plenty. Whatever the time of year, surfers are likely to be found somewhere on the lakes taking advantage of the waves, whether they be two feet high or twelve.

Despite all of the developments in lake

surfing since the sixties, the total number of lake-surfers continues to remain quite small. The community largely consists of the early pioneers of lake waves who, although now in their fifties and sixties, still consistently frequent the surf spots when the waves are up. There are new people getting involved as well, but never at an alarming rate; usually it's the transplant like myself or some younger kids who think surfing looks fun. But anyone getting involved will most certainly meet other surfers and very quickly will feel at home among the community that we all cherish. Whether they are the young 10-year-olds begging their parents to let them surf or the 60-year-olds begging the same of their spouse, they all have their own story to add. These stories all weave together to tell the larger story of Great Lakes surfing, one that, with all of its history, culture and uniqueness, is as much about community as it is about riding fresh water waves. ★

AN ICE STORM DIARY



Surviving an Aberrant Winter in Arkansas

by Theo Witsell

December 2000 brought with it the most severe winter storms that Arkansas has seen in a century—some say ever. We had temperatures as low as seven degrees Fahrenheit at our farm, in what is usually the warmest month of our short winter, with lows typically around 30 or 40 degrees. Wind chill factors were well below zero this year and the chicken eggs froze solid and split right down the sides. The real doozy occurred when two ice storms hit us in succession; one on December 15 and another on Christmas morning. Most of Arkansas is heavily forested and when the trees became coated in up to three inches of ice, the results were catastrophic.

In recent years, climatologists have come forward saying that we will begin to see more and more extreme weather. I believe them. This winter's ice storms are just one example. This summer, record high temperatures were set across the state with temperatures as high as 117 Fahrenheit. Hot Springs, Arkansas was actually the hottest place in the world one day in late August. We had the worst drought in the history of the state, nearly two entire months without significant rain. Even drought-hardy short-leaf pine (*Pinus echinata*) trees died in the forests and wildfires raged across the state burning thousands of acres. The previous January (1999), tornadoes raged across

the state leveling entire neighborhoods and huge tracts of forest.

I began this diary at the onset of what turned out to be the second (and most severe) of the two ice storms. We had just come through the first one, which had done its share of damage to forests throughout southern Arkansas and in urban areas. Meteorologists were predicting that this second storm would outstrip that first, during which we fared pretty well out at the farm. It is generally a few degrees cooler here than in town and, in that case, those few degrees made the difference between sleet and snow at our place and freezing rain in town. The freezing rain stuck to every branch on every tree and brought them down all over, snapping powerlines and smashing cars and houses.

Before I begin, I feel like I should offer a an explanation after hearing from friends in the Midwest and North that people were laughing at how we Southerners fared during these storms. This sort of weather is much worse than we are accustomed to and it is true that we aren't prepared to deal with it. However, even more important in explaining the destruction we experienced is the type of trees we have in our forests. The northern forests evolved in an environment where ice and snow are a normal part of winter, and the trees are adapted to withstand those icy conditions. The spruce,

fir, hemlock and northern pines have little short needle-like leaves. These little needles go a long way toward explaining why they can deal with the ice and snow up north and we can't.

The most interesting thing about the damage in Arkansas, ecologically speaking, is that the areas hardest hit were those in the southern part of the state where the longleaf or loblolly pine tree (*Pinus taeda*) grows. The needles on this species are up to nine inches long and occur in clusters of three. In the uplands and northern parts of the state, the only pine that grows naturally is the short-leaf pine (*Pinus echinata*), which has needles up to five inches long and in clusters of two. When the ice came, the weight on the longer leaves was too much for the trunks to bear and they snapped. So to all you Northerners who laughed at us and made snide little comments about how we can't take the cold... you have puny little needles on your trees; so there.

Monday, December 25

7:30 AM — I wake to find it sleeting lightly. The back steps are already coated with a thin veneer of ice. I take fresh water and feed to the chickens and let them out of the coop to range.

9:43 AM — My sister calls from my folks' to tell me Christmas plans are off. My folks say

the roads are already getting bad and no one without chains on their tires can get up the hill on 17th Street by their house.

10:53 AM – I decide to take a walk in the woods since I may be cooped up for awhile. I see five deer browsing in the backfield and a pair of pileated woodpeckers flying through the woods from snag to snag. I hurry back when the freezing rain starts freezing my neck.

11:43 AM – Seth (my roommate) arrives home unexpectedly from staying at his folks' the night before. He says the roads are passable. He surprises me further with his plans to go back to his folks' at 4:00 p.m.

7:00 PM – Seth calls to say that he's iced in at his folks. The meteorologists on TV predict disaster. My parents call to check on me and report wrecks up and down the roads.

Tuesday, December 26

7:15 AM – There is at least an inch of hard, slippery ice on the ground. I open the coop but the chickens show no inclination to go outside. I close the coop after half an hour and let the dogs out instead. I bring in another load of stove wood and stoke up the fire.

8:30 AM – I call my folks to get an update from civilization. Wrecks are everywhere. All work is called off. Shit is a mess.

10:23 AM – I watch the birds at the feeder. White-throated sparrows, tufted titmice, Carolina chickadees, a pair of cardinals, blue jays, dark-eyed juncos and American goldfinches, plus the old red-bellied woodpecker I always see.

Rascal (my other dog) worries me because his long fur is covered in ice. I worry that his ears will become frostbit so I take him inside and dry him by the fire, despite my allergies. Everything outside is covered in ice and it is difficult to even walk around.

4:03 PM – The power goes out briefly but comes right back on. I'm expecting this. For the last hour, I've been hearing loud cracking sounds as limbs fall in the forest. Our powerline runs through the woods out to the main line on Highway 10. I call Tom (friend and neighbor who lives a half mile down the creek) to see if his power is out too.

4:09 PM – I'm talking to Tom as the lights go out and the phone goes dead. Luckily, the phone only quit because it is portable and the

receiver needs electricity to function. The other phone works but the power looks like it's out for good.

4:17 PM – I slide down the driveway to Hood Road as limbs crack and fall all around me in the woods. For the first time since this started I'm seriously getting nervous. No one has been down Hood Road. The bare powerline is lying across the road blocking the way. I notice that the line is laying in the slush/ice and that that same slush/ice is under my feet, separated from me by a half-inch of rubber. I convince myself that I can feel the electricity in the ground and haul ass back to the house.

4:32 PM – The need for proper planning hits me hard. I am really stranded. There is no electricity and no way out except on foot, and limbs are falling all over. I cart in another load of stove wood and make four candleholders from discarded wooden lamp bases.

5:00 PM – Darkness falls. I hear the distant hum of a generator further down Hood Road somewhere. I play guitar for a while and, despite figuring out "Disaster at the Mannington Mine" by Hazel Dickens, the loneliness is starting to gnaw at me.

5:46 PM – I cook dinner on the wood stove. Tom calls to ask if I've been outside. He says the ice is destroying the forest and he's never heard anything like it. While we are talking a tremendous crash sounds from behind the

house. It must be a huge tree just falling over. A magnificent oak back there is leaning far over already. I wonder if that was it falling. This sets me off on a terrifying

journey of paranoia. Our house sits right on the edge of the forest and a field. In fact, there are huge oak trees growing along the west half of the house. The east half is clear but these oaks, two of them in particular, each in excess of two feet in diameter, are leaning out over the house just waiting to crush it flat. In addition, a massive sweetgum grows between the barn and the chicken coop. If it goes over it will demolish one or both of them. I resolve to keep a big fire going all night in the stove in hopes of keeping the ice on these trees in check by the heat from the chimney.

8:16 PM – New definition of fear: standing outside in the pitch black dark, and listening to tons of trees and limbs come crashing down all around you. I wonder what the death toll will be from this storm. My dad told me ear-

lier that the governor has already called out the National Guard and declared a state of emergency.

My chainsaw is at my dad's. If we do make it through this, we'll have an infinite supply of firewood. The dogs seem relieved to be inside. I wonder if the damage to the forest will be as bad as I'm expecting. I hope it sounds worse than it is, or we'll have nothing left by morning.

10:03 PM – I go outside with a flashlight and examine each tree within crushing distance of the house. All are leaning way over the house. I stay on the extreme east wall of the house for the rest of the evening.

10:37 PM – I let the dogs out and am encouraged to see water dripping off the icicles hanging off the eave on the back porch.

10:48 PM – I go out to get more wood for the stove and actually watch as a big tree falls on Cabin Creek right in front of the cabin. Seconds later I hear an equally big one come down further north. The trees are sagging further and further down.

11:03 PM – I just returned from a trip outside to survey the damage. What can I say? I just had to know. A big sweetgum fell by the cabin. No damage to the structure is visible from the field and I wouldn't walk over into the woods to the cabin for anything at this point. I stuck to the field. The ground is icy but there are pools of water all over. I may be imagining it, but I swear the trees over the house are leaning farther and farther over every time I go outside.

I am unbelievably paranoid – thinking up all sorts of worst-case scenarios. Suppose, for instance, that the big oaks fell on the west side of the house and that the wall behind the wood stove fell into the stove, the house caught on fire and burned down. This is the new fear of the hour. I fill several large buckets and pots with water just in case.

Wednesday, December 27

1:32 AM – I have been drifting in and out of a nervous sleep for the past hour. I tried to read a while but am too nervous to focus so I get up to build up the fire. The noises outside remind me of logging but without the saws.

7:01 AM – I open the curtains and wince as I prepare to see a jumbled mass of slash where the forest was. To my surprise, the forest is still standing. A lot of limbs are down and trees are here and there. Miraculously, the barn, chicken coop and house aren't seriously damaged.

8:04 AM – I rob flashlights until I scrounge

New definition of fear: standing outside in the pitch black dark, and listening to tons of trees and limbs come crashing down all around you. I wonder what the death toll will be from this storm.



enough D cell batteries to get a radio to work. Only a couple of stations are broadcasting but I manage to get a weather report. They call for more freezing rain until tomorrow afternoon. The temperature is 31 degrees in Little Rock. There are 145,000 homes without power.

10:33 AM- I walk out to the backfield to see the grove of huge willow oaks, one of my favorite spots on the property. They are badly damaged. I call Tom and Laura who survived okay.

3:15 PM – My dad shows up with my chainsaw and we clear the driveway of downed trees. The main roads are plowed free of the ice but often only have one lane open due to downed trees. He tries to convince me to leave before dark and stay with them in town where they still have electricity. I am hesitant to leave the animals. Limbs are still crashing down.

4:07 PM - I decide to leave for town, put food and water out for the animals, pack some necessities (including the chainsaw) and leave. Hood Road is slippery and Highway 10 is treacherous but passable. A big pine fell over and is leaning on the powerlines, bending them down. The drive is absolutely beautiful! The forests and mountains are encased in an icy coat and the air is so still and quiet.

6:18 PM - We have a late Christmas celebration, exchanging gifts and eating dinner by the fire. My parents have power though much of their neighborhood is in the dark. They lost power for four days in the last storm, 10 days before, and there are no big limbs left over their powerlines. It is expected to re-freeze into the 20s tonight with more damage to trees, powerlines and homes.

My parents receive a call from the nurse staying with my sick grandfather. His power

went out and they moved him to the front of his house and built a fire to keep him warm. He is getting sicker and we talk of taking him to the hospital where there is power. The roads are getting worse.

10:49 PM – I am awakened by my parents telling me that my grandfather is worse and is being taken to the hospital. They are going to meet the ambulance.

Thursday, December 28

3:00 AM – I wake up as my parents come in. My grandfather died within the last hour. His kidneys failed. The ambulance took a long time to reach him due to trees that had fallen across the roads. He was hooked up to a dialysis machine but his blood pressure dropped, his heart stopped and he died; just like that. I feel guilty for not being there and drift in and out of sleep for the rest of the night.

7:00 AM – Work is on today but I have until 10:00 a.m. to get in. I absolutely have to go in. The funeral is discussed over breakfast and we agree to have it Saturday and keep my sister in town until it is over.

1:10 PM – I hear a local talk show on one of the few working radio stations. They are talking all about local price gouging. I am disgusted with people jacking up prices for things like batteries, bread, propane, generators, tire chains, chainsaws and so on. Fucking people... I am disgusted. About 300,000 homes and businesses are without power. Entire counties in southwest Arkansas are blacked out.

3:30 PM - I leave work, oil up the chainsaw and go to see if my house is still standing. Miraculously, it is. I am ecstatic.

6:15 PM – I pack some things and go back to

town. The main roads are pretty well cleared. I debate about whether or not to lock the gate at the end of our driveway. I'm not sure that the power company can restore power to our house without getting in the gate but I'm scared to leave it unlocked for fear of being robbed. This is the perfect opportunity. What a shitty mess it is. As I drive down Highway 10, power is on-again/off-again.

I call Tom and my folks. Tom left his new truck in town at his in-law's on Christmas day to avoid risking any damage to it. A big limb had fallen on it in the interim, busting his windshield and breaking off his rear-view mirror.

7:55 PM – I go back to my parents' and load up their freezer and 'fridge with stuff from my house. There is some contention about a dead guinea (that I planned to use to lure a bobcat to the camera) being among the groceries.

Friday, December 29

10:27 AM – I read the papers. Holy shit... It could be two weeks before power is restored in "remote areas." Some hunters died in south Arkansas in the storm on Tuesday. Seven thousand employees from 21 states are working 16-hour days to get power restored. Roads in the Ozarks and Ouachitas are still impassable. The sun is out for the first time since before Christmas!

Saturday, December 30

I woke up after sleeping again on my parent's floor, showered, and headed out to the house to feed the animals and get nice clothes for the funeral. It is very bitter cold but there is still no serious damage to the house despite high winds the night before. I passed a fleet of 50 or 60 big orange Asplundh ("the tree experts") trucks on Highway 10. They are working on clearing downed trees on and around the powerlines. Power is on as far west as King's One Stop, a couple of miles from our house. Our phone is still out.

The mountains are beautiful along Highway 10. I make it back just in time to slip into the suit and catch the ride to the funeral. There are many people there despite the ice and power outages. My sister, dad and I buried my grandfather's ashes next to those of my grandmother at the base of a river birch. I've always liked those trees.

My cousins Ann and John, who live out Highway 10 about five miles from us, told me their power was back on. They offered me the use of their kerosene lamps and gave me the key to their house, as they were heading out of town immediately after the funeral.

4:00 PM – I head back out to the house since John and Ann's driveway is supposedly really

nasty and I want to get the lamps before dark. I get there and the drive (all uphill) is a solid sheet of ice. It's a long dirt road through the woods to their house. Plus they're on the north slope of Shinall Mountain, which blocked the sun from hitting their drive. They have trees down all over the place.

I gun the engine and start up the hill. I stop in front of their porch (on the hill) and go to the door. I'm fumbling for the key when I notice, out of the corner of my eye, my car sliding rapidly backward down the hill. I leap from the porch, slip on the ice, and run down to the sliding car and jump in. My efforts to steer are all in vain, so I resolve to get into the leaf litter at the edge of the drive. I slide off the road into the woods and barrel toward a big post oak. I brace for impact as I watch the tree race toward me in my rear-view mirror. At the last possible instant, when I am just inches from the tree, the rear wheels find traction and the car whips around 180 degrees and comes to a stop in some bushes. I am one lucky bastard.

From there I hike back up to the house and find my great uncle Sonny and great aunt Jess home.

They are staying at Ann and John's because they don't have any electricity either. I get the lamps and struggle to get the car pointed back down the drive. I slide down most of the way until I hit the blacktop.



...they saw how badly the first truck was stuck and proceeded to send an identical truck in to pull it out. Needless to say, it got stuck just as badly... The foreman, a complete and total jackass, in his big cowboy hat and boots, his massive belly hanging out all over the place...tells them to bring in a third truck.

5:45 PM –

I arrive home after dark to find a fleet of Asplundh trucks on our road. They have busted open a gate along the fence of our front field and have been felling trees to access the powerline with their trucks. In the process, they have gotten a huge bucket truck stuck up to the axles in the wet field. The driveway is blocked with fallen trees and slash.

6:09 PM – I go out to see what damage the crew is inflicting. They have stopped cutting trees and are working on pulling their trucks out. I say trucks because they saw how badly

the first truck was stuck and proceeded to send an identical truck in to pull it out. Needless to say, it got stuck just as badly. I walk up and offer to get a couple of tractors and pull them out. The foreman, a complete and total jackass, in his big cowboy hat and boots, his massive belly hanging out all over the place, proceeds to ignore me completely and boss the other guys around. To my amazement, he tells them to bring in a third truck. Some of the other guys on the crew, who are about my age, think the tractor is a very good idea and quietly ask me to see what I can do. I borrow a cell phone off one of them and call up Tom who agrees to give it a shot. The third truck is stuck as I leave.

I drive down to Tom's and find him wearing a completely tough-looking orange-red snowsuit. In the interim a very large, 4-wheel drive pickup has arrived and has managed to get one of the trucks pulled free. We hook the tractor and the pickup to the second truck with big log chains and pull for all it's worth. We almost get it a couple of times and then, on the last try (with the tractor, the pickup and 20 guys pushing), we get the second truck free. The

last truck is stuck so badly that no one even tries to pull it out. The foreman says that he'll send a "giraffe" out the next morning to pull it free. A giraffe, I am told, can get anything out. The crews working on the farm were from North Carolina, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota and Ohio.

Sunday, December 31

7:38 AM –New Year's Eve. The crew from the stuck truck is outside waiting for the giraffe, smoking cigarettes and shooting the shit. They are all from Danville, Kentucky, and have been here since Christmas Eve, working 16-hour days. After a while another foreman-type drives up and says that the giraffe is on the way. Almost all of the guys with Asplundh, 1,500 total, are staying at the Army barracks at Camp Robinson.

I ask if they are making good money

working overtime and one guy, about my age, says he's been here since Christmas Eve and has made about \$2,500. He adds that he makes about \$8 an hour at home. Another guy, a little older than me and the son-in-law of the foreman that just paid us a visit, says that this ice storm will give him the \$3,500 he needs to get some new teeth. He smiles and shows that he is missing all but a few molars on top.

After a bit, the giraffe arrives. It is a behemoth, with tires six feet in diameter, a 75-foot long telescoping boom and 4-wheel-drive. They rig up a chain and have the truck out in no time. They thank me again for the help in getting a tractor the night before. The front field looks like a bombing range. There are huge ruts and gouges more than a foot deep in places, and there are fallen trees and limbs all over the place.

About an hour later more trucks arrive. These are from North Carolina and are with Duke Power Company. They patch the broken line to the house and turn on the juice. We have power after almost six days of being without.

2:55 PM – Seth arrives home from his folks' and is happy to see lights on. We go look at the damage and are disgusted to see that a bunch of really nice, mature trees have been felled for no apparent reason (some a good distance from the powerline).

Tonight is the big New Year's party at Beesonville, a small neighborhood in town. We are both planning to go.

10:30 PM – I get myself together and head down to Beesonville to the party. The roads are slick and I witness two near-accidents. Apparently, the snow melted slightly and has frozen again to form a slick icy mess. There are hundreds of people going to the party. Folks have come from several other states! Beesonville is located way down in the holler by the train tracks and all roads lead down into it. There are cars parked along both sides of all these streets and people everywhere. Just as I crest a hill going down, I see a bunch of people crowding around a big pile of cars at the bottom. I manage to pull over to the curb before sliding down the hill to join the pile-up. Cops arrive and block off the street. I give up and realize that I am exhausted. My car is at the top of a hill and I can't go either way. I get a ride over to my parents' and fall asleep without partying at all. After the past week of ice, snow, nervousness, cold, mud, fear, death and erratic sleep, this is fine with me.

Epilogue

In the month following the storms, I traveled around the state monitoring the severity of the ice damage to nature preserves owned and managed by my employer, the Arkansas

Natural Heritage Commission. Most of the state south of Interstate 40 was damaged to some degree. The southwestern part of the state was hit very hard with entire counties losing power, some areas for as long as a month after the storm. In some areas, the entire power grid was destroyed and had to be replaced, poles and all. Perhaps the most talked-about damage was to the timber industry. In doing the ice damage assessments, it became immediately clear that forests managed as intensive pine plantations (areas in which the native forest has been clear-cut and vast monocultures of a single species of pine tree have been planted in rows) sustained much more damage than adjacent natural forests of mixed species and uneven-aged trees. I saw plantations in which 90 percent of the trees (longleaf pine) were snapped in half. Right across the road was a native pine-hardwood forest that had very minor damage. It just goes to show that, as one old-timer said, "The good Lord knows

just what the hell he's a'doin'."

While my heart doesn't bleed a whole lot for the timber industry, I do feel sympathetic for the thousands of small landowners who lost, in some cases, their life savings or their retirement money. The major landowners (Weyerhaeuser, International Paper, Deltic Timber and Georgia Pacific) aren't revealing their losses but estimates range up into the billions. An article in the paper noted that the landowners with the big losses were those that managed their plantations in the way described above, and even interviewed officials from a progressive timber company that did mixed-species, uneven-aged management and had only moderate damage to its forests.

Even the native forests were damaged. Certain species, such as black willow (*Salix nigra*), river birch (*Betula nigra*), sugarberry (*Celtis laevigata*) and numerous oaks (*Quercus* sp.) lost a lot of limbs or fell down entirely. Many forests are now difficult to walk through

for all the branches and trees on the ground. This will mean a huge fire risk in the woods this summer. There is a ton of fuel. Seth and I are still cleaning up the farm and have already cut and split a 3-year supply of firewood, plus got some great oak logs to grow Shiitake mushrooms on.

January was mild, with average temperatures warmer than those in December, and so far February has been mild with a lot of rain. Who knows what the future will hold climatically? One thing is for sure... Whether we are responsible for this extreme weather or not, it will kick our ass either way. There is nothing like a real nasty storm to slap us all in the face and remind us that in spite of all our technology, our dams and concrete, our machines and computers, our buildings and houses, we are dependent on the Earth and the atmosphere being nice to us. ★

Hollow City: The Siege of San Francisco and the Crisis of American Urbanism

by Rebecca Solnit & Susan Schwartzberg
review by Eric Zass

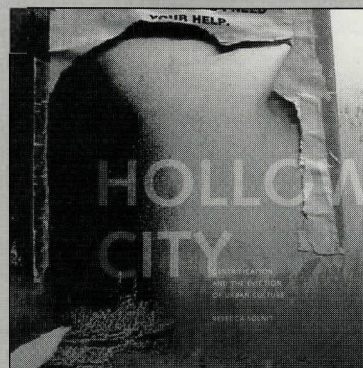
"If you don't make over \$50,000 a year, you shouldn't live here."

In *Hollow City: The Siege of San Francisco and the Crisis of American Urbanism*, Rebecca Solnit quotes graffiti along the walls of her Western Addition neighborhood quoting San Francisco's notoriously developer-friendly mayor, Willie Brown. When he was elected 5 years ago, Brown announced that there wouldn't be a single vacant lot or abandoned building around by the time he left office. The rise of the internet and the subsequent spillover of over-funded dot-com enterprises from Silicon Valley has helped make Brown's promise reality. Unfortunately, by the end of his term, there may not be a single affordable space left for artists or those pulling in an hourly wage to live either. Landlords, always attentive to America's economic whims, have taken note, and evictions—legal and illegal—have increased manifold, displacing, in some cases, entire neighborhoods. Rents for most of the city have at least doubled, neighborhoods have drastically been altered, and streets have seemingly filled overnight with people (still!) ready to make their fortune in the new economy.

Hollow City, a collaboration between longtime San Franciscan writer Rebecca Solnit and photographer Susan Schwartzberg, is a series of essays and photographic explorations of San Francisco's history and a sort of investigation into what's currently being remodeled, or lost altogether. Solnit's writings compare San Francisco's

strange history of development and redevelopment, of population influxes and exoduses, of artistic and activist insurgencies, and compares them with what's currently happening.

Schwartzberg photographs juxtapose San Francisco's urban and architectural transformations with the current state of change. In their analysis, the situation looks bleak—and not just for San Francisco. Seattle, Chicago, Portland, Washington DC, New York, and anywhere that's being affected by the internet explosion and the 'new economy' is at risk. Aside from the increasingly unequal distribution of wealth which allows some to pay unbelievably high rents while others are forced to devote half their income or more to housing, the new economy—and the growth of the internet specifically—has created an urban culture of privation, of conspicuous consumption, and of disgust for the poor once only witnessed in the suburbs of American cities. She argues that cities' most valuable traits—the public spaces that help form communities and make city living worthwhile—are rapidly being lost. San Francisco is becoming a vast concrete suburb, with fewer and fewer meeting places or neighborhood organizations wealthy enough to buy themselves space among the live/work lofts of the city's elite. And where every table in a café and every seat on the



bus becomes a mini office, complete with cell-phone and lap-top computer, each cappuccino-sipping passenger or customer ignoring the other as completely as possible.

Hollow City, in places, reads like an epitaph. Solnit's incisive writing

and Schwartzberg's photographs capture and examine a city and its diverse communities in decline. Though the book devotes some sections to the community activists and artists battling commercial development and gentrification, they're seen almost as doomed warriors valiantly resisting the inevitable. The book's outlook on San Francisco's future is decidedly depressing. And its hardcover, square design resembles a coffee-table retrospective rather than a political attack. There isn't a whole lot of space dedicated to the creative postering and pranking or the grassroots organizing that's grown as a response to the changes. Several months ago, city elections swept almost all of the mayor's hand-picked supervisors from office and replaced them with community organizers hostile to his pro-development policies. The quick decline of upstart internet companies has helped as well. Without being overly optimistic, and without ignoring the thousands of people who've already been displaced, San Francisco could possibly be redeemed yet...



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-Clamor Magazine #6 (dec/jan)

*1. A solo vocal piece with instrumental accompaniment, as in an opera. 2. An air; a melody.

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It Must Have Been Something In The Water: One Father's Search for Answers

Up until early June, my wife had a very average pregnancy with no major complications. That all changed on the morning of June 8 when our daughter was very unexpectedly born, 7 weeks premature.



by Brian Matthews

"You're going to have a girl!" The ultrasound technician said to my wife and me during our February 2000 appointment. An ultrasound examination is typical for almost all mothers at the 16-week stage of their pregnancies. Even though the baby was still somewhat hard to see on the screen, her features were defined enough that the technician could tell that it was in fact a baby girl. When the technician spoke these words, I panicked at first. I knew little or nothing about girls because I had only brothers. But then a flood of different emotions and thoughts started going through me all at once. A baby girl! I thought back to pictures I had seen in baby magazines of really cute girl babies dressed in really cute baby girl outfits. I pictured myself shopping in the Babies-R-Us baby girl section, looking for something neutral in color because our baby already had plenty of pink outfits. My thoughts flashed to the girl and boy names that we had already picked out (we would eventually settle on Amelia). Would this name befit her personality? Then my mind raced through her entire life and I pictured myself as a concerned father, trying to stay awake, watching late night TV while I wait for her to return from her first date. These thoughts and a thousand more raced through my mind as the technician pointed out in the black-and-white contrasted pictures Amelia's face (which, at her age, actually looked more like a skeleton).

Finally, the technician took some basic bone and skull dimensions and we began to discuss Amelia (for I had already begun to think of her in those terms) with the doctor. He told us that Amelia appeared to be normal, which was a huge relief. That meant that she was right on track for average in-utero growth and that her bone and organ development was progressing without problems. He estimated that Amelia's official birth date would be on or around July 25.

Up until early June, my wife had a very average pregnancy with no major complications. However, that all changed on the morning of June 8 when our daughter was very unexpectedly born, 7 weeks premature. The morning of her birth was somewhat of a blur. My wife had complained of stomach pains the night before. When we awoke to begin getting ready for work, my wife found that her water had broken. Because we had only just started prenatal classes, we had done nothing but visit the hospital and maternity ward. Neither of us knew the signs of premature labor. We contacted the doctor, who told us to go directly to the hospital, and just a mere four hours later, my wife gave birth to Amelia. The 7-week premature birth date meant Amelia weighed just over 4 pounds and was a little over 17 inches long. Due to her fragile state, she had to spend the next month in an incubator in the local hospital's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at substantial cost both to us and to our insurance company.

During our daily visits with Amelia, we took every opportunity to question every doctor and

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Thinking back, my wife recalls a week when someone hung a plastic bag to our front door handle. Inside the plastic bag was a small vial and a letter stating that the city was collecting water samples for "routine checking" and asked each home owner to fill the vial up with tap water and hang it back on the front door. I now realize that there was more to this sampling than just a "routine check."

nurse we met on why Amelia was born premature. We heard a lot of conjecture and unsubstantiated theories. But ultimately we were forced to conclude that no one really knows why babies are born prematurely. The favorite answer by most doctors and nurses was that "the baby just thought it was time for her to join our world." When we finally took Amelia home from the hospital, we left feeling very confused and worried. Since no one really knew why my wife or any other mother gives birth prematurely, we were worried that this could happen again if we chose to have another child.

My story moves forward to late November. Other than having occasional bouts with acid reflux (which is very common for babies born prematurely), our daughter is doing very well. She eats well and is gaining the appropriate amount of weight associated with babies her age. But on November 27, I was stopped cold by a story on the local six o'clock news. The announcer mentioned North Canton, a suburb of Canton that rarely gets mentioned except in the local newspaper, much less in the news from the Cleveland-based network stations (North Canton is located about 50 miles directly south of Cleveland). But here our Cleveland-based station was not just focusing attention on North Canton, but featuring it as lead news. I immediately turned up the TV volume.

The opening news story talked about the contamination of the North Canton water system. The reporter had uncovered allegations levied by former North Canton water department employees that they had been ordered to bury 20 or more 55-gallon drums containing dangerous chemicals, unused paints, and various toxins about two decades ago. The place they were ordered to bury these chemicals happened to be the same grounds where the North Canton water department has most of its stor-

age tanks for the city's water supply. About one year before the reporter uncovered this story, a former employee decided to blow the whistle on the City and approached a former councilman with his allegations. The councilman took these allegations to the mayor who, sometime during the month of December 1998, secretly ordered the drilling of two test wells at the site. During the next four months, an independent contractor took periodic water samples to test for contamination of the water supply. At the end of the four month period, the contractor summarized his findings in a report to the mayor and water department superintendent which showed the water supply to be highly contaminated with levels of Tetrachlorethene and 1,1,1-Trichloroethene (otherwise known as PCEs and TCEs). The news report went on to say that the levels were as high as six times the allowable EPA limit. These two chemicals, now considered highly carcinogenic in nature, were ingredients in typical cleaners used by North Canton two decades ago to strip and clean metal surfaces.

The reporter stated that these same two chemicals had been headline news-makers in two other related stories. The first of these dealt with the contaminated water supply of the Camp Lejeune Marine base in North Carolina. The Marine camp's water supply was also found to be contaminated with high levels of PCEs and TCEs. During the period of high contamination, marine women and the spouses of marine men reported high numbers of miscarriages, premature birth rates, birth defects, and baby deaths. The reporter estimated that over 17,000 people had been affected due to consumption of these toxic chemicals through the water supply. The second contaminated water supply was that of Woburn, Massachusetts. Woburn's water supply had also been contaminated with the same chemicals and was featured in the movie "A Civil Action" starring John Travolta. To emphasize the severity of the story, the news segment showed one of the climatic points in the movie when people actually set a contaminated pond on fire. At the time of this writing, I have not seen this movie but understand that the people of Woburn also became violently ill due to their contaminated water supply.

According to the reporter, the North Canton water department superintendent had withheld the results of the independent water testing for several months at the mayor's urging in order to not create a city-wide panic. The reporter then interviewed both the mayor and water department superintendent for North Canton about these allegations. Both stated that they were now "fully investigating why these twenty or more 55-gallon drums had been buried on this critical site in the first place." The mayor also stated that over \$500,000 of taxpayer money had been set aside to begin cleaning the site "in the near future," which included

digging up all of the buried drums. The superintendent then referenced a recent report, which showed the chemical levels had actually declined since the samples were taken over nine months ago. However, the news station countered this statement by consulting a local geological engineer who stated that the chemical levels were lower because the chemicals were actually spreading and seeping into other areas of the ground around the drinking supply tanks.

My wife and I watched the story in complete horror. Up until this point in my life, I had always been one of those people who would see these terrible news events or reports told on national news programs and think, "Boy, I'm sure glad that I'm not affected by that story." However, not only were we now part of this story but my wife's shortened pregnancy occurred right during the time when the mayor had hired an independent contractor to take weekly water samples. Thinking back, my wife recalls one particular week during her pregnancy when someone hung a plastic bag to our front door handle. Inside the plastic bag was a small vial and a generic letter stating that the city was collecting water samples for "routine checking" and asked each home owner to fill the vial up with tap water and hang it back on the front door for pick up. I now realize that there was more to this sampling than just a "routine check."

Throughout our lives, my wife and I have always been big water drinkers. Given the choice between a soda, a cup of coffee, or a glass of water, we would almost always choose the water. Was this contaminated water supply the cause of the premature birth of our daughter? I suspect that if we ever get the chance to speak with the NICU doctors again and ask them this question, we would get a resounding "maybe" answer. Naturally I am relieved to see that so far Amelia is just fine and growing normally. But I worry constantly about a next child if we choose to have one. I am convinced that the heavily contaminated water supply in the city of North Canton did in some way cause my daughter's premature birth. Fortunately, we have since moved out of the North Canton region and have now relocated to a section of town where I am assured that the water supply is tested regularly. The contamination levels have always been well under the EPA mandated levels.

I close this story saddled with confused thoughts that I just can't shake. How can someone trust her/his water supply? Town officials have told me that my current water supply is safe. How do I know if they are truthful? If my wife gets pregnant again and we choose to buy bottled water, how do we know that this water is any purer than what comes out of my faucet? Will the three years of living in North Canton and drinking contaminated water have any lasting effect on my family and me? ★

[people]



The Poor, the Bad and the Angry

Surviving The Service Industry

by Kevin Keating
graphics by Nate Powell

I went in through the loading dock. My pal Miller's Chevy was in the lot. That was good. Asshole was coming straight at me from the walk-in. I punched my time card and put it back in the slot. I could feel him watching me as I went into the office.

I was counting the money in my cash drawer as he came in. This time, I kept my eyes on him without blinking as he moved across the room, since I know he doesn't like that.

"You're late again, Max."

"Yeah, I'll be on time tomorrow."

"You know you're fucking up around here."

"No I'm not, man. I was just a little late, that's all."

"Well . . ." He cleared his throat. "I'm gonna have to write you up."

I took the cash drawer out front to register two. Miller was on register four. I nodded toward the back of the store and said, "He's pullin' my chain again."

Miller made a snorting noise. "Aww, so what? Fuck him. It's Sunday." He smiled and made a goofy face and disappeared down one of the aisles. I told myself that with Miller working, everything would be alright.

This place used to be an A&P. Now it's a natural foods market, with a produce section, bulk goods and vitamins, a deli and a bottle shop. We work under bright white lights illuminating wide aisles of black and white tile floors. The store stereo plays a modern rock station, music to shop and sleepwalk by. Miller had come in at nine. Leslie and Susan would

be in at eleven. Asshole would probably take off in another half-hour or forty-five minutes. Then we could relax. With the arrival of the rebel women, the potlatch would begin.

Sunday is employee-theft-marathon Day. The loyal dogs don't work today. After the store opens the boss takes off until Monday morning, so the four of us make off with as much money, food and alcohol as we can rationally expect to get away with. We tap the till a little on every shift but on Sundays, we pull out all the stops. It's a game, a friendly competition to see who can steal the most without the losses becoming obvious. Intelligent planning, that's the key. Of course, Miller usually wins. He's more industrious than the rest of us. Last night at the bar after closing and loading up he showed me his under-rings: a thick wad of bills rolled up with rubber bands. I can never keep up with him. He learned to work hard like that in the military. After work, over beers and marijuana, Miller often entertains us with tales of army life. On the base in Germany they'd say: "If you can't take it, break it."

When I work like Miller I more than double my cash income, and that doesn't include the to-go items: the microbrews and Belgian ales, juices, cheeses, deli items, fresh pasta and crystal vitamin C. I love that \$22 a pound Nova Scotia Lox, the kind that melts in your mouth. And I've cultivated a discriminating taste for high-end velvety Merlots and Alexander Valley Cabernets, wines that create a galaxy of bouquets on my palate with the first sip. I just can't drink the cheap stuff any-

more. There are certain vintages and wineries that I favor and might even recommend, but I'm not the type to make commercial endorsements.

We're not stingy about sharing the wealth, either, except for Miller. I've tried to give away stuff, but the Volvo-owners who shop here just won't cooperate. Just yesterday, this old man got all indignant when I tried to undercharge him, snarling at me through his little white teeth. I can't stand the people in this neighborhood, anyway, so fuck them.

The first of the day's shoppers came in: a man in Italian clothes and a clinging female with a haircut that made her look like Woody Woodpecker. I watched them in the anti-shoplifting mirror lining the upper back wall. The man's voice was indistinct. The woman laughed, a fatuous "Ha!-ha-ha!," the sound of a rental property owner who goes to Paris or Milan every summer to buy new shoes.

They came to my register with one item, a Napa Chardonnay. I picked up the bottle, read the label, keyed in \$15.99 on the register and asked, "What's this like?"

He pulled a crisp twenty dollar bill out of his wallet and purred, "Gorgeous."

I hit the clear key, keyed in \$1.99, hit the sale key and the register opened. I added the tax in my head, made change quickly and bagged the wine, knowing that he wouldn't ask for the receipt with her watching. He smiled at me and they split.

That twenty in the register was mine.

After under-ringging the difference with another sale or two I'd put the bill in my pocket. I hoped Asshole wouldn't start fucking around in my register before I could retrieve the twenty. I should've waited until he took off, but a single-item \$16 sale was just too good to pass up.

The Chardonnay drinkers weren't even out the door before Asshole appeared at my register, frowning.

"Let me back in there."

I stepped aside. He hit the no-sale key on the register and the cash drawer opened, bumping to a stop against his stomach. The incriminating twenty fluttered, as if waving to him. When he counted the cash in the till and compared it to the register tape I'd be nailed. Folding my arms I thought of a line from a blues-song:

"All the doctors in Wisconsin sure can't help her none..."

I relaxed. It was all over. I tried to act like I didn't care, and thought about this bandit in a Russian story. In the hands of the law, confronted with overwhelming proof of his crimes, the valiant thief proclaimed his innocence until his death at the end of a rope. I'd lie to the bastard, then I'd lose my job. With no income, no savings and the rent due in a week I'd be kissing good-bye to my windowless basement flat. Soon I might be living in my car.

It all ran through my head in a second or two. No more clowning with the gang. I'd miss the busy Christmas season, when friends and neighbors show up for big bargains; the well-off types who usually shop here pay as always, but prices for special customers are reduced to absolutely nothing. Fuck it. I'd been caught and I'd have to deal with it. More than the loot, I'd miss the community of theft that I'd formed with my co-workers. I was mad, but I also felt a strange clarity and freedom at that moment. I wasn't sorry about burning this place. I'd enjoyed myself thoroughly, and, waxing philosophical under stress, I told myself a bad conscience is my enemies' weapon, and guilt is for the weak.

He just stood there, staring at the bills in the drawer. Then he opened the plastic door above the register tape, took the spool out and slowly unrolled the tape, comparing it to a piece of tape from the previous nights' shift. He exhaled loudly.

"You've got a problem here. You were on this register last night, right?"

"Yeah."

"Why are there all these double zeros here?"

"I don't understand."

He didn't respond. After a minute he said, "You're opening the register without making sales."

"Yeah, So? People want change for the



**No matter how much
you pay me, it will
never be enough.
No matter how little
time you take from
me, it will always
be too much.**

paper —"

"I don't buy that. There's some kind of devious bullshit going on here. You've been hitting the no-sale key when you should be ringing up sales, then taking money out."

"No way. That's for people who want change for the newspaper racks, or the bus. People come in here and they ask for change, that's all that is. Man, that's the truth."

I looked away from Asshole, and that old guy from yesterday was standing there gaping at me, like he'd heard what I was saying from five miles away and had come in just to contradict me, shoot me down in flames. We stared at each other for one long and awful moment. He hissed, "Young man!"

Asshole looked at me like I was on trial, then at the old guy. He scowled and called out, "Miller, this gentleman would like some assistance." Miller appeared and led the old guy away.

Asshole spooled out the tape until it reached the floor and spent some minutes examining it. He still didn't get it. I'd never be stupid enough to open the register without a sale and take money. Those double zeros were places where I'd made change for people, like I said. I've always rung up a minimal purchase when I've opened the register to pocket cash.

I've subtracted the minimal purchase from my take. Doing these equations in my head has helped me survive the reign of boredom in the store. It's added excitement and happiness to my workday — until now. I kept my eyes on him, away from my twenty in the register.

"You're not supposed to make change for those newspaper machines. I don't own them. They don't bring any money into my store."

"Yeah, but the racks are right out front."

"That's bullshit! I don't make dick out of those machines! Those machines aren't mine, and I don't make change for them and I don't want to see you opening the register unless you're making a sale."

"People expect things like that. When I don't give them change they get pissed off at me, they get pissed off at you, and they get pissed off at the store, they leave and they don't come back."

He shut the register drawer and handed me the spool of tape. Quietly he said, "I don't give a fuck what they want. You can make change for a paying customer, but not for anybody else. I don't want you or anybody else opening a register in this store without a sale being made, or a pay-out."

"All right. I understand. I got you."

"Good. Have a nice day."

He forgot to count the money in the till. The next thing I saw, he was lumbering across the parking lot to his SUV. I leaned against the counter and quickly rolled the tape back onto the spool. The usual Sunday morning customers were coming into the store. We exchanged polite greetings.

I took a deep breath, and as the adrenaline and fear drained out of me I wondered what kind of victory this was; he knew something was up, and we still had to work for him; we could strip this place bare and we still wouldn't get back all he steals from us. Miller came back to his register, beaming, with the old guy behind him pushing a shopping cart. Miller strummed an invisible guitar. He sang:

"She's got Elgin movements from her head down to her toes... Breaks in on a dollar 'most, anywhere she goes..."

I pointed toward his register, said "Robert Johnson!" and shook my head; Miller was a mind reader. The sun had come out, and I watched the Jeep Cherokee with a Greenpeace bumper-sticker peel out of the parking lot like a muscle car. Asshole headed east toward the freeway, and in my head I told him, no matter how much you pay me, it will never be enough. No matter how little time you take from me, it will always be too much.

I wanted to put those lines to music, and knew it was going to be an especially good day.★



Cuban Women Veterans of Revolutionary War Against Batista Speak in US An Example of Living History

By Jon Hillson

The two women who address an audience of 100 students here in a classroom lecture hall appear unremarkable. Both are in their late 50s. Both speak through an interpreter, nothing special these days either.

But who they are and what they did is indeed rare – especially when explained in a United States venue – as they talk at the University of Minnesota on a brilliant Saturday in October, far from their homeland, Cuba.

Katia de Llano, who teaches business administration at the University of Havana, is a visiting scholar at the University of St. Thomas, in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Consuelo Elba is a Havana-based television director of everything from soap operas to documentaries. She is on a brief U.S. tour to speak at events featuring Cuban cinema.

AN UNPRECEDENTED EVENT

Today, they do not talk about their current careers. Instead, the two Cubans describe how they and other women fought in Cuba's cities and mountains during the war that toppled the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista and brought a revolutionary regime to power 90 miles from the shores of the United States.

Elba and de Llano are members of the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution, formed several years ago. Its over 300,000 members are veterans of military action from the earliest days of the 1950s struggle to internationalist missions undertaken by Cuban volunteers in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Arab world.

"This is the first time that participants in the Cuban insurrection who are members of the combat veterans association have spoken as such in the United States. It's especially significant that they are female," explains University of Minnesota professor of political science, August Nimtz. He chairs their panel, "Women in the Revolution: Stories of Two Participants."

Academic sponsors of the event include the university's Department of Political Science, College of Liberal Arts Scholarly Events, MacArthur Interdisciplinary Program for Peace and International Development, and the Center for Advanced Feminist Studies, along with the Minnesota Cuba Committee and Students for Cuba.

RADICALIZATION OF TWO TEENAGERS

"The lack of a future for young people, social injustice, repression, misery in the countryside" moved Katia de Llano to join the Havana urban underground of the July 26 Movement in 1956, she says. The movement took its name from the date of the legendary military assault led by Fidel Castro on the Moncada barracks in 1953, aimed at sparking a popular uprising. The effort failed, but its survivors lived to fight another day, with a far different result.

"My own ideology was not formed. I had never read Marx or Engels. Like many pre-university students, I was an existentialist. That was the fashion. I had read Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus. We admired U.S. development. But we wanted to repudiate U.S. domination of Cuba," de Llano tells the students. "I loved rock and roll, Elvis Presley, Frank Sinatra, Bing Crosby."

Consuelo Elba's mother was black. She never knew her father. "I always considered myself black. I can remember the Central Park in Manzanillo where the signs said, 'for blacks' and 'for whites.' My family's background was humble," she explains.

Elba became friendly with a neighborhood tailor, who was also black. Several months later, he told her he was a member of the People's Socialist Party, the pro-Moscow Communist Party. His tailor's shop was a PSP unit. "I was horrified. I had heard the Communists were terrible. But they weren't," she laughed. At the age of 13, in 1955, Elba joined the Socialist Youth.

As the struggle progressed, and after its victory, a process of unification of the revolutionary and anti-Batista currents, led by the July 26 Movement, culminated in 1965 with launching the new Communist Party of Cuba.

REVOLUTIONARY ACTION IN CITY, COUNTRYSIDE

Four of the 10 members of de Llano's Havana cell were women. "We carried out educational work, leafleting, trying to convince people to join, talking with other young people," she says. "We raised funds, from voluntary collections to selling [revolutionary] bonds."

"And other actions, sabotage," de Llano notes. She was 15, then. Now, speaking softly, conservatively dressed, the business administration professor explains that the targets – "electrical lines, basic services" – her cell demolished were selected "to prove to the people and the police that that revolutionary movement existed." There is absolute silence in the audience.

Despite the police disappearance of two members of the cell in 1958, "we never had a doubt we would win," she says. "We were not afraid of the consequences of our actions."

Elba was twice arrested for her urban activity, the second time tortured. "I do not like talking about that period," she says with a grimace. After her release in early 1958, she was assigned to join the guerrillas in the Sierra Maestra Mountains. She became a member of the Rebel Army and served in the column headed by Fidel Castro.

Strict rules governed behavior there. "Discrimination against women was prohibited, but, of course, it's always complicated," Elba says. "The women weren't assigned to do the cooking, or wash the clothes. I never did that. I was a teacher, a messenger, a guerrilla fighter."

Cuba's historic literacy campaign, which brought the skills of reading and writing to the country's peasantry, "actually began in the war.

The guerrillas taught literacy to peasant children and their parents, and to *guerrilleros* who were illiterate," Elba says. "We learned proper practice, how to work with the peasants, without which we could not have done what we did."

AN EXCHANGE OF IDEAS BETWEEN GENERATIONS

There are plenty of questions from the crowd, asked by students from Venezuela, Puerto Rico, Mexico, the United States. What was daily life like, underground and in the mountains?

"I felt completely free," Elba says. "In the city, the combatants faced the entire repressive apparatus of the state. It was much more difficult."

Does the new generation of Cuban youth appreciate their contributions?

Both women participate in the activities of the combatants association, whose July 26 Movement and Rebel Army veterans seek to impart the experience of the revolutionary war to today's Cuban youth.

"We do not live in the past, however," de Llano says. Every generation "has its own challenges. Cuba's young people were the big majority of those who fought for the return of Elián González."

Documenting that history remains a challenge. "People understand that women fought in the Sierra," Elba says after the event, "but even in Cuba only a few names are known."

To fill that gap, Elba is working on a film documentary of women fighters, *guerrilleras*, and a companion book.

"I have compiled a list of 85 women who fought in the mountains," she tells the students, answering a question about the role of women in the Cuban struggle. She describes Fidel Castro's proposal during the war to form a women's guerilla unit, and how it was organized. Elba's labor will detail "what happened, why it happened, what we did, and why we did it."

De Llano explains how Ernesto "Che" Guevara dispatched a leading female combatant to Havana to discuss with her the development of an entirely female urban underground unit.

All of this is, Elba says, a "rich story that must be told." And that history is completely current and relevant, both women assert.

CURRENT SITUATION IN AMERICAS MIRRORS PRE-REVOLUTIONARY CUBA

"The same conditions that existed in Cuba in the 1950s that made it ready for revolution exist in all the Americas today," de Llano says, responding to a student who asks if Cuba's liberation struggle was unique, the product of a combination of special circumstances.

There have been no deep-going, Cuba-style victories in Latin America since then, she explains, because "what is missing is leadership."

"I do not believe the world can stay the same, it will not stay the same," Elba says, and many of the students applaud and cheer. Both women shake their heads in disagreement when asked if they believe in the current wisdom that "communism is dead" in the world. Both say they're proud of their affiliation to the Cuban Communist Party, of which de Llano was a founding member 35 years ago.

CHANGES, BUT NO RETURN TO THE PAST

"Many terrible things were done in the name of socialism," de Llano says, "and many errors were committed. But in Cuba there were important differences. We have learned through a process of trial and error."

Through these difficult moments, Elba says, "the essence of the [Cuban] system continues to be the same. It is not perfect, but it is best for us. Look at the rest of the Third World. We work to correct the deficiencies we might have, but we're not going into reverse and start building capitalism."

When we were in the Rebel Army, Elba says, laughing, "we thought

all the problems of the country would be solved overnight. We would triumph, everything would be fixed, like that!" She waves her hand.

But, she explains, "in his first speech to us after the triumph, Fidel said, 'now begins the hardest part.' We didn't know that then. But Fidel was clear." ★

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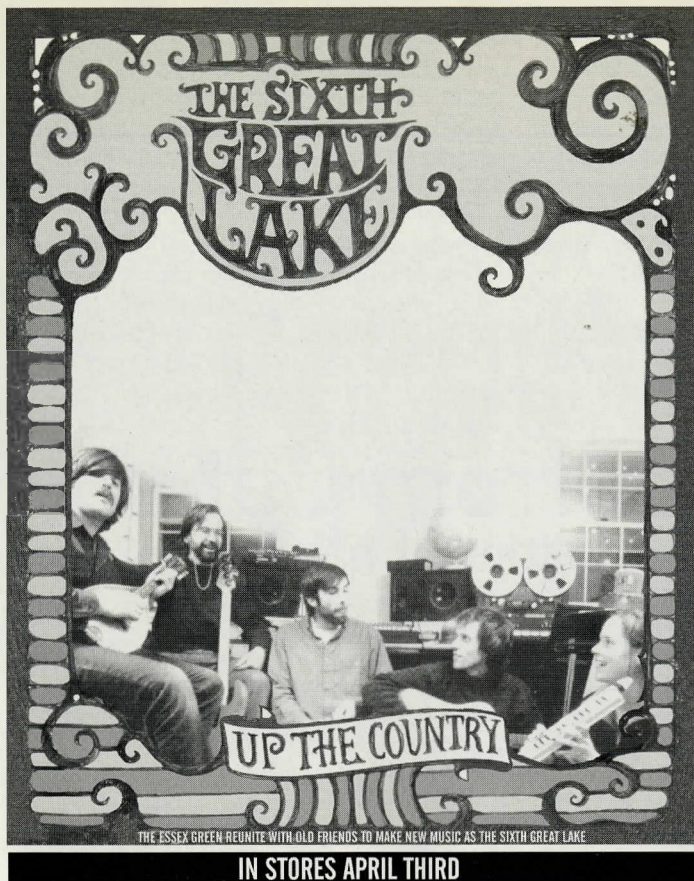
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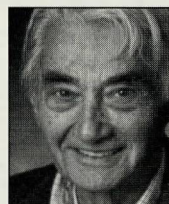
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Watching the Water from Canada

an insider's perspective on the privatization of natural resources

[economics]

by Louis Rastelli

For several years in the early 90s, former communist countries were picked clean of their assets, most of these assets forming new corporate divisions for companies like the one I work for. The transition from commie to capitalist meant selling off all state corporations and nationalized industries to the private sector. Adding a few elections and calling them "democracies" was like window dressing. Now that most of those nations have more or less sold off all they could, companies such as the one I work for have set their privatizing-guns on anything remotely socialistic existing within capitalist countries. This activity is doing no less than changing what we mean by countries, and by extension, what we mean by corporations.

In the past few years the company I work for has become Lebanon's postal system, Turkey's public transit authority, the sole owner and operator of a major new highway in Ontario, etc. The ramifications of this kind of thing for countries, not only democracies, all over the world are too huge to be happening by accident, and, alas, are also too huge to get into in this article. For now, I'll just focus on what it is about water services that makes companies like the one I work for drool puddles of the stuff.

In Canada, we've been hearing a lot about how rich we're all gonna be because of the coming global water shortage. As right-wing newspapers (i.e. all of them) breathlessly report, "the shortfall of water in California could be supplied using just 0.005 per cent of the fresh water that flows into the ocean from BC alone." In other words, if we start selling the stuff, we could be rich — rich as Arabs! Despite this argument, Canada hasn't led the way in privatizing water services.

Understandably, there's a lot of resistance on the part of the general population to hastily export a resource which may end up being one of the most valuable in the world. Despite assurances that what currently flows out to sea is all we need to sell, no politician is in a big rush to be THE ONE who gets the whole ball rolling, and no one really believes there would be no environmental impact.

But behind the scenes, preparations are no doubt being made. As is the custom with governments now, all the protests and arguments regular citizens have against water privatization are probably being compiled and dissected by some government agency, who will try to come up with a way to present water privatization differently so people will fall for it. After all, the corporations currently drooling over the mere possibility are private citizens too, and they've pestered the government for help on this one for years. So in that sense, we definitely need to be skeptical of what any level of government says about water privatization.

One thing that has already occurred in Canada is the partial privatization of water services. Wherever possible, various water testing and wastewater services have been spun off from public responsibility to private firms. This allows governments to say "it's already part private, see? And you're not suffering now, are you?" It also lets large firms get their foot in the door and all that kind of thing. And, fortunately, it can also backfire in a big way.

In Canada we just had a very nasty experience with the partial privatization of water services. In Walkerton, Ontario, in the spring of 2000, 7 people died and over 2000 became ill due to bacteria in the water supply. Early on, it became known that the crucial water testing which could have averted the disaster had been unloaded to the private sector a couple years earlier. It wasn't the quality of their testing that was the issue; what happened was that government labs had been closed down, and each municipality now had to pay private labs to test their water. With that change in policy, it now became profitable for a municipality to do less testing than before. Before, testing was built-in to public budgets. Now, it's one of many expenses municipalities are under constant pressure to limit or curb. So, the danger which arose in this privatization experience was directly related to the new "incentive" created: to lower costs related to testing. Before, the only incentive was to assure quality. I'm sure that in the wording of the legislation that privatized the labs, they threw in something like "to assure quality while assuring lower costs." But as my mother used to tell me, you can't have everything. And in this particular case, to "assure quality" was actually diametrically opposed to lowering costs. It's like saying you can kill someone to save their life.

The initial public reaction to the Walkerton tragedy was that hasty privatization was to blame. Was cutting the deficit so important as to put public health at risk? The province was criticized for unloading too much responsibility to municipalities who, in many cases, are too poor

or poorly managed to rise to the task. (And sure enough, it was one of the smaller, poorer parts of the province which ended up suffering this tragedy.)

Eventually the media began giving a different spin to the whole situation. New facts, a great many new facts, were released. A pattern of incompetence was shown to have existed for years in that small town. Extensive televised inquests filled people's heads with

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more information than they could digest. By now, the word Walkerton doesn't evoke the evils of water privatization to most people; if anything it evokes a bumbling, dangerously incompetent public health service.

This is a very common tactic used to further any privatization scheme: get the media to zoom in on any and every detail of public mismanagement or corruption. The right-wing and financial columnists will always point out that the publicly managed can only be badly managed, leaving the assumption that the private is always excellently managed. Like I mentioned, the media seems to have succeeded in leading people to conclude that Walkerton was less about the dangers of privatization and more about the dangers of inept bureaucracies.

If those of us pushing to keep public control over what's currently publicly controlled wanted to play that same game, we could easily find an endless list of failed businesses in the private sector. Hell, we can find instances of corruption, mismanagement and intentional bankruptcies that would put even the Russian government to shame. Such a counter-strategy would be useful, especially considering how quick the media seems able to spin around stories of failed privatizations.

The recent crisis in California is a case in point. The government is now the one being blamed, because they "didn't privatize properly." Apparently their fatal flaw was putting a limit on how high energy prices could rise after privatization. My question is, then, why privatize in the first place? How come it was cheaper before? How did they end up with higher prices when the whole point was to make it cheaper? I'm sure the answer is hidden somewhere in a Swiss bank account, but in the meantime the California experiment is a potent case for public utilities being left just like that: public. Any moderate or truth-valuing media source should resist the spin and continue to let people know that before privatization, none of this chaos had ever happened before.

One aspect of the California crisis which could figure

large in any future private water crisis is the relation between supply and demand and pricing. I don't know all the facts, but at face value the California energy crisis appeared to be a cut-and-dried case of artificially lowering supply to create an inflated demand, thus raising prices. And sure enough, the end result looks to be that California will soon have much higher energy prices.

One thing mentioned a lot by privatization

One thing mentioned a lot by privatization advocates is conservation. People are just wasting too much water: Charge them for it and it will be better for the planet. Whoa, Nelly! Make it a commodity and its scarcity will drive up the price!

...we're told that without the profit motive, there is no incentive for any kind of research or development making it more efficient, safe, cheap, or less wasteful. Take away money, they would have us believe, and humans screw each other over, try to kill each other, and ignore their common well-being entirely. But throw some money in there, and suddenly all the kindness and thoughtfulness of the world pours forth.

each other, and ignore their common well-being entirely. But throw some money in there, and suddenly all the kindness and thoughtfulness of the world pours forth. Never mind that one of the greatest achievements of this past century, providing running water to everyone in the

come a tradable commodity. Let's say Ontario fully privatizes water and it becomes a commodity—any American would, under NAFTA, have the right to insist on equal access to their water market, for buying or selling, with no protective legislation whatsoever allowed (whether to protect the environment or local access to local water sources.) This isn't very likely anytime soon, but as I said, a hemispheric trade deal would make it all but inevitable, considering how far ahead South America is at being privatized. (The CEO of the company I work for was overjoyed with glee after his last trip to Argentina. "They've privatized everything," he told our annual meeting, "even tax collection!")

The main reason to fear that water privatization may sweep North America is that it has been pulled off already elsewhere in the world. And the main reason why these precedents exist is the manhandling of debtor nations by the IMF and World Bank. Privatization has been one of the strings attached to their loan programs for over a decade, resulting in its imposition on countries across Asia, Eastern Europe, Africa and South America. Now that some of the private companies who've scored these first water concessions have managed to score some in less impoverished, western countries (Portugal, Argentina, Germany, even to a limited degree, Florida and Texas), countries will be under more pressure by their industry lobbies to go with the flow. And the next time there's a serious global recession, just watch: anyone who hasn't cut the corners of public spending on water services will be forced to, if not by bailout-banks like the IMF and World Bank, then by the threat of status downgrades by the S&P Index or major private banks. Before you know it, it isn't "We should privatize water to encourage conservation" anymore, it's "We have to privatize water or else all foreign investment will be scared away by our downgraded economic status."

Before writing this article, I did some research in the company library and read some riveting back issues of *Water Engineering and Management* and *Water and Wastewater International*. I thought I might detect a glimpse of controversy within the water industry regarding privatization. This is, after all, an industry which since its earliest days has relied on government contracts, so I thought some players might be unwilling to rock the boat. I was wrong. They are unanimously excited about what's to come. The water industry was never much more glamorous or rich than, say, road asphalters, and now they feel the electric buzz of potential riches on the horizon. Instead of leaving the scene once the filtration plant's been built, they feel like they will soon be able to stay behind and count money for every liter they pump out. They do, however, realize that at this point it's still mostly a pipe dream (no

advocates is conservation. People are just wasting too much water: Charge them for it and it will be better for the planet. Whoa, Nelly: make it a commodity and its scarcity will drive up the price. In other words, let the companies waste or taint tons of it (oops! Not on purpose, of course) and its value will go way up. So whereas we now have no disincentive to waste water, at least we have no INCENTIVE to waste it. In other words, sure, we waste a lot of it now by accident. But at least no incentive exists for people to waste large amounts of it ON PURPOSE. Seen in this light, commodification is a much, much bigger threat to future water conservation than any amount of excessive lawn-watering on even the biggest of lawns.

But proponents of privatization are experts at proving that black is white, that circles are better off being squares, that opposites are in fact the same thing but better. How else do we end up, after ten years of "streamlining" and "improving" societies everywhere, with far more and far poorer poor people, and vastly richer rich people? Thus, privatizing water will help save the planet. It will make us all treasure the water so. Sparingly will we sponge it onto us in the bath, for, at \$3 a liter, we better fucking use it sparingly.

But seriously — the question of incentives comes up all the time in privatization. For water, the argument that privatization is needed as an incentive to conservation is pretty thin. Laws can be passed at any level of government enforcing conservation, if need be. Surely if water reserves declined to dangerous levels, the government would have to take over management anyway. So why bother transferring water supplies over to the private sector? For money, of course. But not just money: governments have to convince people that once the incentive of money has been put into the water equation, the quality and care with which it's managed will rise enormously.

As with any privatization, we're told that without the profit motive, there is no incentive for any kind of research or development making it more efficient, safe, cheap, or less wasteful. Such arguments seem to exist in a vacuum containing only humans and money. Take away money, they would have us believe, and humans screw each other over, try to kill

western world, including its poorest people, was an entirely public endeavour. "But no, a publicly run service will always be inefficient, wasteful, and accomplishes nothing." Here again it may be useful to dig up some stories of fantastic failures of businesses in the private, corporate world. The fact is that any way you do it, public or private, you still need to have talented, committed people with more than just money on their minds. So far, this is how public health has been assured: with no incentive besides public health itself. It's very easy to say that with millions of dollars up for grabs, everyone would work themselves that much harder, raising the quality of service that much higher. It's not quite as easy to see how the profit motive can do serious damage to water supplies.

Probably the biggest single reason that'll be put forth in favor of privatizing water will be "It'll cost less", i.e. in municipal taxes. "You're ALREADY paying for it," they will say when people oppose charging for it. "This will only bring the hidden costs above the table." And so on, and so on. These things are all true, but to assume that nothing more fundamental than appearances will change would be quite wrong. Still, arguments like those are likely to be the ones which tilt public sentiment in favour of privatization, if it happens. Maybe not now, but in the middle of the next recession, when everyone's feeling a money squeeze, these frugal sound-bites can carry a lot of clout with regular, bill-paying people. Couple lines like that with an actual promise to decrease or eliminate water taxes, and people might just go for it.

Another thing very much worth keeping an eye on is a possible "hemispheric free trade deal". Such a deal would put huge pressure on North America to start emulating the privatization-mania seen in South America. In fact, under such a deal there might be no avoiding massive privatizations. Suppose water is already considered a commodity in the several South American countries which have already privatized it. The free trade deal would typically cover any and all tradable commodities, so it wouldn't be easy to call it a "free trade deal" if tons of stuff that is already traded in part of the affected area was excluded. Indeed, under NAFTA alone, water could be-

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pun intended).

One article in *Water Engineering and Management* reports with much regret that for most people, water is still "perceived as an entitlement." Even worse, "Water suppliers often face a population accustomed to simply not paying for what they consume, and governments reluctant to collect from or even charge the poor ... Thus, water remains in many regions underpriced and oversubsidized."¹ To the water industry, this is a tragedy. To humans everywhere, it's as natural as being born.

Which is why large-scale privatization of water may yet see failure. There isn't much else that can be privatized that's more basic to life than water. I assume that's what Kenneth Lay, CEO of Enron, a large energy-and-e-commerce company, meant when he explained why his company spun off their water division in 1999: "Water markets have proved tough to crack."² If a fast-expanding, new-style utility like Enron gives up the fight, it means those of us fighting to keep water free are winning. All we have to do, after all, is uphold the status quo. And that's done us all fine for as long as anyone can remember. ★

Resources

"Lessons from the Field: Private Sector Involvement in Water Projects," by Zane O. Gresham and Katherine E. Shlaudeman, *Water Engineering and Management*, February 2000, vol. 147, no. 2, pg. 26.

"Texas Lone Star," by Kamalakshi Mehta, *WorldLink: The Official Publication of the World Economic Forum*, September/ October 2000, pg. 10.

Oh Canada!

By Nate Dogg

Canada. The Maple Leaf State. Where "be nice" is actually written into the constitution. A land where an inability to speak French fluently could earn you a black eye and a split lip. And, quite possibly, the cause of World War III. Whodathunkit?

Canada has water, as does just about everybody—for now. Of all the water on Earth, only 2.5% is fresh water and two-thirds of that is locked away in glaciers and ice caps. So, less than half of 1 percent of all the world's water is actually drinkable. And 20 percent of that is conveniently located in the Great White North. And everybody else might literally kill for it.

"In a very short while, most of the world's people will face shortages or absolute scarcity," says Maude Merlow, head of the Action Canada Network. "This is not a matter of seeing more stories of wretched African children dying in horrible droughts, but of imminent water crises in America, southern Europe, India, England, China, and other nations not usually thought of as facing massive water shortages."

Consider Russia's Aral Sea. In one of the most arrogant acts in the history of mankind, Russia's city planners decided to siphon off the fourth-largest inland body of water for faraway cotton fields. In the process, they eliminated an ecosystem roughly the size of Ireland. The results were, predictably, disastrous. Almost 60,000 fishing jobs dried up and thousands of people fled the area. The few who remained died of cancer or respiratory dysfunction. Winds whipped across the new desert, dumping toxic salt, dust, and chemical residue on the nearby towns and villages. Dust storms and polluted rivers made it impossible to breathe the air or drink what little water was left.

The tragedy of the Aral Sea is, sadly, not unique. In the Colorado River delta, the Cocopa Indians face extinction and the destruction of thousands of years of culture due to the construction of needless dams and diversions. On the bright side, the golf courses in Arizona have never looked better.

The earth's population will rise to over 9 billion people by the year 2050. And we don't have enough water for them. Period.

While rich retirees in Arizona have desert swimming pools, 2.8 billion other people don't even have basic sanitation. The World Health Organization estimates that five to 10 million people die annually from water-related causes such as cholera and intestinal worms.

Since the beginning of history, water has been managed by individual countries themselves, that treated it as a commonly held resource allocated for the general good. But corporations want to consider it a commodity traded by private investors for profit. Similar to having oil or pork bellies on the stock exchange, they want to privatize our drinking water. Both NAFTA and the WTO have begun preparations to promote this idea. According to the new rules of global trade, "water, including ordinary natural water of all kinds, is merely one more form of goods."

Bulk sale plans would buy and mine lakes and rivers and aquifers, even siphon off the Great Lakes. The multinational conglomerates have supertankers, pipelines, canals and river re-routers at their disposal, ready and waiting.

Pouring Rights

The battle over corporate sponsorship in the schools has finally come to our small town. Recently, Bowling Green State University signed an exclusive deal with Pepsi for "pouring rights" - the exclusive use of Pepsi products on university property and at school functions - in exchange for money.

This is not without controversy of course. Although many of us dispute the use of corporate advertising in schools, groups like the Ohio Dental Association argue that these exclusive details are simply not in the best interest of students.

A professor at BGSU, Prof. Neocles Leontis, Ph.D, has put together a simple but informative website detailing the use of aggressive marketing against students, the amount of sugar in soft drinks, and the adverse affects of sugar on our health, including an exhaustive list of references. This site is easy to read and plainly illustrates another downside of corporate marketing. Please visit the site at <http://www.bgsu.edu/departments/chem/faculty/leontis/LiquidCandy/> or email Dr. Leontis at leontis@bgnet.bgsu.edu.

- Jen Angel

"Water has moved from being an endless commodity that may be taken for granted to a rationed necessity that may be taken by force," stated the Global Water Corporation in a recent press release.

Monsanto, your friendly neighborhood Frankenfood Factory, explains that, "since water is central to food production as seed is, and without water life is not possible, (Monsanto) is now trying to establish its control over water...(Monsanto) has launched a new water business, starting with India and Mexico, since both of these countries face water shortages."

Terence Corcoran, editor of the *Financial Post*, observed that Canada may very well become the next OPEC, more powerful than all the oil sheiks combined. But concerned citizens and the Council of Canadians (also run by Merlow) have successfully obtained a temporary block on all bulk water purchases in their country.

Letting the market decide has never worked before, but the double-edged sword that is "free trade" is already in motion. Sun Belt Water, based in Santa Barbara, CA, has already filed a case with NAFTA. It had a contract with British Columbia to ship tankers full of water from BC back to Cali. But when the deal was announced, massive public outcry convinced the Canadian government to put the moratorium in effect. Sun Belt Water is suing Canada to the tune of \$468 million U.S. dollars.

Sun Belt CEO Jack Lindsey says Canada is being incredibly selfish. "California has 33 million people, more than the entire population of Canada," he points out.

This is not about global need, it's about global greed. Lindsey is only interested in the windfall he'd receive if the deal went through—he could care less if California was set on fire and fell into the sea. Silicon Valley and agribusiness giants are responsible for depleting the water table, but they are the ones he wants to sell water to. But water there is not just spilling aimlessly into the Pacific, and people don't consider water "wasted" just because nobody's making a profit off of it. The runoff into the sea is integral to ecological cycles, sustaining the fishing market, feeding the wetlands.

We don't need water barons. One needs only to look back in our country's history and see the tragic excesses of monopolies like the steel and railroad industries to realize we can't afford to make those same mistakes yet again.

Canada. Infested with trees. Home to yaks, moose, lemmings, and marmosets. Birthplace of William Shatner. It's hard to imagine a country with round bacon, venison Slurpees and bagged milk could be so integral to our future, but it's true. So, be nice. ★

Resources:

"Blue Gold: The Global Water Crisis" Maude Merlow (Pamphlet)

If The Gods Had Meant Us To Vote, They Would Have Given Us Candidates. Jim Hightower (Harper Collins, 2000)

"Troubled Water" Sandra Postel. *Utne Reader*. July/August 2000.

No NAFTA for the Western Hemisphere: Fighting the FTAA

By Kari Lydersen

In the seven years since the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) took effect, people around the world have become all too aware of its devastating effects. The thousands of new jobs that NAFTA promised to create have been almost all extremely low wage jobs in Mexico, while half a million decent-paying, mostly union jobs in the U.S. have been destroyed. Corporations have steam-rolled over environmental laws and considerations in their rush to profit in the U.S., Canada and Mexico. NAFTA gives corporations the right to sue governments over barriers to investment; taxpayers in all three countries are facing NAFTA lawsuits from corporations totaling \$1.8 billion or more. Imports from Mexico to the U.S. are up by several billion dollars, yet the number of Mexicans living in extreme poverty is up as well. Since the implementation of NAFTA, 79 percent of Mexicans make below the poverty level of \$7.50 a day. In short, multinational corporations have gained windfall profits at the expense of workers and the environment in the NAFTA countries.

Now, if trade negotiators and the corporations whose interests they represent have their way, NAFTA conditions will be expanded to cover the entire Western hemisphere. This plan, called the FTAA (Free Trade Agreement of the Americas), would include all South and Central American countries and the Caribbean, with the exception of Cuba. There are already various trade agreements between these countries, such as Mercosur, the Andean Pact and the Caribbean Community. These trade agreements and NAFTA would serve as the building blocks for the FTAA, resulting in what former President Bill Clinton called "the world's largest market."

"NAFTA was supposed to provide more and better jobs for everyone," said Alesha Daugherty, senior organizer at Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch. "It was supposed to provide improvements in public health and clean-ups of the environment, especially along the U.S.-Mexico border. What we've seen has been exactly the opposite. It's been a race to the bottom in terms of labor, health, the economy and the environment. It's brought the levels of labor, environmental, public safety and health protections down to whichever country had the least protection."

The FTAA was actually proposed at a summit in Miami in 1994, but after several years of inactivity punctuated by yearly meetings, the key players from the 34 involved countries are moving to have the FTAA in place by their original goal of 2005. In early April, trade ministers will meet in Buenos Aires to discuss the FTAA. The

FTAA will be the main focus of the third Summit of the Americas in Quebec City, Canada April 20-22. U.S. interests are trying to obtain Fast Track legislation to push the FTAA plan through Congress as they tried to do with NAFTA. Under Fast Track, Congress doesn't see the plan until it is complete, and no amendments can be made. While Clinton failed to pass Fast Track for NAFTA, President George W. Bush has already stated that Fast Track will be introduced to Congress before the Summit of the Americas.

"Everything bad about NAFTA will be magnified by the FTAA," said Tom Hansen, director of the Mexico Solidarity Network, a nationwide coalition of organizations working for justice in Mexico. "Under NAFTA, millions of farmers in Mexico have been displaced because they can't compete with the price of corn being imported from the U.S. NAFTA has increased the level of poverty in Mexico drastically. And with the FTAA these effects would be exaggerated immensely because it would be carried out throughout the hemisphere. It's an undemocratic process that removes economic and political power from the people and puts it in the hands of corporations and international trade regulators."

Hansen noted that in Mexico and Central America, the FTAA would facilitate an out of control expansion of maquilas, the sweatshop-type factories that pay paltry wages and offer virtually no benefits or labor rights. And the FTAA would speed along the plans for huge land and water canals throughout Mexico and Central America. These canals, used to transport the fruits of free trade from east to west and north to south, would have devastating effects for the environment and indigenous populations. Plans are already underway for a "Mega-Project" canal in southern Mexico, which would destroy numerous indigenous communities and fragile ecosystems.

"You have a refrigerator being built in China, the parts are transported to a maquila in Central America for assembly and then it is transported to the northeastern U.S. to be sold," Hansen explained.

While it is only within the past year that there has been much public knowledge of the FTAA, non-governmental organizations and environmental and other activist groups have sprung into high gear to organize a multi-pronged plan of opposition to the FTAA and create an alternative, socially justice-conscious trade plan. An international coalition of groups called the Hemispheric Social Alliance (HSA), which formed in 1992 and represents 30 million people, is working to op-

pose the FTAA; the Alliance for Responsible Trade (ART) is the U.S. liaison with the HSA.

"We want to come up with alternatives from civil society so they can't just say their way is the only way," said Karen Hansen-Kuhn, an organizer with Development GAP and the international coordinator for ART. "We want an idea that doesn't just modify their proposal but presents a whole different approach to economic development, one that would put international human rights and economic rights above trade law. We have international teams working on a draft right now."

On January 27 and 28, Canadian activist groups called the Anti-Capitalist Convergence, based in Montreal, and the Summit of the Americas Welcoming Committee, based in Quebec City, held a consulta of organizers opposing the FTAA and globalization in general.

"In the context of the largest police and security operation in Canadian history, the Summit aims to talk about security and terrorism, and utter empty rhetoric about democracy and human rights," says a statement from the consulta organizing committee. "Accelerating both social and ecological degradation, these leaders aim to extend the reach of capitalism, subjecting our lives to the domination of the commodity economy. In the face of this systematic dispossession of our political power, resistance is essential."

Chad Lubelsky, an activist with the Center for Media Alternatives in Quebec, noted that like NAFTA, the FTAA would open up loopholes for U.S. companies to make inroads into public safety nets offered in other countries, such as Canada's socialized healthcare system.

"Now American companies can come in and privatize things that we depend on, like the health safety net," he said. "Profit takes precedence over everything else. It's all about corporations making money on the backs of people."

When the trade negotiators convene in Quebec City, they will be met by an international demonstration on the scale of the anti-WTO and anti-IMF protests in Seattle, Washington D.C. and Prague. A People's Summit happening concurrently in Quebec City will include teach-ins, meetings and actions for activists to become educated on the FTAA and develop plans to combat it. Various Latin American unions and activists are also planning large-scale demonstrations during the Buenos Aires meeting.

"There's not really an agenda, something we can kill like at the WTO meeting in Seattle," said Michel Lambert, coordinator for the Center for Media Alternatives in Quebec. "The negotiations

are being done elsewhere and this is more of a show. But if we show the extent of the opposition, they will have to take notice. We can still interfere with their plans."

The Canadian government is well prepared for the protests, according to local activists. Lambert said the government will have 8,000 federal and municipal police officers on hand, and the government plans to close down shops and restaurants in the area and give them reimbursement for lost business. The government is even going to empty the Orfainville prison near Quebec and move the approximately 600 prisoners elsewhere. Regular communiqués have already been released defaming the protesters.

"They're trying to frighten people," said Lambert. "They are expecting big protests. They're building a huge security perimeter, and 30,000 people in the area will be required to carry ID cards just to get into their homes and workplaces."

There will be a legal protest in Quebec City on April 21, and various groups are developing plans for other protest and guerrilla actions. There are plans to try to block delegates' access into the city, by clogging roads, bridges and airports. A Smash the FTAA caravan being organized over the internet will travel slowly down Highway 41 towards Quebec City, creating blocks on this major Canada-U.S. trade route. The group plans to stop at the border in Cornwall to try to make sure activists are allowed to enter Canada, and they plan to shut down the locks in the St. Lawrence Seaway near Cornwall, impeding the vast shipping industry there.

It is a given that the Canadian government will try its best to thwart these various plans and try to keep activists out of the area, as it did during the meeting of the Organization of American States in Windsor last summer.

"I don't know how easy it will be to get into Canada and Quebec City," said Lambert. "It's an easy city to close, it's surrounded by bridges."

In addition to the April protests, wide-ranging public education and lobbying campaigns against the FTAA have been ongoing and are continuing to gain steam.

"People need to be informed," said Lambert. "We need to mobilize the alternative media and get people speaking to people about what's going on."

The most immediate challenge in fighting the FTAA is finding out exactly what it is. While it is widely accepted that it is similar to NAFTA and will have the same devastating effects on a much larger scale, few details of the plan are known. Negotiations have gone on behind closed doors, with almost no specifics released to NGOs, the public or even Congress. An official FTAA Web site gives the basics of the plan and details about the structure of working committees, but actual information about the draft is scant. The site promises that civil society and NGOs will be involved in the negotiations, but NGO leaders say there has been virtually no outreach to the public

and requests for information have been met with complete silence.

"Negotiations have been done in hotel rooms and backrooms, around the edges, by the trade specialists," said Hansen, who serves as the national coordinator for ART. "Not much negotiating will go on in Quebec, basically they'll be ratifying things that have already been developed."

An ongoing campaign is demanding that negotiators "liberate the text," a move that U.S. Congress and the Canadian government have pledged at least limited support for.

"We see the campaign to liberate the text as a way to raise the issue of transparency in different countries," said Hansen-Kuhn. "And whatever text we get, we will fully analyze."

The vague existing descriptions of FTAA goals include removing all trade barriers and tariffs between countries, for example Brazil's requirement that automobile importers without local operations pay a hefty 70 percent duty tax. A paper by former Americas Society president Everett Ellis Briggs says that "although tariffs throughout the hemisphere are considerably lower today than they were five years ago, at 13 percent on average they remain a major obstacle to expanded trade." The FTAA would also prevent governments from excluding foreign investors from strategic sectors, such as petroleum. Like NAFTA, the FTAA would likely require that governments don't allow domestic companies any advantages over foreign companies. Foreign companies would not be required to hire local labor or reinvest in the area.

The removal of local trade regulations and tariffs won't necessarily go over easily with all the involved countries, and the actual ratification of the FTAA plan is likely to be a long and arduous process.

"[Making] the FTAA a reality will be a complex process due to the many different relationships and working plans existing within subregional groups," says an academic paper by Syrous Kooros, Bruce McManis and Fernando Albareda. "Is it likely to achieve its goal by the announced target date? It looks as if it will fall short."

While many lesser-developed countries have good reason to oppose the FTAA, the economic elites will eventually be able to strong arm whoever they need to in order to get what they want, according to Hansen.

"Each government has its own interests and it won't be easy to negotiate," said Hansen. "But the elites in each country will have a lot to gain from the FTAA. The elites in every Latin American country are tied to the multi-national corporations, and they have police and security forces assembled to protect the interests of the multi-nationals."

The report from the 1994 Miami Summit paints the FTAA in rosy terms as a great plan for everyone involved. "Free trade and economic integration are key factors for raising the standard of living, improving the working conditions of

people in the Americas and better protecting the environment." It also says that "for the first time in history, the Americas are a community of democratic societies."

The future of the FTAA could be seen as a perfect test of this claim. If the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Brazil and the other countries are indeed true democracies, they will release information about the FTAA plan and respond to the obvious and growing worldwide opposition to the plan. They will consider the alternative trade plan that is presented to them by the HSA, and they will draft a proposal that unlike NAFTA, actually has teeth in enforcing labor, environmental and health regulations. The chances of these things actually happening sound like a snowball's chances in hell to the activists and NGO leaders involved in the fight. The coming months will tell. ★

Resources:

The Alliance for Responsible Trade/ The Mexico Solidarity Network: msn@mexicosolidarity.org (773) 583-7728

Official FTAA Web site: www.ftaa-alca.org

Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch:

www.tradewatch.org

The Anti-Capitalist Convergence (Montreal):

casa_clac_consulta@hotmail.com

Smash the FTAA Web site:

www.tao.ca/~kdawg/smashftaa.html

msilburn@kingston.net

The Center for Media Alternatives: www.cmaq.net

Indymedia: www.indymedia.org



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[economics]



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Dir Jon Fine/ Michael I Schiller

The newest release from Bloodlink Motion Pictures. The story of a martial arts legacy that spans the ages. The film begins in ancient Israel where one of the twelve tribes is scattered by a Babylonian invasion. After an epic battle that fuses classic Kung Fu mythology with elements of Jewish mysticism, the film travels to Babylon Long Island in 1971. Descendants of the ancient warriors, a Jewish Socialist (Tzadik Yessli), and a black revolutionary (Shazzam Shabazz Shabbat Shalom) unite under their shared martial arts heritage to battle sinister agents of the FBI. The final chapter finds the children of the idealistic 70's radicals struggling to reunite the tribe in the racially tense environment of Brooklyn.

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Underground



V. Vale has been a voice in America's cultural underground since pasting together the first issue of *Search and Destroy* zine in the late 70s—one of the first zines to chronicle the artistic underground surrounding the punk movement. He has been tirelessly documenting and expanding on that underground ever since, with books that search out ignored, interesting communities and ideas on the periphery of American culture. Together with Andrea Juno, he created RE/Search Publications in the early 80s, releasing books that investigate and explore unusual, creative individuals and cultures as well as innovative music, film, and art. These have included interview books with J.G. Ballard, William S. Burroughs, Brion Gysin & Throbbing Gristle; explorations of growing scenes like his book on *Zines (Volumes 1 & 2)*, *Modern Primitives*, *The Industrial Culture Handbook*; as well as classic underground autobiographies such as *The Confessions of Wanda von Sacher Masoch* and Daniel Mannix's *Memoirs of a Sword Swallower*. Now working alone as the head editor and publisher at V/Search publications, Vale continues to publish and document ideas and communities that have managed to evade mainstream attention. In many cases, when V/Search publishes a book, it seems larger corporate publishers follow suit almost immediately. His most recent book on the rapidly expanding pagan movements in America, *Modern Pagans*, will be available this summer.

Anthropologist

an interview with
independent publisher

V. Vale

by Eric Zass

How did Search and Destroy start out?

Search and Destroy started up because both Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Allen Ginsberg gave me a hundred dollars each to start it up. Then, I had another friend, an M.D., who gave me two hundred. The legend is that Allen Ginsberg gave me a hundred first. I took that and showed the check to Lawrence, and he immediately wrote another check for a hundred. That paid the printing bill for the first thousand copies of *Search and Destroy*. It was very touch and go. That later developed into RE/Search Publications, and then V/Search.

What strikes me about RE/Search books is they're partly a catalog of these cultures that are cut off from or in opposition to mainstream culture. They're anthropological ventures.

That's what I have in common with Charles Gatewood. It's only relatively recently that it's sunk into me that Charles Gatewood actually studied anthropology. I didn't officially study it in college. I have an English degree from the University of California, Berkeley. I got a scholarship there. But I didn't take any anthropology classes. I guess I was really lucky early in life to have a mentor, right here in San Francisco: Philip Lamantia, who is an autodidact and a bibliophile. He could have been the Diderot of our age, on a certain level, in that he's so encyclopedic and knows so much of the right kind of history—which is more the surrealist history of the world. Thanks to him, I got all the books I could by Claude Lévi-Strauss and read (or tried to read, at least) the father of structural anthropology. Lévi-Strauss was involved with the surrealist group really early. I think he was on the same boat, coming to America, as André Breton. I would say that all my work has been informed by a certain conscious amateur anthropological background.

It sounds strange that you'd sort of marry the two traditions of anthropology and surrealism. One is supposed to be completely about gathering objective information, and the other

is more about changing it, and making it fun or interesting.

The thing that surrealism taught me initially is that everyone is born an artist. Actually, even the pre-surrealists – De Quincey pointed out that the machinery for dreams in the imagination has always been implanted in our brains, and it was not put there for nothing. Dreams and imagination are all you need to be an artist. An artist is just somebody who hasn't been beaten down by society. Again, if you go to preschool, every kid there is drawing and painting, and banging on things trying to make music, and making jokes with their speech, and bad puns—which is like making poetry. My own daughter has come up with some amazing little perhaps accidental poetic phrases. I think that we were born to be artists, and of course our society doesn't like that. We're ruled by a conspiracy of control maniacs who are more interested in manipulating other people rather than furthering the notion that everyone ought to be allowed to express themselves as creatively and richly as possible.

Anthropology is such a detached observation of phenomena, though. It's so structured that it seems like there would be a tension between the two.

Anthropology was trying to see if there are some invisible or hidden laws behind behavior and social grouping and structures and codes. Anthropology is trying to glimpse the universal behind the particular. There is such an incredible variety in human behavior and artistry. In theory, anthropology, when applied to us, would show us some of our own shortcomings. We're filled with such egos – I say us meaning most people in America. We think we're at the pinnacle of technological achievement, and because of access to television, everyone thinks they're so knowledgeable as to all the mysteries of the planet. We all watch the Nature Channel or whatever, yet we don't do anything. Most Americans are just consum-

ers. What do they leave behind that has their own individual stamp? Very little. A pile of junk to be sold later on eBay and at various garage sales, but what have they left behind as a contribution? I think people should always be thinking about contributions they could be making for their children after them. People seem very shortsighted now. It's just, "I got mine. Fuck you. If you didn't get yours, it's probably because you're genetically inferior." I think most people have a pretty barbaric philosophy.

Why did you decide to base your books around conversations or interviews instead of writing an article or excerpting or something like that?

One of the differences between that format and straight prose is that some people who are very pretentious as far as writing goes are forced by an interviewer to explain their theories or thoughts in plain, understandable English. Academics especially. In the eighties and nineties there was a glut of jargon-filled academic books published that were so difficult to read. Mercifully, they seem to have faded away. I have a resentment towards canned speech. I think speech is alive and dynamic, and you have to guard against canning phrases, even if you invented them yourself at one time. You should feel a sense of freedom to be speaking and more or less synthesizing topics in real time during the interview. That's the ideal, at least. My interviews are not like mainstream interviews. I almost never want to do a hatchet job on someone. What's the point? To get them to reveal something tragic that happened in their past. Yeah, if they want to say that stuff, fine. The book that's most revelatory in that way is *Angry Women*. I prefer just having conversations like we're having now. Who knows where they'll go. Of course, I'd be much happier if the person has a sustained and deeper critique of society. I certainly don't want to interview a bunch of cheerleaders for everything that's going on now. I guess one of my main goals would be to demystify what I call this control process

[media]



a lot of the V/Search books are built to influence. They're structured sort of like you're hooking into a conversation with someone who's thinking differently...

which has the effect of implanting within us notions, words and ideas that aren't even ours, though we think they are. We act upon them and think that we're free. We don't even know that we're being manipulated. That's my number one fear.

Being manipulated without knowing it?

Yeah. Of having a desire and acting on it, and thinking it's my own, though really it's been implanted in me by an ad agency or someone else.

At the same time, a lot of the V/Search books are built to influence. They're structured sort of like you're hooking into a conversation with someone who's thinking differently...

I don't know if the goal is to influence other people. The goal is to have a real conversation and reproduce it, condensed down, but relatively faithfully. You know, the problem with conversations is that they can go all over the map. What I actually do is that I do follow-ups and drill down deeper in certain topics and beef them up. You're not getting a real conversation, you're getting much better than a real conversation. You're getting one in which the person remembers the name of the book that they had actually forgotten in the first conversation. They get to have perfect memories. If they said something incorrectly, we make sure it's said correctly in the final interview.

What about the Internet? Is that something that influences you?

I think for most people, going on the Internet is very much an extremely time-sucking medium that reinforces more consumption and passivity. When you're surfing the net, it's amazing how you'll look at your watch and, suddenly, it's two-thirty in the morning. I think there's some rule that states that no article should be any more than two or three full screen sizes, screen dumps, or whatever you call them. That automatically makes everything even more of a sound-bite than it already is. Of course, nobody has any time any more to just get together and hang out with their friends. I don't mean, hanging out between rigidly scheduled hours before your Palm Pilot goes off for your next appointment. I mean like staying up all night and talking.

It seems as if the idealism is dying down a bit. A year ago it almost seemed as if all of a sudden we were going to be able to exchange all the time, and that it would be this free exchange, equal exchange. That we were

going to be surrounded by a web of connections and of information.

I think that people are living by certain myths that I don't think in real life are applicable. For example, people seem to think that their brains have an infinite capacity to store knowledge and recall it on demand – in conversation, for example. What's happening is that we're suffering from severe information overload. If you could watch a TV set from across the street, just far enough that you can't really see what the hell's onscreen, you'll be able to see that they're editing television so quickly that you couldn't possibly digest it all. I'm the kind of person who likes to look at all the details of the room or environment that I'm in. There's no way I can absorb all the details on a television screen ... it's frustrating, and when you're frustrated, it keeps your interest piqued. You're frustrated when you can't follow something, and that's sort of addicting. It spellbinds

y o u .

They're giving you information faster than you can process it. What kind of information?

It's completely banal information. It's a cliché to say we're a sound bite culture, but it's certainly true. Sometimes when I overhear

people talking, their conversations are comprised of one sound bite after another. It's really sad. Television is a big parent, and that's the language this parent teaches us. Everyone's stuck in this sort of infantile stage, for the most part. I don't mean you necessarily, but there are a lot of people out there stuck in some infantile stage, and the TV commercials know exactly how to manipulate that. In a way, humans are basically simple. We're very quick to take heed of our basic needs – sex, and to a lesser extent, food ... and we have a craving for images. There's no authenticity and no body

[media]

language to read online. We're animals. We need to be in the same room with other people to read their body language, the way they're dressed, everything about them. Most people, if they have instincts left, can figure someone out by the time they finish one sentence. That old saying from the Bible, you know, "by thy speech I will know thee" is still true. You can't fake it when you talk. You can't fake it in conversation. As the deterioration of the art of conversation continues to escalate, I think it's our job to try to keep some sense of spontaneity and creativity alive. I think the only thing that can save us is not only conversations between two people-but we have to get to the point where at least in our own towns or cities, have regular pretexts for social gatherings of more than two people. The coffee shop is sort of the right idea. But I don't know any coffee shop around here, except maybe Cafe Trieste, where I can go with even a reasonable chance of running into someone I know.

Do you think books provide an alternative?

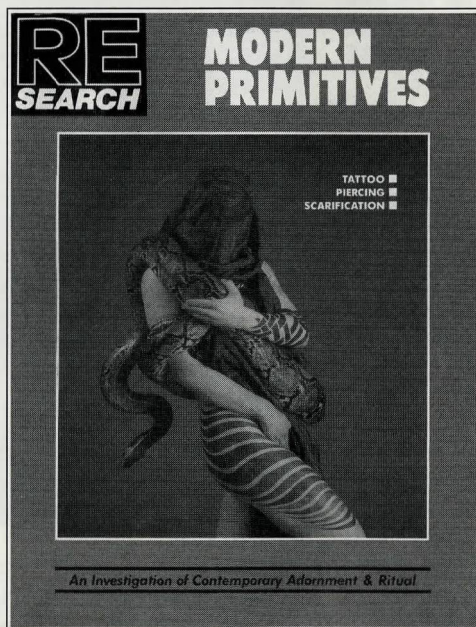
The problem is, if you're raised with so much incredible television consumption, as most Americans are, it would be like a junky attempting to kick junk to try to stop watching

TV and become a book lover. Images are addicting. I'm addicted. Every once in a while, I have to go out and see a movie or rent a video. I know I'm responding to a type of addiction. I have to do it. I feel frustrated and angry if I don't. Even if you don't watch television, you'll still know what's going on. I know all of the brand names. The thing is, I don't think there's that much room in your brain. If you have all this corporate branding and logo and marketing information in your head – which we all do now – I think it crowds out other, essential information. I don't know how we can fight alienation. I think any publishing we do is trying to fight that. It's all we can

do. We're still in the brainstorming, theory-generating stages. Soon every person is going to be a goddamn brand. They're all going to know the principles of guerilla and viral marketing. It's all going to be a bunch of crap about "me, me, me" and "buy my products."

Do you think the medium can be used to confront the message of passivity?

You can try. There's so many voices crying out in the wilderness, though. You're not the only voice. There's one every ten feet now.



You're not John the Baptist in a huge desert now. There's so many people speaking against it, but they're not being heard. All the information coming at you is like a sewer now. There's so much coming at you, and from so many different sources, nobody has an adequate filtration system to find the handful of voices that are really germane, diamond heart sutra quality.

How did the Internet and the rise of the big chains affect you?

Let me give you the history. In the beginning of the nineties, suddenly you had the rise of this new chain called Borders. Before then you had some really bad chains – Crown Books and Barnes and Noble (which is still bad), B Dalton. I can't remember them all. Then, there was a death struggle between two behemoths – Barnes and Noble and Borders. In the first place, I was against any big chains coming into the book business. It's not about making money. It didn't used to be about profit. Allegedly, it was about getting knowledge out. It wasn't just to provide infotainment. It was hopefully to spark some deeper intellectual current in this country.

How do you think the corporatization of the publishing industry has affected writing in the US?

A corporation, to me is not a human being, it's not an entity or an individual, even though it's legally recognized as one. A corporation is a principle – do whatever it takes to make maximum profit as fast as possible. Applying this principle to the book business, I think, is a really bad idea. Obviously, it's tilted us towards putting out books that appeal to the lowest common denominator, that are full of sensationalism, and that sell really fast. Corporations do these heavy duty marketing campaigns. They send their authors out on all these tours and get them onto Oprah and other national TV shows and things like that. Do you think the people who are allowed to appear on these shows would offer any sort of critique of our society? No. Anyone with anything to say is excluded from participation in most of this hype-factory networking. The chain stores already make it really hard to get your independently produced books out there. Then Amazon.com shows up in 1995, but it doesn't really start impacting until 1998. They're putting pressure on the chains and independent book stores. In one of the papers, somebody at A Different Light Bookstore in the Castro told the story of a man who came in and spent hours looking at the expensive art books, but never bought anything. One day they asked him, 'You spend hours looking at our books, but you never buy anything. Why?' He says, 'Oh. I go home and order them all on Amazon, where they're twenty percent off.'" Don't these people know, that if you don't support your local stores, sud-

denly, they're not going to be there anymore? You wouldn't be able to sell a book on Amazon by itself. You'd be taking a big risk buying a book from a Web site without seeing it first. What I don't like is that Amazon changed the industry in this very significant way – a little publisher like me has a choice. Do I want to have my books distributed by Amazon or not? Well, I need every damn dime I can get. Okay, I'll do it. Then they say, "Well, you know, you have to give us free shipping, and you have to give us a fifty-five percent discount." In other words, they pay me four dollars and fifty cents for a ten dollar book. Those kinds of discounts were not there ten years ago. In order to get a fifty-five percent discount, you would have to order something like five hundred different titles. The margins have never been that good on books. They're heavy to ship. They're expensive to produce. There's not much pie left for the publisher after the bills are paid. You have to spend money to promote it, and pay the author royalties. Amazon asks for a fifty five percent discount, and I pay the freight. Then they start ordering three copies of a book. Anyone in wholesale knows it's just as easy to pack up forty books as it is to pack up three. You're being nickel-and-dimed labor-wise to deal with them. I'll still do it, because I have to, but it makes me mad.

How has V/Search been able to survive in that environment?

It's been extremely tough. That's all I can say. I don't really want to talk about it. The experiences I've had have been strange; I went from having really a yuppie income to having the income of a person on welfare. But I came from punk rock. I actually grew up on welfare. During the punk rock period, nobody had any money. Well, yeah, it turned out later that there were trust fund kids pretending to be poor like the rest of us. Still, in the punk rock days, we would go to art openings early just so we could eat all the food. That's how desperate we were. That's why everyone looked so skinny.

Do you feel that you're still printing really important work? Do you think it will have a legacy?

Somewhat more of a legacy than others, I'm finding. For example, the two books I did on the zine underground arced real fast. I put the first book on the zine movement. That was another sort of fad, as it turned out. Fad in an economic sense. I put out the first book and then about a dozen corporate books on zines came out after mine. Mine was the first to market. What was the mission statement of the zines book? It was really to interview people and tell how they self-publish. We're also saying that almost as a necessary right of passage in this society, everybody – I don't care who they are – should do a zine, just so they know what it's like to self-publish and to write and

[media]

express themselves, and maybe do some little drawings. Everyone – it doesn't even matter how great they are. It's not for other people. It's for yourself.

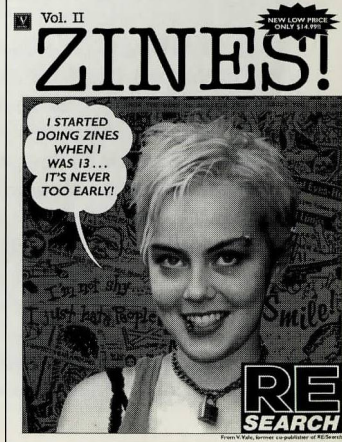
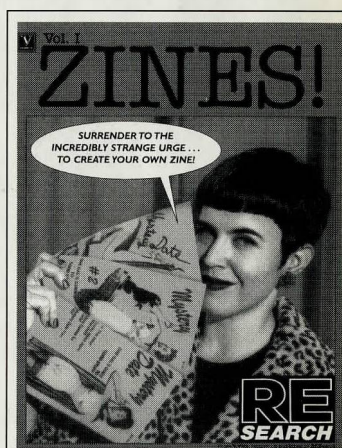
Do you see anything with that independent, creative potential coming out now? The zine movement is sort of slowing down.

I think humans were made to transmit things to each other, to personalize them. The Internet is totally different. You're putting it up there, and once in a while you'll get an email. Even today I got a call from someone stuck up in Nashville, Tennessee who's going to send me a money order for some books. She said, "I'm so grateful that you do your Internet newsletter once a month. There's just nothing happening around here, and at least it makes me feel that something's happening somewhere." I mean, that's kind of pathetic in a way.

How do your interview books differ from those of larger, more conventional publishers or from what you can find on-line?

The freedom that an interview gives you is the freedom to range widely over topics all over the universe. You're not allowed that freedom in a novel. I mean, it's harder to attain that freedom in a strictly written piece, because you're supposed to stick to the point, you supposed to have a thesis you're developing, a few supporting thesis, and then a conclusion at the end which allegedly wraps up the way you started.

You're supposed to be able to graph out pieces. Especially commercial writing for places like *Atlantic Monthly* or *Harpers*. They all demand certain formulas for their writing, which I resent. I'd just love to read a piece that goes all over the map and doesn't necessarily have to reflect a structural unity in which the end reca-



My books were always trying to encourage people to find out what you can do that's creative, and do it, no matter whether it makes you wealthy.

pitulates the beginning. Why should the end have anything to do with the beginning? What you want the end to do is to be a door to some kind of future discussion. Here's what I don't like about watching television, and movies, to a lesser extent – the images are so powerful, the narration is so compelling that I instantly internalize them. Occasionally, this disturbing thing will happen. I'll have a dream, and in the dream I'll be accessing a memory that wasn't even mine. I had thought it was mine, but then I realized I took it from some damned movie. That never used to happen before. I can internalize someone else's experience as my own, which then leads me to another theory. It's one of the reasons I'm doing the new book on modern paganism. The pagans use this cornball phrase that makes everybody I know cringe – the Gaia theory. Basically, it's the belief that earth, or the world as we know it, is just one interconnected organism. We're just part of that huge organism. Even rocks are alive. Everything that has molecules in it is alive. The amount of water in our universe never changes. It's a strange thought, isn't it? I do think we're all connected. And I do think that we're all kind of one brain. The problem is that it's a faulty brain. The prevalent condition is based in, as Deleuze put it, a schizoculture. Maybe it's always been that way. Schizoculture refers to a culture in which everyone is schizophrenic in the sense that they're able to turn off a part of their conscience or themselves when they rip someone else off. After they rip someone off, their mind will work overtime to erect some kind of complicated, labyrinthine justification for ripping that person off. They have to have a self image of themselves as honest, as forthright. Everyone likes to think of themselves that way.

Is the Modern Pagan book an attempt to convince people to go back to something more holistic, to something more grounded?

It's just trying to restore something. I'm afraid the Modern Pagans project is destined to be as misunderstood as the swing project [Swing: The New Retro Renaissance]. The reason a lot of people for doing the first book, tracing the rise of this very brief neo-swing movement, is that they didn't look at it the way I did. Jello Biafra of the Dead Kennedys said, "why are you interested in swing? It's just a bunch of yuppies." He'd never even gone to a swing event, really. Other people said, "You know, they're just a bunch of bourgeois people getting dressed up." What

I saw in it, instantly was that this was yet another stage of the war that I've always been engaged in, which is trying to erase the dichotomy between the performer or speaker or superstar on a stage and the ten thousand people sitting in seats. There's something really unnatural about that. Talk about alienated consumption. Talk about reinforcing these paradigms of passivity – even though I hate the word paradigm. You know what clubs used to be for? They weren't supposed to be there to promote consumption. They were supposed to be a way of creating community. Remember that word? That word is so hackneyed now you almost don't dare use it.

Here's what I like about the modern pagan movement. There are a lot of people like me who are sociable, but are very happy being all by themselves, working on our own little projects. We realize it's important to really do something and not just consume all of the time. What's most important in our lives? I'll ask you, what is most important to us as humans? The two most important problems are anything to do with sex, and anything to do with death. They're very complex things you're going to be working on for the rest of your life. It's been said that life is nothing but a preparation for death. I've heard people arrogantly tell me that they're ready to die anytime, but I want to torture them to death and see if they still believe that. "No, please don't kill me. I've changed my mind. I want to live a little more." I think those are the heaviest problems we face as humans. Anyway, I think the pagans have definitely dealt with death in a public way better than anyone else I've ever seen. I went to the incredible Spiral Dance last October, around Halloween. It happens on the shortest day of the year, and during the longest night. Sort of the death of the sun, you might say. I was very impressed with what they did. Most pagans are very physical. You're not just sitting around as you would be in a church – in a bunch of rows in a box, looking up at usually a white guy on a podium talking at them. All pagan get-togethers are very participatory and very anti-hierarchi-

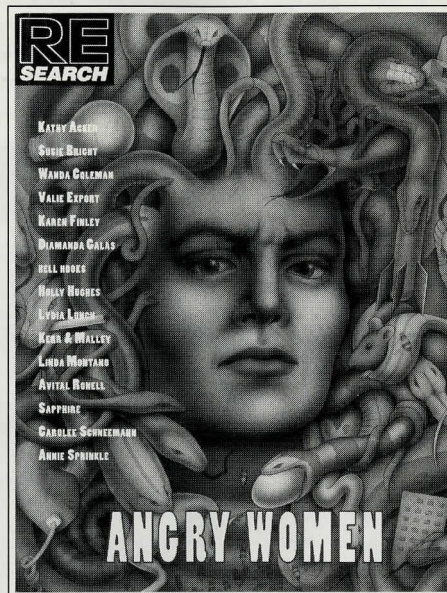
cal. At least, they avoid the appearance of hierarchy. There's a small group of people, every time who plan each get-together. Someone will get up and say, "Hi. Welcome. First we're going to ground ourselves. We're really happy that we have bodies. We love the earth. We all pledge to love the earth and all the beings and creatures on it, including ourselves. We're going to take some deep breaths. We're going to pay homage to the east, the west, the north, and the south and the four elements: fire, air, earth and water." They make you appreciate the earth and the fact that you have a body, and can feel pleasure, and all of this.

That sounds completely antagonistic to the sort of punk rock cynicism that comes out in a lot of the other projects that you've done.

I don't even think that punk rock was cynical. I think punk was certainly disparaging to authoritarianism, wherever it may be found. My books were always trying to encourage people to find out what you can do that's creative, and do it, no matter whether it makes you wealthy.

In the first place, I would never call myself a pagan. I don't like to be identified and categorized. Almost everyone I know doesn't like to do that anymore. We've learned our lesson. I will go to an occasional pagan event because they're closer than anyone else in dealing with death in a way that I find most reasonable. At the Spiral Dance, a whole bunch of people gave talks on the meaning of death and what might happen when you die.

There were some really great talks. They read a long list of more famous people who'd died in the past year. "These are the names of a lot of people who've died in the past year. When they're remembered, they live." Then at the end you have joyous spiral dance, as a sort of regeneration. You've been so immersed in the dark side for a while, and then you have the spiral dance, which is pure joy, and sort of sexual in a way. It's a very strange dance because dancing in a spiral, you're forced to be about as close as I am to you now, with every person in the room. There were one thousand eight hundred and fifty people in the room, and every person in the room passes before you this closely. ★



The Alien Tongue of *Necrophones*

Review by Mike Taylor



"Ok, so I've heard the new Lungfish record playing in the background a few times now, and I know what it sounds like."

"Oh yeah? What do you think?"

"It sounds like slow, plodding Adventure Metal."

There is a way in which songs get written that has become THE way in which songs get written: a sensitive or spectacular opening, a recurring theme, a repeated chorus, maybe a bridge. Some songs have an extended, repetitive ending that denotes their compatibility with frequent play on the radio or at dance clubs. Classical music (but *not* Baroque!) builds in patterns which purportedly facilitate human learning. Punk Rock has, in its short history, remained close to traditional rock forms, which are strongly influenced by blues. It claims its dissonance in its execution rather than the orchestration of the music.

Lungfish, of Baltimore U.S.A., is a rock group from the punk underground. They play a music that is truly dissonant and myopic while at the same time referencing the ubiquitous. The voice in which they speak on *Necrophones*, their 9th album, is not new to them. Theirs is a singular style weighing at the fulcrum of the opinion of an obviously small, specialized public within which many of us putatively revolve. As a listener, you may or may not enjoy the two-to-five minutes of a repeated riff and the same drum beat. You may or may not think you relate to, or simply enjoy, the lyrics to the songs. As Lungfish consistently Just Breaks Even with each record, but is Really Famous To People Who've Heard of Them, I don't plan to make a case for why you should start enjoying their music if you don't already.

In one of the more concentrated questions a band has ever asked of its audience, Daniel Higgs asked after the first song of a show I attended, "OK, do all the instruments sound like one instrument?" That was 1998, and it seems like that's what the band has been trying to do with itself: absolve the division among the percussion, the stringed instruments, the vocals and the warm static of the recording process itself. From the observer's point of view, there has been an emerging theme of unity and symmetry throughout the band's 11 years, culminating on 1996's *Sound in*

Time, on which each song appears at the apex of the Doppler effect. Each song sounds as though we are driving past music happening, immediately knowing its essence but never its beginning or end. The album that followed, *Indivisible*, seemed to turn on a lyrical axis. No longer was every song a lengthy dissertation or set of meta-hypotheses; instead, these songs invoked observation. That trajectory continues into the present, as do the more exsufficate dub influences often present in many late '80s D.C. bands.

The omnipresence of the instrumental on each album since *Pass and Stow* has served well to illustrate that Lungfish's songs are about music, and the lyrics are about language. One of the interesting points about some of the more fantastic lyrics in Lungfish music is that initially they invoke the disorientation of science fiction but upon closer scrutiny are simply beautiful illuminations of life in spirit and biology. And don't forget, one of the functions of science fiction literature is to establish a new vocabulary to expound upon ideas that can't be discussed within preexisting language.¹ Illustrations of the invocation of symmetry occur in attempted shifts of perception, such as in "The Words", the first song on the LP. It is straightforward - a pulse, a brainwave, a conversational tone of voice. The only drastic change occurs when all the music stops for four beats upon the lyrical line which says simply, "*the words, the words, the words, the words*" and begins anew, just the same. Is *The Words* - both the title of the song and the lyrical emphasis - a frustrated cry at the general pervasive and bankrupt nature of language, or is it a gentle acknowledgement of the listener and her power to interpret and communicate? There is a similar perceptual oscillation on the next song, *The Way*, where the title is the basis of each lyrical line, and seems to shift between subject and object. *The way you lie about the color of the sky* could be a personal address or an expansion of the manner of *The Way*; further:

O the way your simulacrum waits around

O the way you perforate our perception

The entire song is simultaneously speaking of and to *The Way*, a contradiction to the set of dichotomies that facilitate not only every aspect of social communication in our culture, but mediate the

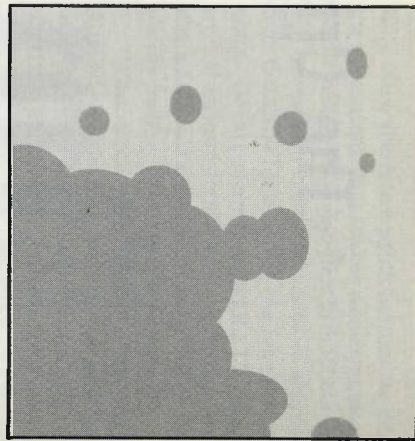
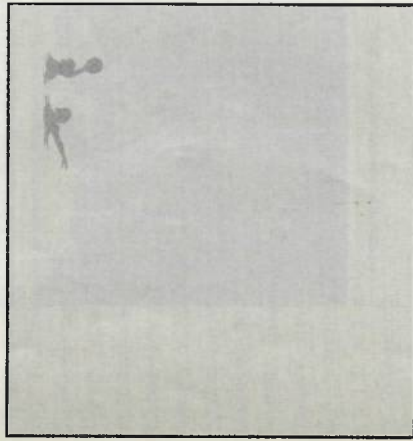
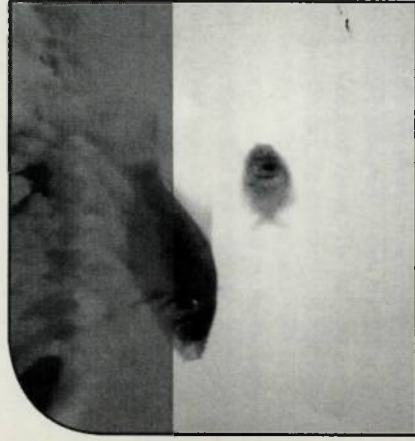
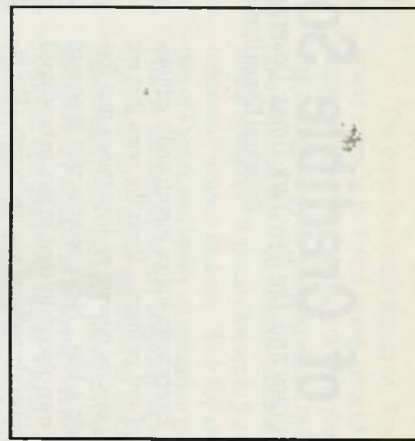
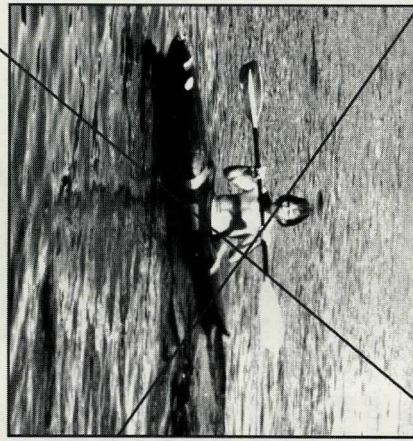
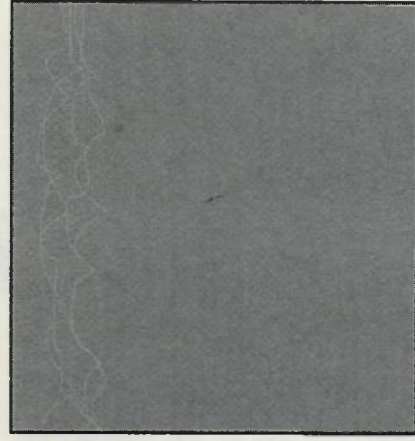
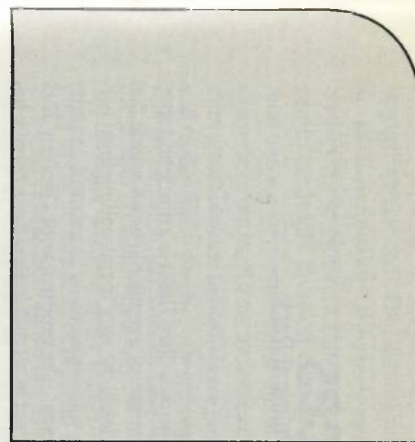
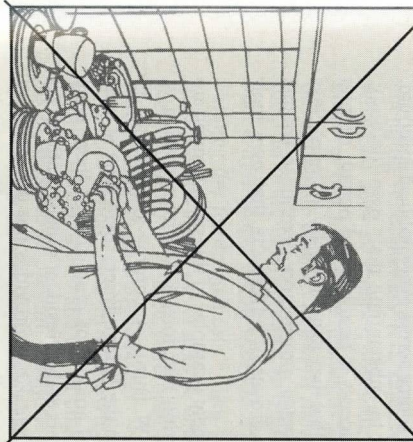
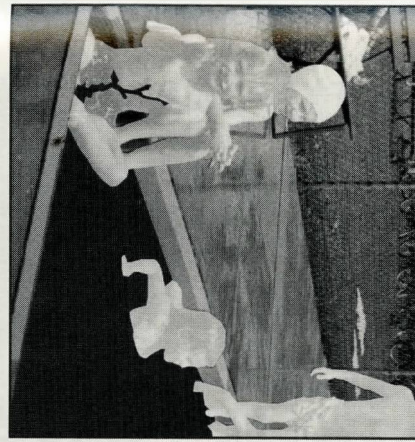
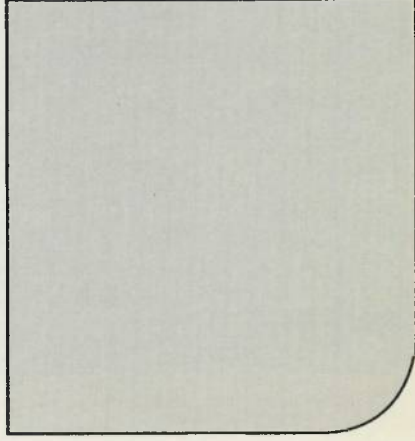
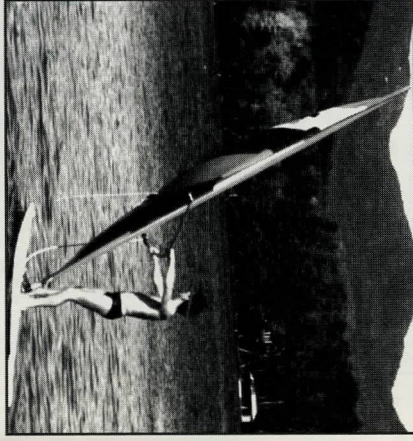
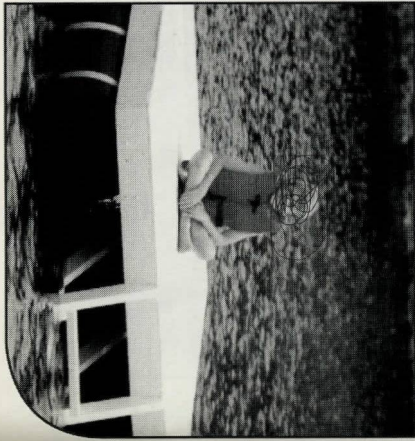
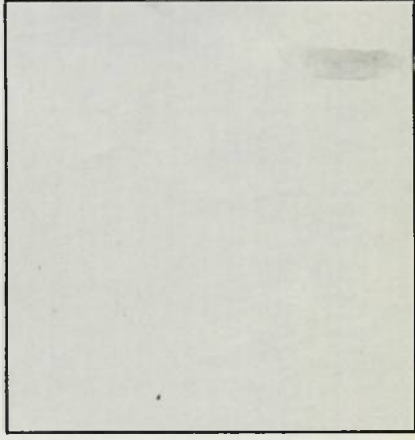
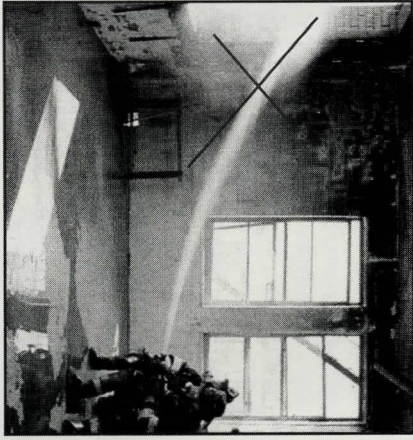
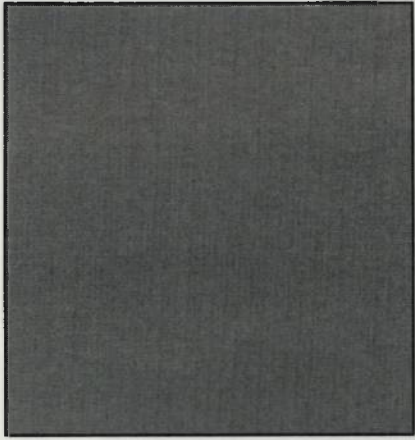
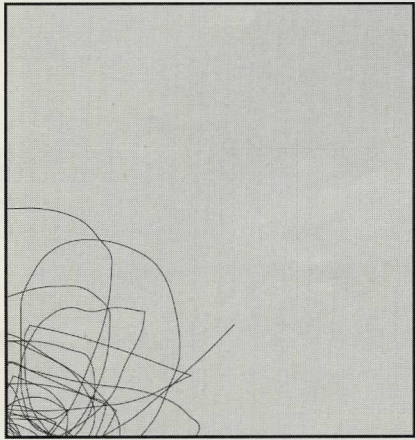
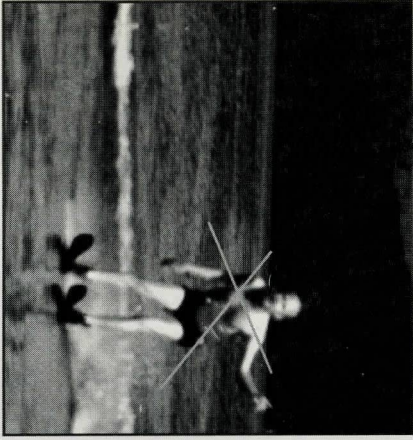
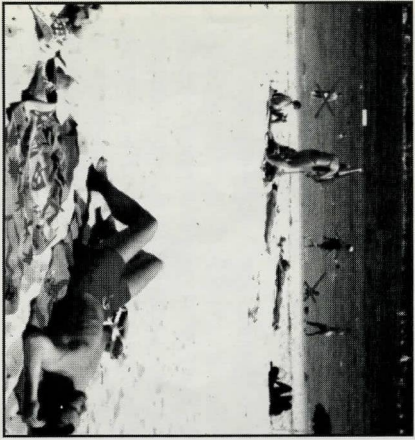
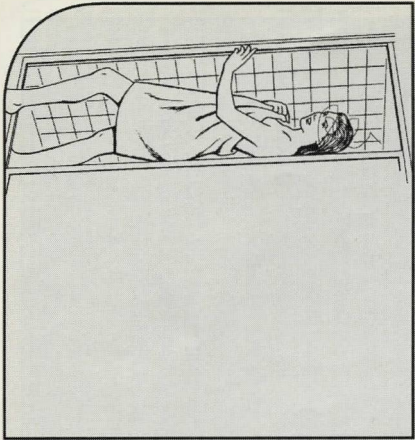
manners of communication upon which we depend.

Ultimately, this is what makes each new Lungfish record consistently exciting throughout the years. They are a band, not with a political rhetoric (and I don't mean to use the word "rhetoric" to say predictable or lessened; I don't think protest music is cheap or immature, though it is almost always bereft of creativity), but with a different way of constructing music. Each song seems to last long enough to say what is what is to be said within the confines of the craft of Writing a Song, while many traditional aspects of songwriting become dressing, only detracting from what the song is saying to the listener. Or what the listener is saying back to the song.

Not to sublimate what is, in essence, the release of a rock and roll record to the wealthiest nation on Earth; with it understood that Lungfish is an important band, this is not the apex of their career as musicians. I was curious about how the newest record would serve as an extension of more recent directions in which the band has moved. Would it be half-instrumental? Would instruments be introduced from outside of the studio rock canon? Will the music get slower? Will there be more studio effects to add texture and relate the songs to one another? *Necrophones*, like *The Unanimous Hour* and *Artificial Horizons* before it, seems to have a couple of anchor songs on each side, a couple of instrumentals, and a song or two that just leave me wondering what made the band decide to include them on the final cut. Not that I necessarily think it's fruitful to discuss what makes a song bad to me and good to you, but I begin to hear songs that are remarkably close to songs they've already written.² But I've yet to write nine original LPs, so my criticism isn't to be taken as altogether scathing; mind you. And yes, for the greater part, this record is slower than usual. However, I've seen many of these songs performed, and I know they are just as intense and captivating in the live context as any that has made me enamoured of the band. But for the record, grudgingly, *Shapes in Space* is an Adventure Metal Song in the finest *Technical Ecstasy*-era Sabbath tradition. ★

¹ See Kathy Acker, or even the *Dune* series, if you're a total nerd.

² "Sex War" sounds like "Space Orgy" from *The Unanimous Hour*.



The Crisis of Credible Sources

Media Accuracy and *The New York Times*' Coverage of Political Rock

By Richard Gilman Opalsky



Every news source is profoundly editorialized and political. Even the ones that are most precise operate on hypotheses that formulate a bias. News sources that announce their own objectivity tend, in fact, to be steeped in decisively political vantage points. The famous television news show *20/20*, for example, might be better named *80/20* in closer proximity to its preference for reactionary conservatism. From their coverage of straight-edge hardcore music to the Mumia Abu-Jamal case, *20/20* touts its own objectivity, while simultaneously presenting blundering hardcore punk kids and uninformed anti-death penalty activists. A hasty and unreasonable response to this kind of media is to demand heightened objectivity and the exclusion of bias. Such a demand takes for granted the fact that objective news sources, strictly speaking, are only possible if the people who collect the news subvert their own subjectivity. Hence, objectivity is a feat we should not anticipate too hopefully.

There are countless kinds of news people, from Amy Goodman and WBAI to Rush Limbaugh and his comrades-for-capital at ABC. Both of these talk show hosts operate their syndicated news shows on the assumption that objective media is impossible, and they bring us the news on the backs of their politics. For Goodman, mainstream media is a hand puppet for the corporations that fund it, and for Limbaugh it is a liberal propaganda machine. Magazines like *Clamor*, *In These Times* and *Z Magazine* are radically different than magazines like *Fortune* and *Maxim*, not just in their content, but also in their openly professed political biases. And yet, all of these publications are successful in a common way—they secure their market by making no pretense of their politics. For example, *Z Magazine* is committed to publishing coverage in distinct opposition to the tracts of dominant culture, while *Maxim* targets single, young republican men who have a very strong affinity for misogyny. But the former as well as the latter are all on the right track inasmuch as they have decided not to self-identify as objective mediums. They announce themselves and all of their biases on sight.

Then what are, if they even exist, the real media-based threats to an informed, resourceful and productive citizenry? These threats do indeed exist as a form of coercion found in the overwhelming influx of news that claims to be above partisanship, beyond its own politics and as dispassionate as the most successful sci-

entist. *The New York Times* is a prime and sparkling example of a reputable news source that secretly leads the way in railroading third parties and misrepresenting grassroots popular movements. The problem with *The New York Times* is not at all that it does these things, but that it has convinced its readers that it doesn't. Its successful campaign for its own objectivity¹ means people consider *The New York Times* a credible source across every political spectrum, looking to substantiate their own ideology. Their success is tangible and potent, despite the fact that they pander mostly to upper-class sophisticates, prospective penthouse tenants and the droves of advertisers that own their pages.

Recent examples of this phenomenon are the varying reactions to the inauguration of George W. Bush. According to a January 31 article in the *Village Voice*, there were at least an equal amount of protestors as there were supporters at the President's inauguration. Yet the *Village Voice* provides not one shred of coverage to the inauguration, opting exclusively for coverage of the protests to the inauguration. The *New York Press*, a paper that prefers to be much more politically ambiguous, featured coverage of the protestors and Bush supporters through a cryptic recounting of sordid events, which read more like a self-indulgent foray into artsy prose than anything we're used to thinking of as news. And finally, there's *The New York Times*, which seems to have not even noticed a protest just as massive, and probably a bit louder and more diverse, than the official inauguration. What an elusive protest this must have been, to have escaped all of the eyes of *Times*' journalists and the rest of the televised commercial news? Was it really unnoticed, or was it, rather, deemed less newsworthy than the celebration of President Bush?

Now, there is no point in sparring with *The New York Times*, and in this publication such a task is hardly possible. Perhaps only collectively, with a coalition of critical, independent media will we be sparring with *The New York Times*, and even that is something of a fantasy. The point is to illustrate the crisis of credible sources and other reputable burdens. For example, consider a December 31, 2000 article in *The New York Times* that attempted to provide coverage of political rock music. In the Arts & Leisure section there is an article by Ann Powers titled "No Last Hurrah Yet for Political Rock," providing the perfect opportunity to study the elusiveness of

[media]

feigned objectivity. The aims of this article are so elusive that all but the most scrutinizing readers of *The New York Times*, who also happen to be deeply involved with counter-cultural music movements on the radical left, will discover its errors. To my awareness, such enthusiasts of obscure radicalism are not the general readership of *The New York Times*. Hence, this particular article won an easy victory in the goal of credible objectivity.

Powers' article attempts to provide a summary of the current state of political rock music by surveying the fragmentary and diverse messages of artists such as Rage Against the Machine, Indigo Girls, Dead Prez, and a handful of others. Her summary illustrates what seems to be the characteristic disarray of the changing revolutionary left, represented by what she sees as separate subcultures. She observes that since these musicians are "without a Vietnam conflict or a civil rights movement to bring unity, politics is beginning to take a new shape, along with the leftist subcultures the music supports." But a critical question this article never asks is, what would there be to unite if there were only one subculture hinging on a single issue?

The article fails to acknowledge that politics take a new shape on an ongoing basis in response to present situations and that today's left is clearly responding to symptoms of the same objectionable machinery. In fact, the present social unrest is one that embodies the scope of social, environmental, and economic justice. The deeper realization that these three are inextricably linked is also a part of the general progressive consciousness. Social justice presses for equal rights, fair legal treatment and societal opportunities for all groups of people. Whether grouped by race, class, sexual orientation or gender; environmental justice advances the contention that human subsistence requires a healthy balance between the natural environment and the people who depend upon its cultivation and protection. With this contention, environmental justice opposes any agricultural or other business method that utilizes the natural environment only for the ends of profit maximization and development; economic justice has been newly realized in the United States within the context of globalizing capitalism. To an impressive extent, present social movements understand the fact that poverty is not caused by the poor, but imposed upon them. To understand any of the voices that substantiate today's movement for social change, one needs first to understand the nature of the movement. The way in which this movement coheres is not even the remotest allusion in Powers' article. Therefore, in its random survey of political rock music, *The New York Times* prints the proof for the claim that today's left is a piecemeal and juvenile collage at best.

The most important aspect of Powers' article is not to be found in any error of fact, since, as far as I can verify, it is quite precise. The article's deepest problem stems from its false pretense that it discusses a political sentiment upheld by "the most obscure to the most renowned" protest rockers. With the exception of Fugazi, and hardly an exception at that, Powers focuses all of her attention on musicians who have never managed to elude the mainstream press. She says "the most obscure" and gives us Fugazi as an example. Yet to those involved with grassroots music, Fugazi is undeniably amongst the most blaringly visible faces of the underground, and to call them obscure is comedic at best. Getting no more obscure than the rather renowned Fugazi, Powers pays passing attention to an extraordinarily popular face of a subculture while she presumes to have plumbed the depths of. To say that *The New York Times* article merely

scratches the surface is an understatement worthy of ridicule—a form of ridicule that such a credible and objective source is mostly exempt from.

Powers takes the break up of Rage Against the Machine as her prime case study. "The dissolution of Rage Against the Machine seemed to deal yet another crushing blow to the notion that self-defined activist artists could succeed. . . . Rage Against the Machine apparently had much in common with the diffuse grassroots movements on today's left—each participant had his own agenda, and when push came to shove, the band members couldn't unite," writes Powers. Now there is no doubt that if I had to restrict myself to the commercial music industry, I would wholeheartedly commend the political aims of Rage Against the Machine. But it seems quite clear to me that when we discuss a subculture, we must, by definition, not be discussing the commercial music industry. Perhaps I would thank Rage Against the Machine for raising some bit of mass consciousness through their brand of 'political rock' but these politics are maintained cosmetically as long as their protestations make millions of dollars for the industries they detest. Let's not be too soft on pop-stars with radical rhetoric. It is one thing to appreciate their messages and be an active proponent for the causes they side with, but assuming an ignorant innocence of their own complicity in endorsing the grip of dominant culture is a bit lofty to me. When rhetorical heroes success-

fully make alternative politics assimilate into the mainstream, they weaken what it means to be alternative. Any opposition to the commercial mainstream cannot be vested in alternatives that thrive because of it. As John Zerzan notes, "David Letterman mocks the TV industry and his own format while enriching media; who would really be surprised to see explicitly 'radical' angles presented there?"¹

Whether you are or are not a fan, Rage Against the Machine were anti-capitalists working for the endless accumulation of capital. They were undying critics of pop music, simultaneously installed as the newest and hippest pop music makers. Rage Against the Machine made it hip and yet somehow still political to sell Che Guevera, like countless

Rage Against the Machine were undying critics of pop music simultaneously installed as the newest and hippest pop music makers. They made it hip, and yet somehow still political, to sell Che Guevera like countless numbers of scented candles . . . The efforts with revolutionary value are always alternatives to what defines the mainstream— never what define it.

numbers of scented candles. The main problem with seeding popular protest in the popular music industry is that radical movements for social change are always below the surface, mobiliz-

ing out of sight. When you trade in such obscurity for the perks of an industry you lose your radical edge. I am not denouncing things that enjoy mass acceptance, but simply emphasizing the point that such forms of entertainment are not revolutionary on the grounds that the revolutionary presents itself as an alternative to that which is mass accepted. The efforts with revolutionary value are always alternatives to what defines the mainstream— never what define it. If we agree that radical movements for social change take place outside of, or in opposition to, the commercial mainstream then we see the disconnect between what Powers treats as "the underground of activist artistry" [I am unsure why this is in single quotes. It reads like a quote, hence the replacement, but if it is not a direct quote then all quote marks, single or double need removed] and what actually exists as such.

There is a serious problem with all that I have said in response to this particular article in *The New York Times*: The only reason I had for questioning its credibility is my own involvement with hardcore/punk culture. Only by virtue of my first-hand experience could I see the chasm that separates the real phenomenon of political rock from the one characterized in her piece. I have no doubt that any person unfamiliar with this sub/counter culture would accept the Powers article as the credible overview it pretends to be. The implications of this are far-reaching enough to grab each and every one of us by the throat.

[media]

What is your first-hand experience with the conflict in the Middle East, Indonesia, the Pacifica Radio corporate takeover, and slavery in the Sudan? I know about these situations only through the reports of others. And while it is true that I get my reports from journalists who were actually on site in the West Bank and the president's inauguration, so too were the journalists who rationalize Israeli military violence and ignore protestors in Washington, D.C. The fact is that the reporters from Fox News bear first-hand witness the same Republican National Convention as do the reporters stationed in the Independent Media Center. Needless to say, all of our sources select what gets coverage. The media flaw that leads to the spread of stupidity is not a flaw of selective sources, but of selective sources that claim not to be.

A particular crisis of the credible sources within mainstream media is the ease with which they maintain their credibility. There is a disproportionate burden of proof. Certain sources of news are so much a part of our collective consciousness, and are so much responsible for the American mind, that only the alternative perspective carries the burden of proof. We all know people like this: They want us to articulate the every cause of our position, not because it is hard to believe, but because it is an uncommon position! We progressives are always asked to painstakingly substantiate each premise against the unchallenged premises of commercial news media. This is not a compliant, since painstaking proof is a good thing, and something we should seek to accumulate as we build new perspectives. So the crisis is not with burden of proof alone, but with the politics behind who has to carry it.

Consider the fact that the National Dairy Council's famous milk ads repeatedly assert the health benefits of dairy products. Yet modern nutrition challenges these claims in every place from the mainstream Dr. Benjamin Spock to holistic and alternative Drs. Gary Null and Dean Ornish. So is cow's milk healthy or not for beings other than calves? One answer is that it depends who you ask, but there is no denying that the majority of our nation continues to trust in the wholesome goodness of milk without knowing why. Most people, I suspect, would say that milk is healthy, "Well, because it is milk" or because "We cannot grow up big and strong without it." Meanwhile, alternative views take into account the facts that 80 percent of the Asian population, 70 percent of the African/Black American population, 60 percent of Mediterranean peoples, and 50 percent of Mexican Americans are lactose intolerant.² And yet these numbers will need to be substantiated for decades before they gain any credence. There is an obvious rebuttal to this example—namely that diet is cultural, and that we cannot reduce this problem to a mere disproportion between cred-

ible sources. I would agree, but what would happen if more people began to demand some evidence of milk's wholesome goodness? What if people wanted proof for the most common principles of their cultural life? What if we gave more credence to alternative perspectives, and shifted some of the burden of proof onto the back of the conventional food pyramid? I wonder what kind of evidence we would get. No matter the situation, if we don't question our reputable sources, then we may start to believe that war crimes are humanitarian interventions and that John Ashcroft is not such a bad guy after all.

In a world where it is so easy it is to buy reputations, "What is a reputable source, and why?" is not a bad mantra to choose. What we all do, but are afraid to admit, is to see how far we can go in supporting our own ideolo-

gies. The most shameless and proud smokers would love to find a study that asserts the health benefits of cigarettes. And vegetarians celebrate the studies that firmly laud the unhealthy consequences of meat-eating. We should not reject truth in favor of perspectivalism, but we must realize that perspectives help to shape the truth. Powers writes about an approach of protest rock: "stealing the spotlight at whatever level it becomes available, is creating a new activism." But perhaps this "new activism" is somewhere else, where Powers and *The New York Times* have failed to look. Perhaps protest rock, despite Powers and *The New York Times*, lies beneath the surface that better suits their views. ★

¹ John Zerzan, *Elements of Refusal*, pg. 262

² Paul Pitchford, *Healing with Whole Foods*, pg. 109

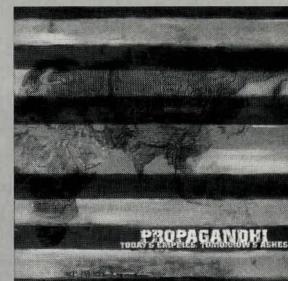
Propagandhi

Today's Empires, Tomorrow's Ashes

First, please allow me to address the thickening murmur of people who have heard the album and suggest that most people will not like Propagandhi's new effort because it is too metal and not what people are used to. Acknowledging such metal-ocity, I would like to say that people have spent the last four years listening to such shitty, vapid punk and hardcore that they will not like this album because it is punker and harder (yes, I can say that) than anything you've heard in your relatively short existence.

In other words, claiming that this release is too metal is essentially admitting that this CD is out of your frame of reference for what punk actually is and what hardcore could be. This is breakneck punk with political lyrics that take aim at oppressors and assholes alike. It's been over four years since their last effort, and these fourteen tracks are only a tease of how great this band is. The CD contains a brilliantly-designed multimedia experience (by G-7 Welcoming Committee Records' Derek Hogue) that features critical commentary by Propagandhi, Ward Churchill, and William Blum. Propagandhi believe that people are smarter than they are given credit for being, and for this simple assertion, you owe them a listen. Knowledge is Power. Arm Yourself. — Jason Kucsma

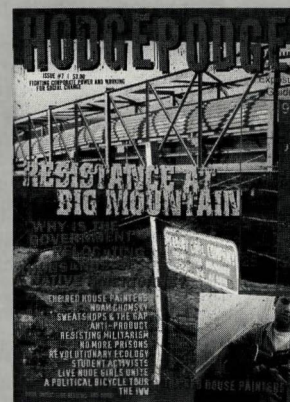
available from Fat Wreck Chords. PO Box 193690. San Francisco, CA 94119-3690. www.fatwreck.com



Hodgepodge #7

Claiming its mission as "fighting corporate power and working for social change," *Hodgepodge* is an excellent zine that fulfills its mission with an equal emphasis on politics and culture. *Hodgepodge* fills its 100 pages with accessible content that focuses on progressive issues through the voices of people working to effect social change. Interviews with Noam Chomsky, Anti-Product, the Prison Moratorium Project, Student Activists, and strippers working to unionize the sex industry complement essays exposing the relocation of Native Americans, your tax dollars at work in the military industrial complex, and sweatshops. *Hodgepodge* reads like a loved sibling of *CLAMOR* with its devotion to documenting a variety of voices in one magazine. Highly recommended. We're glad to be in the same family of independent media that is both critical of the status quo and celebratory of the people making a difference. —Jason Kucsma

available for \$4ppd from *Hodgepodge*. 114 Anderson Pl. Apt. 10. Buffalo, NY 14222. www.hodgepodge.burnit.net/





Covering Murder the American Media and the Al-Aqsa Intifada

by Steven Salaita

In the past months of violence, Israel has been condemned by human rights groups such as the UN (in eight separate instances), Defense Children International, the Al Mezan Center, Human Rights Watch, Peace Now, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Society, the Palestinian Center for Human Rights, Gush Shalom, and Amnesty International. Israel, the final garrison colonial force in Asia, is bound by international law to withdraw from all occupied territories in Palestine. Only the United States stands in solidarity with Israel as it undertakes what is on of the most vicious civilian slaughters of this century.

These facts should be reported in the mainstream American press. They aren't. What is reported, in contrast, is that Israel is an aggrieved nation under siege by wild-eyed Palestinian rioters. At best, the situation is presented as one in which two parties have competing claims to the same land and holy sites. *The New York Times* and *Chicago Tribune*, in particular, have a history of running articles supporting these sorts of assumptions. All the press attention devoted to the presidential election and the newly-appointed cabinet gives the illusion that the violence in Palestine has re-lented. It hasn't. In fact, Israeli military force continues to increase daily. This includes the deployment of live ammunition (high-velocity steel bullets), snipers, anti-tank missiles, armored personnel carriers, and assault helicopters against unarmed civilians. As of early February, over 350 Palestinians have been killed and more than 11,000 injured. Over 70 of the deceased are children.

The way information is presented in the American media, presumably under the guise of objectivity, is in reality disgraceful and irresponsible. *60 Minutes*, for example, is considering running a story absolving Israeli soldiers of the videotaped death of 12-year-old Mohammed al-Dura, who has become a symbol of the Palestinian struggle. This only contributes to the latest Israeli PR claiming that Palestinian parents readily send their children to the front lines to be murdered. Even a Klansman would be hard-pressed to produce a more flagrant example of racism. It should be mentioned that inserting excuse making into the bloody aftermath of murder is, as critic Edward Said notes, an archetypal mechanism of colonization.

Palestine is an occupied land. Palestinians have suffered Israeli bullets and Israeli

racism long enough. The rioters seek the same thing as black South Africans and East Timorese in the past, and Native Americans in the present: freedom from foreign occupation and the ability to control their own lives under their own discretion. This simple fact is routinely overlooked in corporate media's coverage of recent events. As Robert Fisk of *The Independent* observes, "but on we go, reporting the Middle East tragedy with all our own little uncontroversial clichés and amnesia and avoidance of 'controversial' subjects. Such journalism is already leading — despite the extraordinary casualty figures — to a public view that the Palestinians are solely responsible for the bloodbath, that they are generally violent, untrustworthy murderers. I think this kind of reporting helps to condone the taking of human life."

Let me contextualize the conditions that have led to the recent Palestinian uprising and analyze the mainstream media's role in a two-fold framework: how they protect Israeli and American strategic interests by distorting or ignoring essential facts that are commonly reported across the world; and how this amnesiac approach shapes public perception of Palestinians by reinforcing stereotypes and, conversely, relying on their existence.

What Words Don't Say

Hanan Ashrawi, Stephen Shalom, and Noam Chomsky argue that context is needed in interrogating Palestinian unrest. This suggestion becomes more valid each time a purportedly impartial column appears in a major newspaper. Commentators are apt to discuss the current clashes as if they arose in a vacuum. Better evaluations explain that they are part of a continuum: mass displacement by force in 1948 and 1967; 33 years of military occupation; hundreds of thousands of imprisonments (usually resulting in torture, which remained legal in Israel until 1999), home demolitions, apartheid, live burials, illegal settlements, humiliation, and the permanent absence of human rights. Most importantly, we should never forget the attachment of Palestinians to their ancestral homeland, which they cultivated and for which they are willing to die.

The facts are striking. Approximately 700,000 Arabs were driven from Palestine in 1948, and thousands more in 1967, actions that can only be described as theft, brought to fruition through absentee landlord sales, calculated

murder (Deir Yassin, Tantura), and the destruction of over 400 Arab villages within pre-1967 Israeli lines. Since June 1967 Israel has expropriated at least 5,893,000 dunums of Palestinian land, which amounts to 73 percent of the West Bank/Gaza territory. During the same time frame, Israeli authorities have demolished over 6000 houses within this territory, as well as 2500 homes in Arab East Jerusalem (in direct violation of Article 53 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits home destruction, and to which Israel is a party).

Since Ehud Barak took office, settlement activity — the single most important reason that real peace cannot be achieved — has increased dramatically. Over 40,000 housing units have been built or are awaiting construction. Ninety percent of West Bank water is used for the settlers, who comprise one-tenth of the population. The State of Israel controls over 90 percent of historic Palestine. Rather than scolding Palestinians for placing their children in danger, perhaps our jingoistic moralists might wonder why settlers would risk the lives of their children by occupying a land that isn't theirs.

Palestinians inside Eretz Israel, who constitute 20 percent of the total population, have none of the rights supposedly afforded the subjects of a democracy. They are not allowed movement, receive substandard education, remain segregated, and, during the recent clashes, have been displaced and murdered en masse. Israel is the only "democracy" that routinely uses live ammunition on its own citizens. When Israeli Jews have held rallies, as they do often, soldiers have never opened fire, not even with rubber bullets.

This isn't lost on the international community, which continues to support the Palestinians in their independence struggle. On December 1, the UN General Assembly adopted five resolutions dealing with issues at conflict. They are as follows:

1. The Assembly determined that the decision of Israel to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the Holy City of Jerusalem was illegal, and, therefore, null and void.
2. The Assembly also deplored the transfer by some States of their diplomatic missions to Jerusalem in violation of Security Council resolution 478.
3. The Assembly authorized the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Pales-

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tinian people and to give special emphasis to the need to mobilize support and assistance for them.

4. In its action on the Special Information Programme on Palestine of the UN Department of Public Information, the Assembly requested the Department to continue its special information programme for the biennium 2000-01 and to promote the Bethlehem 2000 Project.

5. The Assembly stressed the need for commitment to the principle of land for peace and the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and the need for immediate and scrupulous implementation of the agreements reached between the parties, including the redeployment of Israeli forces from the West Bank."

The United States, on the other hand, which either abstained or dissented from the above resolutions, continues to implement its own brand of imperial justice. On October 25, the House of Representatives passed resolution 426 (365-30), which exclusively places Palestinians at fault for the violence. More recently, in what The Council on American-Islamic Relations [CAIR] terms "Nuremberg-style legislation," Rep. Robert Andrews (D-NJ) has introduced a bill that would "require the Attorney General to establish an office in the Department of Justice to monitor acts of international terrorism alleged to have been committed by Palestinian individuals or individuals acting on behalf of Palestinian organizations and to carry out certain other related activities."

The United States ardently supports Israel in its defiance of applicable international law (to the tune of over \$3 billion annually). As a result, it is gradually becoming more and more isolated from the currents of international policy. Government thuggery has often left the United States detached from both human rights accountability and the respectability it claims to hold. Because of America's latest intransigence, Palestinian civilians, who refuse to accept the miserable conditions under which they live, continue to starve and die.

Media Discourse in the Public Realm

The media remain a powerful mechanism for influencing public opinion and perception. This becomes remarkably clear when assessing the assumptions underlying American coverage of the Middle East. It is difficult to say whether the media are conscious participants in American jingoism. At times, well-intentioned writers simply echo the dogmas of an educational and political system geared toward inducing obedience to the so-called national interest. This is certainly the exception, however. Regarding Palestine, it is ultimately laziness and cowardice that causes domestic reporters to overlook the overwhelming evidence of Israeli war crimes and human rights violations.

Certain depictions are sickening. Florida's 8th district Republican House candidate, Ric Keller, remarked, "I think Palestinians are lower than pond scum." George Will, always a reliable autocrat, has likened Arabs to Nazis. Says Scott Shuger in *Slate Magazine*: "And then there are the pictures [of Palestinians killing two Israeli soldiers]. The most unforgettable, credited to Agence France Presse, appears on everybody's front — in it, a piece of shit posing as a human being is only too proud to show the other turds below that in the West Bank, 'having someone's blood on your hands' is not just a statement." Shuger is mysteriously silent about the murder of Palestinian children caught on tape. This is more than a double-standard. It is institutional hate finding an acceptable avenue of statement. Stan K. Sujka of *The Orlando Sentinel* makes his contribution to this trend by writing, "The hate germ, fed to children by their mothers and fathers, encourages kids to throw rocks and Molotov cocktails at Israeli soldiers. These children are fed hate by the same adults who chauffeur them to the riot areas."

These overtly racist statements create space for tamer comments that nonetheless rely on their more egregious counterparts for validity. For instance, Deborah Sontag of the *New York Times* claims that "[t]he Palestinians have turned the Jewish communities, always points of friction, into the targets of their rage. With considerable backing from the Palestinian population, Palestinian gunmen have declared open season on the settlers and soldiers in their midst." This echoes the sentiment of the *Wall Street Journal*, which explains, "But as little Israel again comes under siege — from Hamas terrorists, Tanzim militiamen, Hezbollah guerrillas as well as sanctimonious Westerners it bears notice that this little country remains free, and brave and, it now seems, a little wiser."

I will bypass commenting on the absurd nature of these passages and instead focus on the culture that grants them legitimacy. First of all, the notion that Israel is a democracy surviving against great odds because of and under siege from its intractably aggressive neighbors is the most prominent assumption underpinning Israeli rhetoric. More importantly, the conceptualization of settlers as innocent victims crystallizes the groundwork of Israel's existence. At base, then, it is always Israel which is to be pitied for its difficult conditions. All the facts, easily-obtainable from thousands of sources, suggest the very opposite; and yet they are distorted to the point where the aggrieved become the aggressors, which reveals the ability of centralized discourse to shape public compliance.

This makes sense only when contextualized in perpetuity. Beyond the obvious benefits for the United States in having what essentially amounts to a fifty-first state in the Middle East, a broader imperial nature marks

American involvement overseas. This is tied to corporate demands and strategic advantage. It also verifies the continuity of violence and its accompanying narration. At no point in the history of the United States has it failed to be an aggressive colonial state. The nation was built on genocide, policies that continue into the present; the threadwork of American discourse was thus formed in the same manner that colors Israeli polemic today.

Selective Memory

American journalists who tout the glories of Israel would do well to look at the facts, as is the case in the rest of the world, where Israel is accurately portrayed as the aggressor. Instead, we are treated to Madeline Albright and a collection of flag-waving moralists who whine that enough isn't done to aid the suffering nation. Once again, reality is forfeited in order to promote the interests of the military power. Numerous historical precedents exist for such activity. As Edward Said has observed, Israel's behavior parallels that of every classic colonial nation-state. Its discourse is certainly no exception.

The broad solutions for peace are available to anybody who cares to break dogma and liberate memory from the throes of mainstream policy analysis. The most important concern is dismantling the settlements, which, at base, are the primary source of Palestinian suffering. That the Israeli government is willing to endure warlike conditions in order to indulge the desires of 200,000 "bigots," as Uri Avnery dubs them, is fantastical almost beyond comprehension. Beyond this, Israel must confront and acknowledge its brutal history. One way to do this is returning Palestinian refugees to their rightful homes. Reinstating Jerusalem under Palestinian sovereignty, which international law mandates, is also compulsory.

These suggestions, of course, are simply the broadest points of extremely complicated circumstances. They are, however, accepted as elemental to the Palestinians and the international governing bodies monitoring the situation. Although our domestic media tend to depict these realities as irrational Arab demands, one thing remains clear to all involved: that the Palestinians will continue fighting until their freedom—and, by extension, land, housing, and dignity—is restored.

It is not only the Palestinians in the occupied territories who take up this fight, though. Also involved are the concerned Americans who have staged a record number of protests and rallies of late. For in the end, it is not only the Palestinians who suffer as a result of Israeli occupation, but also the Americans who have murder so generously bankrolled in their name. ★

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Some Thoughts on Accountability:

Dealing with Oppression and Abuse Within Our Communities

Rus Ervin Funk

This article is a response to "Oreo-Cookie Feminists" by Loolwa Khazzoom, published in the August/September issue of clamor. I am the "Rus" she identifies. I found her writing enlightening, and want to thank her for the courage it must have taken. Her article has given me an opportunity to continue looking at my behaviors and attitudes (even those, in this case, that are more than 8-years-old) and confronting my sexism and other oppressive or privileged behaviors.

This is not a response in the traditional sense. Suffice it to say my memories are very different and, where our memories are similar, our perspective and interpretation of the events differs. There have been plenty of "he said she said," and I find those kinds of discourse neither helpful nor beneficial, don't experience those situations as community building, and the results are neither progressive nor radical. Rather than argue about whose memory is more accurate, or whose perspective more correct, I want to explore the substantive issues identified in Loolwa's article — the importance and value of dialogue, defining accountability, self awareness, and our innate ability to grow, move and develop.

Finally, I want to acknowledge that Loolwa experienced our relationship as hurtful. That was not, in any way, my intent, and I am truly sorry that she was hurt.

ON DIALOGUE AND COMMUNITY

How important is dialogue to building community and to maintaining our radical movements for social change? What is the role of dialogue in accountability?

It is crucial that we all have a voice. In addition, it is essential that those who have historically been oppressed be listened to more carefully than those who are part of a class of people who have historically oppressed others. However, is talking the point of having a voice?

I submit that talking—and with talking, listening—particularly in the context of accountability, is a means to an end. That end is dialogue—dialogue with the point of coming to a better understanding from which we can find or

create meaningful solutions. Dialogue for the sake of dialogue is precisely what many of us are organizing against—in one form or another. For in the end, such talking is fruitless. In order for dialogue to be transformative, progressive, and to have any true meaning, we must move beyond talking in order to hear ourselves speak and dialogue for the purpose of pointing out how "wrong you are," or for the sake of proving a point. We must move toward dialogue for the sake of transformation and progression, and to find (or create) meaning.

Having a dialogue means acknowledging that we see the world through a particular lens. My experiences of being abused as a child, gang-raped as an adult, pistol-whipped, gay-bashed and otherwise assaulted; receiving hate mail and death threats, arrests and police harassment; being publicly confronted on my sexism or racism and held up as "an example," all create a lens through which I view my current and future experiences and a perspective from which I interpret these experiences. Dialogue is an opportunity for me to notice: I have a lens/perspective; and my lens/perspective for what it is—a lens that skews my vision; a perspective that alters my view. It is not *necessary* to judge my lens or perspective. It is enough simply to notice that I don't have the same view as others and part of the difference is a result of my experiences. This is the beginning of understanding—both understanding where I am coming from, and my understanding better where the person(s) with whom I enter into dialogue are coming from.

While not necessary, it is critical — especially when dialoguing about abuse or oppression — to examine the lens through which we view and judge our world. Because of both the ways that I have been hurt, and the ways that I've been privileged, there are things that I miss or exaggerate. I often do not see my hurtful behaviors — particularly when those behaviors are an expression of my privilege. Through dialogue, I can come to better understand my behaviors, the ways they are hurtful and, ultimately, develop a deeper appreciation of the ways that my privilege harms others.

My personal experiences inform my perspective of the world as, simultaneously and paradoxically, both a dangerous place (and by extension, you a potential threat) and a wonderfully soothing and healing place (and by extension, you a potential ally). I have been harmed many times. Several of these have been threats to my life. I believe utterly that it is because of community that I am still here. It is my own power, coupled with the love and support of amazing, care-giving people who sur-

rounded me, that got me back on my feet every time I got knocked down. My power does not come solely from me — it comes from the universe, and the community of which I am a part.

Dialogue helps to me remember, recognize and honor both my experiences and the lessons I have learned from those experiences. In addition, dialogue helps me to recognize there are others who have had both very similar experiences — with different results — and people who have had very different experiences. Their experiences, too, result in a perspective on the topic of dialogue. It is through dialogue that we come to better understand oneself and each other, that we all become more enriched, and, through true dialogue, that we better understand issues of abuse, oppression and privilege — the very issues that Loolwa raises.

So the question becomes, how do we enter dialogue with people who have hurt, disappointed, offended and oppressed us? It often feels unsafe to enter a dialogue when we've been hurt. It triggers the times we have been harmed, the times we haven't been heard, and the times our pain has been dismissed. To enter dialogue at this point takes enormous courage and strength. It also takes community. As Loolwa describes in her article, it was through gathering with others who *heard* her that she was able to gather the courage to confront me. The same process can be used to enter dialogue with those who have hurt us — a dialogue that can be transformative for both parties, and ultimately, progressive for the movement as a whole.

It is by dialogue that we begin the process of being accountable. It is through dialogue that I make an account of my actions. It is through dialogue that I understand the pain I have caused, and the ways that I can (if possible) begin to make amends.

ACCOUNTABILITY

What do we mean by accountability? What is "being accountable?" What does it mean to hold another accountable? What is the purpose of accountability? What responsibility, if any, do we have when we hold others accountable? How long are we accountable for our behaviors? What is the difference between accountability and blame, accountability and judgment, and accountability and punishment? And what of holding people accountable for the good things they do? We use the word a lot in our movements — and it is used endlessly in the movements of racism, sexism, homophobia and other movements of oppression — but what do we mean when we use this word?

To be accountable requires that we be clear

about to whom we are accountable, what we are accountable for, and what the point of being accountable is. As I suggested above, the point of accountability is to: accept responsibility, make amends, and find or create meaningful solutions.

Accountability, it seems to me, is the process of making an account. We have heard one account. There are other accounts as well: Jon, Phyllis, Ben, myself, Sven...all the folks who were mentioned by Loolwa, as well as several hundred that weren't. Each has an account of what they experienced. To varying degrees, these accounts relate to the issues raised here. It is through dialogue that we can discover the common themes and move towards meaningful solutions. It seems to me that, ultimately, moving toward meaningful solutions is the whole point of accountability in the first place.

Accountability is also a two-way street, in a couple of ways. Not only are we accountable for what we do wrong or how we've hurt someone else, but also for the things we don't do and the things we do very well. (This last one is often ignored in any discussions of accountability.) It is also two-way in that the persons holding another accountable have some accountability as well to the process, to the broader community and to themselves, as well as to the person they hold accountable.

Being accountable for hurting someone else, for example, begins with the process of making an account of what I did and why I did it, towards the purpose of making amends to the persons I hurt. (I want to emphasize here that making an account such as this is not being accountable, but just the first step.) This suggests that when we hold others accountable, we need to be open to them making amends to us. (In my mind, this is part of their accountability in the process.)

Being accountable in the process of holding someone else accountable also means that I need to be open to accepting responsibility for my own pain. There are times when people hurt me (being harassed because of my sexual orientation, for example). There are times when I get hurt by what people do or don't do (not being invited to a dinner party, for example). Although in both cases I am hurt, there is a difference. I have a responsibility to tease out where and when the pain is coming from before I hold someone else accountable (for the pain can be current pain or old pain that has been re-ignited by a current experience). Admittedly, this is extremely difficult. Determining if my pain is a result of your behavior, a result of my own baggage, or some combination of both is indeed a challenge. However, I suggest that this is necessary for my own continued development and growth, not to mention for the sake of fairness. It seems to me, that it is only by clearly defining where the pain

comes from that we can begin to hold someone else accountable.

Now I want to be clear. I am not blaming victims here. Having spent the past 20 years advocating for people who have been victimized, and having been victimized myself, that is the last thing on my mind. Nevertheless, I also know that as a result of being victimized (in addition to the results of just living life), I have *lots* of scar tissue. There are times when people act quite innocently. But for whatever reasons, it triggers my old not-completely-healed scars. I'm still in pain and, because I'm in pain, I am often angry. However, another person's current actions may not be the cause of the pain that I currently feel.

Accountability is not necessarily doing what someone wants you to do, the way they want you to do it. This is not accountability. It is manipulation. Dialogue is a critical aspect of accountability. Being accountable is a process where I listen to your concerns, attempt to put my defensiveness, privilege and self-servingness aside to hear the pain that you feel as a result of my behavior, and together, in process, we discuss ways that I can make amends.

Other questions about accountability relate to the questions of holding moving targets accountable. People move — we change, grow and develop. How do we hold people accountable for their hurtful behaviors as they continue to become aware of their hurtful behaviors and develop? Eight years is a long time. Am I the same person now that Loolwa described? Was I ever that person? Is there room, as we hold others accountable, to allow them to continue to

their own participation in oppression — and as such continue to become increasingly aware of their own hurtful acts, how do we hold these moving targets accountable?

Are there different degrees of accountability? Am I as accountable for what Loolwa described as I would be for making a racist slur, raising money for a male supremacist organization, "spanking" a child, or harassing one of my students? I submit that there are, in fact, different degrees of accountability and different techniques that we need to use to hold people accountable. This is not meant to minimize the pain. Pain is pain and it hurts. Disappointment is disappointment and it all kind of feels the same. However, it does seem to me that I need to hold anti-gay organizers to a different degree of accounting than allies who make heterosexist assumptions.

There are no innocent victims here. One of the wonders of being human is that we are all magnificently paradoxical. We are all both victim and abuser, oppressor and oppressed. The degree to which we do not embrace the totality of this paradox is the degree to which we are not fully human. As I'm sure we have all experienced, there are many less than fully human activists running around — people who are so "pure" that they can't (or don't) relate, people who are so sad or burned out they can't seem to move. I am in no way suggesting that we be proud of or celebrate our abusive or oppressor parts. I do think that in order to be effective as a movement, and as individual activists, we need to find ways to allow for this paradox. That means figuring out how to hold folks accountable when they screw up — even when they screw up big — without requiring that they turn in their activist position. Perfection is a little hard to come by. The human condition is simply too complex for simple binary thinking — either/or, victim/abuser, oppressed/oppressor, god(dess)/devil, good/evil or madonna/whore.

Those of us who work on issues of oppression and violence from positions of privilege related to that oppression (i.e.,

European-Americans against racism, men against sexism, heterosexuals against homophobia and heterosexism, adults against the oppression of children, middle and owning class against class oppression, etc.) walk this paradox daily. The privilege we benefit from — the same privilege that we are working against — is so pervasive, subtle and ever-present, that we often act out our privilege (and therefore act in abusive and hurtful ways to the very people we strive to be allies with) in ways that we are not even aware of. Yes, it is absolutely our response-ability to be aware of our privilege and the harm we cause when we act out of our privilege. Nevertheless,



I wish I could tell you that I will never again act in an abusive way; that I will never again be sexist, racist or ageist; that I am totally aware of all forms of my privilege and they will therefore never again be expressed; that I am always completely accountable. But I'd be wrong.

progress as human beings?

This growth also goes both ways. For example, I am now in my mid-30s. As I get older, I increasingly notice my oppressive behaviors as I interact with younger people. I consider myself and am considered an ally for children and youth. I continue to work on my own ageism and to uncover any ageist behaviors and attitudes — peeling them off and throwing them away. Nevertheless, behaviors slip by without my noticing. The point is, however, that I am moving and growing, as, presumably, we all are. So if people do continue to develop in their awareness of issues of oppression — including

[sexuality & relationships]

I for one also am blind to much of the privilege that I experience and act out of. As Bell Hooks says, "It is our collective responsibility as people of color and as white people who are committed to ending white supremacy to help one another. It is our collective responsibility to educate for critical consciousness (P. 194)." As this quote suggests, I sometimes need help in seeing my privilege. It is only by my being accountable to you in looking at my privilege and you being accountable to me in exposing my privilege to me, through a process of dialogue and developing a critical consciousness, that we can create transformative, progressive solutions.

Recognizing this complexity and paradoxical nature of humanity will only become more necessary as we continue to develop our skills in multi-issue organizing and activism. The issues intertwine – sexism and racism and classism and homophobia and oppression of children and violence and abuse and pornography and oppression of people who are differently-abled and oppression against the old, and and and... and are interrelated. In this kind of multi-issues organizing, more and more of us will find ourselves simultaneously one of the oppressed and one of the privileged. From this place, accountability and dialogue are crucial if we are to be effective. By being accountable, by entering dialogue, by continuing to be committed to increasing self-awareness, we can sustain communities based on the justice, care and compassion.

CONCLUSION

I wish I could tell you that I will never again act in an abusive way; that I will never again be sexist, racist or ageist; that I am totally aware of all forms of my privilege and they will therefore never again be expressed; that I am always completely accountable. But I'd be wrong. Truth is, I do hurt people. I am sexist, racist and ageist... and sometimes, just plain thoughtless. There will be times when I will act out my privilege and some of these times will be abusive. There will be times when I will not be fully accountable. This is not defeatist. On the contrary, it is realistic and necessary if we are to continue our personal growth and personal/social change. Becoming pro-feminist, anti-racist and anti-oppressive is a process – one that I am still in the midst of; one I continue to struggle with and grow from. Thanks to dialogue, I continue to struggle and grow. Through dialogue, I come to better understand the issues to which I have committed my life and soul, and better understand the complexity of the ways they are acted out in our life and world. In addition, through dialogue, I come to better understand accountability and the various processes of accountability that are necessary depending upon the specifics of the situation. These processes will only become more crucial as we better understand the ways we are all situated in both privileged and oppressed positions.

Being accountable (at least, striving to be accountable), entering dialogue, continuing to look at and critically examine ourselves... this is community building and community sustaining. And to me, this is the point. I am an anarchist because, in part, I understand that governments, hierarchy and bureaucracy destroy community. I am pro-feminist and anti-racist because sexism, racism and other forms of oppression destroy community. I am nonviolent because violence destroys communities. But being in community is risky business. As I described above, being in a community can hurt you. However, we can also heal in community. We strive for better in community. We can dialogue, make mistakes, grow, develop and mature in community.

I do not offer these thoughts as the answers. In addition, I hope that I did not evade the accusations made by Loolwa, nor dismiss her experience. The issues are more important than either of us and are deserving of a larger and deeper debate – one that is long overdue. I look forward to such a dialogue as we figure out ways to be accountable, hold others accountable and be in dialogue in a just manner. ★

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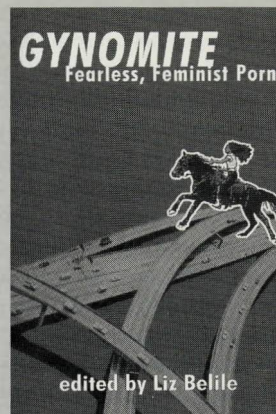
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GYNOMITE: Fearless, Feminist Porn

ed. Liz Belile (*New Mouth From The Dirty South*, 275 pp. \$14.95)

Reviewed by Jen Angel



I have to say right off the bat that I loved this book. Although this book bills itself as "Fearless, Feminist Porn," that just doesn't fit right to me. Where "pornography" conjures images of gross, overly-produced films or air-brushed magazines, this book is so much more than that. *Gynomite* the book follows a successful reading series, CD compilation, and web site, and features 25 different authors with 25 different perspectives on sex.

My favorite story is written by editor Liz Belile, "Thing fer Skinny." What can I say? This story is amazing. It has more depth, perspective, and completeness than any erotica a man could write. I don't know how, but Liz somehow got into my head and figured out all the things that turn me on. How could she know me so well? Skinny yet tough guys, tattooed arms, pierced genitals, punk rock, vegetarianism – everything the little countercultural girl in me loves. The story follows the protagonist through her infatuation with and first incredible date with Shannon – right up to the incredible sex. From the beginning flirtations to a little experimentation with pain and bondage, to anal sex, to a threesome with two hot guys. I'm getting excited just thinking about it.

The strength of this story is not just the sex. The story is complete. In a scant 15 pages, Liz describes the main character and skillfully gives you enough information about her past and present to understand who she is and what she wants. There are no holes or leaps of faith. This is a fantasy written just for females, without wimping out on the sex.

Another story I enjoyed was "Dancing With Daisy" by Tatiana De La Tierra. I did not like this piece because I found it erotic. It is a story of an experienced, butch lesbian meeting with a curious middle-aged housewife type who answers her personal ad. Their interaction is uncomfortable and awkward, difficult and in some ways disgusting. What I liked about this story was that you can feel the awkwardness in their meeting. It's as if you are in the room, feeling the tension. The interaction is completely real and honest. This is how it happens in the real world.

This book is simply about sex. The good, the bad, and everything in between. It is so multifaceted that there is something in here for everyone. There is domination, sex and attraction over 50, sex in public, golden showers, women with women, men with men, and women with men. There is a story (or two) about rednecks, about being a lesbian in a small hick town. There is a story about cleaning houses nude for a living.

You won't read this book just to get off, you'll read it to gain insight on how real women, not only straight, white women, think and feel about sex. It's not fearless because they aren't afraid to say "fuck," this writing is fearless because it portrays sex as it really exists, without the glossed over veneer of professional pornography.

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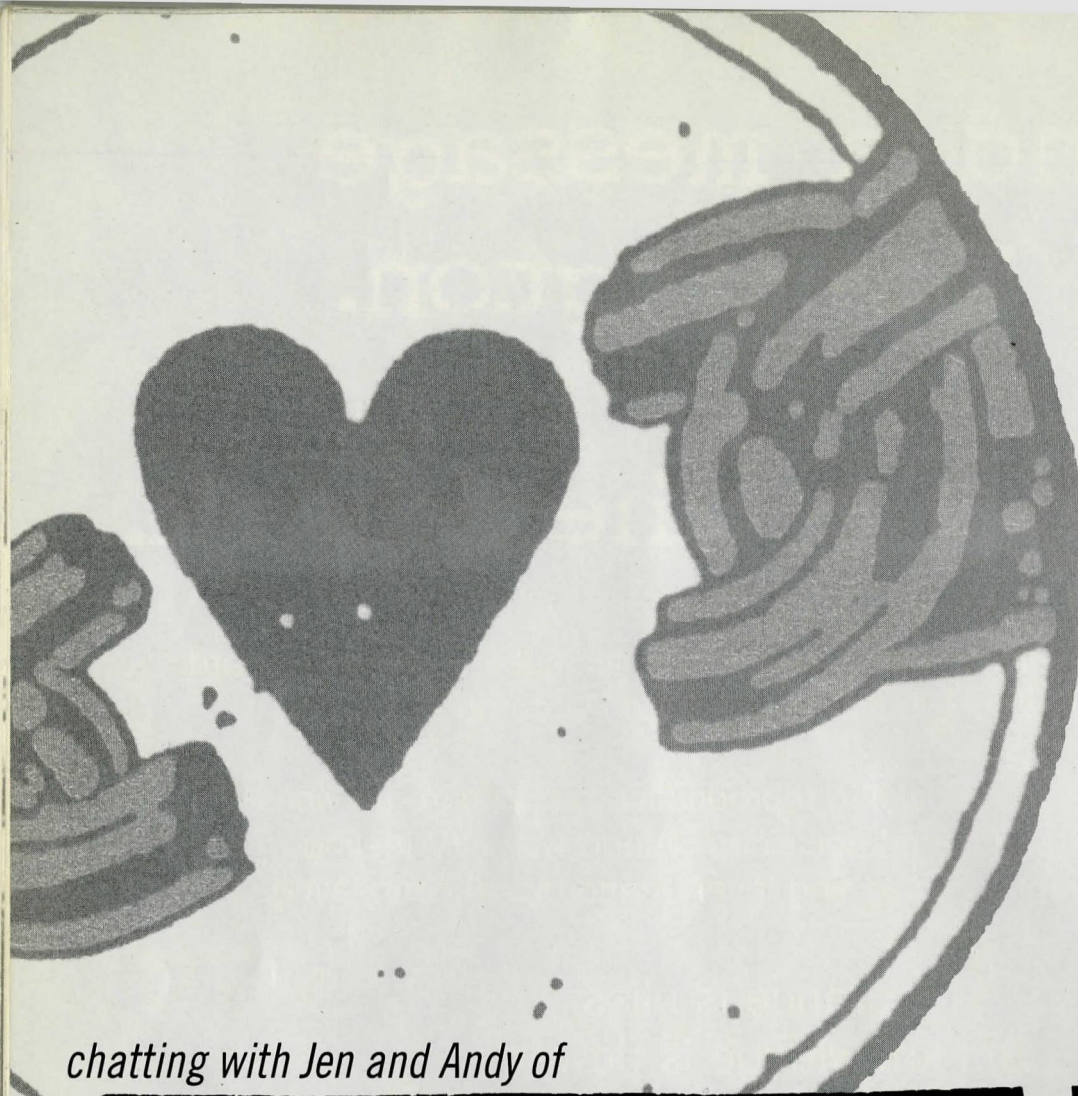
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chatting with Jen and Andy of

SUBMISSION

HOLD

Submission Hold is a brilliant union of human emotion, creativity and intensity. Playing hardcore music that challenges the aesthetic and intellect of the genre, Submission Hold has developed an international following that hinges on their ability to articulate beauty and rage simultaneously in their art. Jen and Andy shared a moment of their time to discuss their lives. Be inspired. Interview by George Sweetman.

[culture]

Clamor: A lot of your lyrics seem to be community oriented so let's talk about the community you live in, that being east Vancouver.

ANDY: I've lived in this neighborhood a long time and, well, it's horrible now. I think if I came here now I'd go "What the hell?" People come here and they wonder why we're living in this neighborhood because it's full of yuppies and horrible people. But it's only in the last five years they just kinda found out about this funky part of town with lots of artists and lefties and activists. Cheap food and rent and all that.

Is it staying cheap?

JEN: The rent has shot up like crazy. It's really hard to live around here cheaply. The only reason we can afford it is because we've been living here for seven years and our rent's only gone up fifty dollars. But I know a lot of people who have a really hard time if they want to live in this area

There's the yuppies and there's the gentrification, but there's also a really solid core of people who are genuinely into doing a lot of good. There's a bit of a tug-of-war between the yuppies who obviously move into a place because it's creative and cool, then want to sanitize it and suck the life out of it, and the people who are fighting that.

Right now there's a campaign going on with the Grandview/Woodland community police office. It's in Britannia Centre, which is right near Grandview park, which is a central meeting area. It's where a lot of community events happen — Food Not Bombs serves, Reclaim the Streets happens right in the street in front of the park. They want to move the community police station, which is two blocks away from the park, to the actual park. There's a set of bathrooms in the park and they want to convert those into a police station.

There's a real push from the yuppies, the so-called "productive members of society," and the new business owners who want the cops in the park. There's a LOT of people, the older business owners and a lot of people who use the park for political purposes, who don't want it to be policed.

ANDY: Or for hanging out or for getting high. It's like drug addicts aren't allowed to exist. It's obvious that there's a fucking huge drug problem in this city and it's obvious that there's huge amount of addicts. Where the hell are they supposed to go? There's no treatment center; there's no facilities to get people off dope yet there's huge amounts of it. There isn't even a needle exchange program in this neighborhood.

They tried to get one and the yuppies all freaked out. Said they didn't want the needle

exchange van coming around. There's no facilities for addicts in the whole neighborhood, so fuckin' "go to the park," ya know? It's like people are

"Oh, I'm afraid to go to the park because there's drug addicts there." Well, so what? Deal with it because there's addicts in this city. This city has so many addicts they're a part of the city. I wouldn't tell someone to choose that lifestyle but they're here. Fucking deal with it, don't just shut the park down.

JEN: When the needle exchange van was talking about coming around there was a community meeting and there was a woman there who actually said "Not in my backyard." Well, then in whose backyard? There's been over thirty prostitutes killed below the Hastings Street area in the past couple of years. If there was a community where people cared about each other and tried to make it safe for the people who lived there, including the drug addicts and prostitutes, then people wouldn't be getting killed and fucking dying. I Dunno (sighs)

ANDY: I don't think there's any easy answers but I definitely know that stepping up the police and having patrols in the park isn't the answer. They have these "citizen patrols" in the park now where people walk through and if they see someone panhandling they'll call the cops. If they see someone doing drugs, like smoking marijuana, and everyone in the fucking world smokes marijuana, especially in Vancouver — it's like marijuana town right? They'll call the cops. These are just citizens that walk around saying (said in big tough wanna-be rent-a-cop voice) "We gotta get this park cleaned up." If the park isn't used for marijuana then what the hell is it used for?

JEN: There's a curfew for ten o'clock. They don't want people sleeping in the park, they don't want people sleeping on the sidewalk, they don't want people sitting on the sidewalk. They don't want people panhandling; they don't

want people busking; they don't want people squeegeeing. It's like, "What the fuck?" Suck the very life out of the community.

ANDY: At the same time they're cutting back on welfare, telling people they can't have it. Shutting down treatment centers. So it's like you can't try and fend for yourself and you can't have anything off the state. Go die.

JEN: Then crime shoots through the roof, "Build more prisons!"

ANDY: Now they're painting murals. Yeah, that'll fix everything. Kick everyone out of the park and paint a mural, bring in another fancy restaurant.

JEN: Though, I do think the murals are involving community kids, which is a good thing.

ANDY: There's been a lot of art on the walls that they've taken down over the years.

JEN: It's not art to them. It's vandalism.

ANDY: I saw a good one. There was this yuppie restaurant that out front had painted a mural of a plant and someone came along with a spray can and wrote "No Graffiti." (Laughter)

This whole neighborhood is such a touchy thing with me. On the one hand I can't fucking stand it and on the other hand I'm really attached to it and feel a part of it. It's kinda like seeing your cousin who you grew up with going into business school, trying to dissuade him. You still love your cousin, running around being a kid but you see what he's going to become.

You also put on punk shows in your basement. Why do you feel that's important or even necessary?

ANDY: It got to a point where it was either rent a big hall for tons of money and lose all the money, because a band would



[culture]

The last thing that we had here was a live sex show! In our basement! It was this queer punk night. There was music and somebody was shoving rolling pins up his bum. Where can you do that?

come with no draw and you want to do a show for them but the only places we can rent is this 600 capacity place, then 20 kids show up. It was either that or do it in this one cafe where the owner was a horrible slimeball and this one woman in the scene was working there and ended up taking him to court for sexual harassment on the job. So we stopped doing shows there because of that. No one else did, which fucking pissed me off, because everybody knew about this and she wasn't down with people helping the guy out and giving him business but people kept doing shows there. So we were just "Whatever, we'll do it in our house."

JEN: It doesn't cost anything, there's no overhead, and we have our own PA so all the money can go to the touring bands. It's easy, you don't have to call someone, you don't have to go check out the space, you don't have to rent a PA, you don't have to bring everything down there. It's really easy. It reached its peak about two years ago, when we were having shows three times a week.

ANDY: Also, a reason for doing shows here is that we've been able to do things that wouldn't have had a venue otherwise. We've had stuff like punk poetry night and stuff like that. Where the hell would you do that? The last thing that we had here was...

JEN: (laughing) A live sex show! In our basement!

ANDY: It was this queer punk night. There was music and somebody was shoving rolling pins up his bum. Where can you do that?

JEN: You can do it once somewhere.

ANDY: We'll invite them back, bring your turkey basters full of pudding and whatnot.

JEN: We do bigger shows too, if the band coming to town is going to draw more people than will fit in our basement. Although we've had some pretty big bands play here, DOA, His Hero Is Gone, Citizen Fish There's been a lot of really great big, intense, hot, shows.

There was a photography show down there. These two photographers, one from Winnipeg and one from Olympia, Jon Schedewitz and Joe Denardo, came and did a photography tour and hung pictures all over the place. It's just nice to have a space to

hang out and do things. They don't have to be super planned out, they can be short notice and people will still come.

How did people react when you started moving away from 4/4 rock music

JEN: As soon as you leave the relative comfort of the "same old, same old" you're leaving a lot of people behind. People really like things that don't change, they like the same thing. Especially with our music, at the beginning we were very punk, very fast, maybe a little bit more quirky than a lot of bands. Now, we still have the fast bits, but we've gotten older (laughs).

ANDY: *MaximumRocknRoll* doesn't like it. They don't review us anymore.

That's a good sign. (Laughter)

JEN: Yeah, we're doing something right.

You've gone on what, 11 tours? What are some of the spaces you got to play or check out that you really liked?

JEN: Stalag 13 in Philadelphia was a great place. It's closed down now. I just got a couple letters from people there. It's too bad it's shut down, it was a collectively run all-ages space, people lived there. ABC no Rio, fantastic place. The people involved with that place are amazing, they put so much work and energy into the space, it's a labor of love. It's more than an all-ages space, Food Not Bombs cooks there, it's an artist space, a meeting space, a lot of political groups meet there. ABC no Rio is one of my favorite places.

ANDY: Gilman St., squats in Europe that just blew me away. Kids would just... well they're not just kids over there there's people in the scene who are like...

JEN: Our age! (Laughter) and older, wow!

ANDY: They're just "We live in this old factory, and we have a metal shop, and we have a bar in there over here's our video room and an artist space." All these things going on in all these crazy old squatted buildings. JEN: There was this one place in Italy, beautiful old building with a hedge maze in the back. They called it La Villa Ocupata, the occupied villa. It used to be some rich person's mansion. They had a guesthouse in the back, even a hedge maze. It was pretty decrepit but it was still fantastic.

They were just so well organized. We were told that if we had come there 5-10 years ago there were squats everywhere. In Berlin alone there were 300 squats a few years ago. Now there's two left, which is really depressing.

We also went to Auschwitz... and the amount of fascist and Nazi graffiti was incredible. It was so infuriating and frustrating and sad. Before you actually go into the

camp itself there's a modern information center with information on how they set it up and opened it to the public. And there's swastikas and Nazi graffiti everywhere. Well, not everywhere, but one is way more than I was expecting. With the incredible amount of evil that happened there for people to go back, after it had become a place of great sadness for people to go and learn from the mistakes of

the past, and desecrate it was really disturbing.

Is that where Nazis have put up crosses all around outside of it?

JEN: Yeah, that was weird. When we were there (Poland) there was quite a bit of debate, arguing and a lot of bad blood between the Jewish and Christian factions.

What had happened is that the Christians had put up these crosses as a memorial to the Christians who died in the Nazi death camps. Because they were saying "well, it's not just Jewish people that died, it's Christians as well."

Which no one is disputing, least of all the Jewish people are not disputing the fact



that Christians died as well. It is, however, a slap in the face because one of the main reasons the Jewish people were targeted is that they weren't Christian. It's really bad taste and fucked up that they would do that. We heard stories that the area was patrolled by Nazi skinheads to keep people who were against it from taking down the crosses.

ANDY: When the Christians had their events and put up crosses, there'd be a lot of people there to protest. There'd be Nazi skinheads there to act as thugs for the Christians.

JEN: I couldn't even talk about Auschwitz for several days afterwards. It seemed it would just cheapen it. How can you talk about something of that magnitude?

ANDY: I wasn't aware of the whole situation in Eastern Europe before I went. In Poland people put tons of flowers on the graveyards, so every graveyard you pass there's just massive amounts of flowers then if you pass a Jewish cemetery there's no flowers because there's no one to put them there. They're no Jews in Eastern Europe anymore and there used to be tons of them. You think Nazism and Nazi Germany happened so long ago. But you go there now and, well, they did what they wanted. They got all the Jews out of Eastern Europe and Fascism is alive and well there.

You have any problems with boneheads in Europe?

JEN: Actually, we did play a show in Germany and then halfway through the show everybody disappeared. I was like, "What the fuck, I didn't think we were that shitty."

ANDY: (Laughing) "I know we're really not having an on night here..."

JEN: We found out afterwards that someone had come running to the back of the place. "There's Nazis here, there's Nazis here" and everyone had gone running out to deal with it.

ANDY: This is in Germany, right? So fascist boneheads are double the threat it seems.

The whole time I was in Germany I was thinking "Jesus Christ, this is where fucking Hitler came to power, this is where all this shit went on" and then to see Nazi bootboys running around, like what the fuck? These people learn from nothing. We had Nazi boneheads come to our show in Fredericton, New Brunswick last time we were there, too.

JEN: Oh god, We had been through all of Europe, all around North America never any problems, and then we go to my hometown, population 50,000 Fredericton, New Brunswick, and Nazi skinheads show up. I couldn't fucking believe it.

They came into the show just before we were supposed to play, when they walked into the room my heart fell right to my feet. They started whipping chairs around, they were all massive, they had white power tattoos, one of them had African tattoos on his face, which didn't make a whole lot of sense to me but whatever. They had the boots and braces and the bald heads, all drunk and belligerent, yelling out racial slurs.

ANDY: There was a black kid in one of the bands and they were singling him out and targeting him.

JEN: There was a lot of people at the show, like 100-150 kids and nobody was doing anything. I was really scared and didn't know what to do but then I got really pissed off. They went outside and were regaling the crowd with their bullshit like "They wanted to mosh man, just here to have some fun, what the fuck, everyone here's fucking white, what's your fucking problem?" ya know.

So I went out and I said "We don't want your shit here, get the fuck out." And there ensued a loud large argument between me and couple of them. Then I turned around to everyone else and said "There's a lot of us here let's deal with these guys and get them the fuck out of here." This punk woman came over to me and told me I was being just as intolerant of them as they were being of oppressed peoples. I was like "No, this is our space, this is our community, this is the one place where we refuse to welcome this kind of bullshit. I take issue with that argument, fuck off."

Then my dad showed up and my dad was yelling at them. Boy, did he ever make me proud. He was awesome, he was arguing with the skinheads and one of them said "You're just a fucking

old man, you don't know what anarchy is." My dad's a political scientist. He's a brilliant man and he turned to the skinhead and said "Son, you don't know what anarchy is."

I thought that was amazing, my dad's a mainstream kinda guy but he knows what real anarchy is. He knows it's not mayhem and chaos and beating each other up and shitting in our own nest. He knows it can be a really good productive thing and a lot of awesome people are involved. I thought it was really cool that he said that.

The cops showed up and it turned into a big stupid saga. They were just complete idiots and I was arguing circles around them they didn't know what the hell they were saying so finally they left.

We talked about it a lot during our set. About not letting that kind shit into your scene, into your community, because once you do, under the auspice of tolerance or whatever, then that kind of hate gets a foothold and it can grow and grow and we can't let that happen.

We had a forum for conversation and everyone talked about it and how they felt about what just happened. It was really cool and we made sure that everyone made it home safely, that no one was going home by themselves, going home in cars or in groups - in packs!

I was the only one who spoke up initially and told them to get out, but in retrospect I was leaving the next day, so I was pretty safe. But at the same time I wanted to let the kids there know that if they got together then they could get rid of this shit.

ANDY: We did a show some years ago at La Quena (a local collectively owned coffeehouse) and this Nazi showed up. It was one of the most hilarious things I've ever seen. It got to the point where people were "You're not welcome here, you have to leave." He wanted to fight, whatever. His bus was coming up and he was running for the bus, slipped on the cement and did a faceplant, blood everywhere, haha. Get on the bus! Get out of here! Beautiful. ★

Endnotes:

1. Submission hold can be contacted at:
P.O. BOX 21533
1850 COMMERCIAL DR.
VANCOUVER, BC
V5N 4A0 CANADA

2. The cops ended up winning the battle for the park washroom, it's now a "community police station". At least it's appropriate, everyone knows the cops are full of shit.

...then my dad showed up ... he was arguing with the skinheads and one of them said "You're just a fucking old man, you don't know what anarchy is." My dad's a political scientist. He's a brilliant man and he turned to the skinhead and said "Son, you don't know what anarchy is."



Using Water

the story of urban hydrology

The average American lives in a city or suburb and does not think about sewage. Its removal is assumed to be a civil right. Occasionally, sewer drains on old city streets waft an unpleasant odor that we suspect is related to our toilets—or, we pass one of the sewage treatment plants on the outskirts of town and roll up our car windows. But in general, within the city, suburbs, and frankly, anywhere with indoor plumbing, sewage is out of sight and out of mind.

But should it be? Without working sewer systems, our cities would be disgusting places to live. They would be full of disease and stink and filth. You think accidentally stepping in dog poop once a year is bad? Imagine your neighbors emptying their chamber-pots onto the street or alley from the second floor windows, thousands of tons of horse manure accumulating, your own personal sewage cesspool under the house, and dirt roads flooded with shit and water, impassable whenever it rained. Medieval Europe looked like that, but so did urban America in the 19th Century. Poor countries have cities that still look this way and carry the accompanying diseases and filth. Modern American cities are very clean compared to cities of the past and of the developing world, making them much more pleasant environments. We make it look easy and natural to not wallow in our own excrement and rubbish. But, Americans use 100 gallons per person per day of water that has to come from somewhere. And in turn, we create billions upon billions of gallons of wastewater that has to go somewhere. Our water does not come from a magical, bottomless tank of endless, clean tap water—it is diverted from the natural water cycle. And so, the quality of urban water sources is and will always be linked with the quality of the continent's freshwater resources—and visa versa.

For over 5,000 years, cities just dumped everything into waterways raw. There were

words and photos by Beth Barnett

"At what cost do we flush? Water companies spend millions on purifying water for us to use and much of that beautifully clean water goes into flushing the indoor toilet."

Jean Turner

problems with this approach, but it worked well enough that other options weren't pursued. The recent phenomenon of industrialization and population growth caused the volume of dirty water to grow while people rearranged the environment and its natural hydrology—and pollution became a big problem. Modern wastewater treatment plants were devised to lessen the burden of pollution on streams that weren't as good at cleaning water as they once were. Most people are surprised to learn that the idea of cleaning our wastewater before putting it "back" into streams, oceans, and aquifers is very new. Most cities and industries didn't start cleaning their sewage until the 1970s—which is something you probably didn't know.

Some History

Rivers have always been natural sewers and natural "treatment facilities." On a dispersed scale, this makes sense. Other living things, including aquatic species, live, die, and excrete wastes in and next to streams. It happens everywhere, and streams naturally dilute concentrated nutrients (like nitrogen) and disperse disease-causing bacteria as they ripple and flow along. The rich biota in wetlands and marshes also play a key role in cleaning water by sucking up, settling out, and decomposing nutrients. Dependence on nature for wastewater disposal only becomes a problem for people when the volume of sewage is too large for the streams to manage it naturally (and population is too dense). When streams are over-burdened, the pollution also becomes a problem for the non-human web of life.

People can get around tainted water by diverting cleaner water from far away or upstream and efficiently moving the dirty water out of the way. Ancient cities were able to develop and thrive using this basic plan. As early as 3000 BCE people in cities were building sewers, and for at least 4500 years they have been using aqueducts to divert water into cities. For a very long time, urban centers have

been drawing water from rural mountain streams, springs, lakes or reservoirs, groundwater, and/or upstream rivers—and sending waste water down-river, into the ocean or lakes, and back underground through cesspool seepage. Cities that failed to fund large water projects—like those in Medieval Europe—drew water from wells and streams in the same neighborhoods where sewage seeped into the ground through cesspools or ran into the water up-stream. Such places suffered from bad water and serious disease epidemics. Billions of people around the world *right now* live in places with these same water-supply problems.

American cities grew in the late 1700s and early 1800s without public water works to bring water in or take it out—and outbreaks of Cholera and Yellow Fever were a result. Shocked by thousands of deaths and the flight of frightened residents, Eastern cities began to plan and build aqueducts and reservoir systems to bring cleaner, rural water into town. Major aqueduct water projects were implemented from the 1830s to the 1850s in major US cities (all in the East). Although no one was sure what caused disease, the cities were increasingly filthy with manure and rubbish and had become extremely unpleasant. People knew that reliable, cleaner water would be used to wash everything more often and flush some of the filth away (into the rivers and harbors). The added water supplies flowed through new kitchen sinks, making life much easier. But, eventually all the extra water flowed into sewage cesspools which then overflowed too quickly. The extra water had to have somewhere to go once it was used.

People had already been digging their own gutters and neighborhood sewers to handle runoff during storms and other excess water. Without some kind of drainage, streets and cellars routinely flooded. Dirt roads turned to mud. The increased population and high per-capita water consumption caused these DIY sewers to back up. So the cities stepped in again, this time building major sewer con-

duits in the 1850s-1880s, and later. Residents quickly began to hook their cesspools (think of septic tanks, but less complicated) into the sewer to carry overflow. Cesspools didn't have to be pumped out as often, and the combined-sewer system came to be the norm. The sewers came to combine street runoff with household and industrial/business sewage and send it out of town on river currents or outgoing tides.

In the mid-1800s, the magnifying lenses of the light microscope were improved significantly, and it became possible to look at samples on a cellular level. Obviously, one of the first things scientists did with their new lenses was look at water, where they were shocked to find an alarming abundance of activity. They had discovered microorganisms and realized that millions of tiny swimming creatures were living in their tap water. Water that looked, tasted, and smelled clear and clean had contained a sinister secret. Although they were concerned, people weren't sure what to do, or whether they needed to do anything. But then, in 1880, Louis Pasteur published his "germ theory of disease," linking microscopic life (bacteria, viruses) to human diseases. This caused quite a stir, and within a decade several scientists had linked specific microorganisms with common epidemic diseases. This new knowledge was extremely important in the development of sanitation and drinking water treatment—although the idea of wastewater treatment lagged behind.

Other peoples in earlier cultures had been treating water for drinking far, far in the past, and some American cities were already using mechanical methods to clean grit from their water (the first municipal water-filtering system was installed in Poughskeepie, NY in 1872). But, the weird-looking, disease-causing microscopic organisms convinced Americans to take their drinking water more seriously at the end of the century. They started to re-use very old technology to filter their water supplies. They used sand and gravel as

filters (an idea at least 4000 years old) and used Alum (Aluminum sulfate $Al_2(SO_4)_3$) as a "floculant" to clump-out microorganisms and fine particles (another old idea, from the 1st Century A.D.).

Drinking water was improved greatly by the installation of these filtering methods. But, the introduction of chlorination around 1910 made it possible to kill what microorganisms remained in the water and prevent new ones from appearing between the treatment facility and the household tap. Chlorine removed almost all threat of bacterial/viral disease from city water sources. Of course, we now have reasons to be concerned about the danger of undesirable side-products of the chlorine itself that are carcinogenic.

For much of the 20th Century, water was thought to be finally safe, having been rid of danger via chlorination. And, people *were* pretty safe from bacteria and viruses. But from the 1940s to the present, horribly carcinogenic synthetic chemicals, like industrial solvents and agrochemicals, have been produced in huge quantities and dumped into surface water and onto the ground (into aquifers). It took a few decades for the chemicals to build up and the scientists to prove they were horribly damaging. Many synthetic chemicals weren't acknowledged to be carcinogens until the late 1970s-1980s after mysterious outbreaks of cancer and birth defects. Tiny amounts of heavy metals, agricultural pesticides, and industrial chemicals can harm our bodies significantly (and the bodies of all kinds of other organisms). At this time, most cities regularly test drinking water and wastewater for a long list of compounds, which are poorly understood and sometimes highly toxic, worthy of continuing public concern. Every year new chemicals are created and the EPA adds more formulas to its water quality testing list.

Today the process of drinking water treatment is surprisingly simple. I had long imagined it would be more complicated than it is. Drinking water flowing from a tap seems magically clean. It comes from somewhere, but somehow seems to have nothing to do with pond and river water. I liked to imagine that the water was distilled to purity in a highly advanced, space-age process. But, living in a city of 50,000 in western Oregon, the water coming out of my sink and shower doesn't flow through a magic wand. It goes through just a handful of steps:

1. It is diverted from the Willamette River and mountain streams of the Coastal Range.
2. Then it is treated with alum to create "floc" clumps that settle out.
3. The water is sent through filters composed of sand, garnet, gravel, and activated carbon before
4. chlorine is added.
5. It is routinely tested for dangerous heavy metals and synthetic chemicals,
6. and then, it is sent through pipes around

the city to my house.

I run the tap, the shower, the garden hose, and flush the toilet and drinking water becomes wastewater.

Flush toilets didn't become common until the beginning of the 20th Century. Using piped water, hotels and public buildings could afford them in the mid-late 1800s but everyone else continued to use cesspools and outhouses because they were cheaper. Most rural farmers still lacked indoor plumbing for toilets through the 1950s. Anyway, wherever it was adopted, the flushing toilet greatly increased the volume of raw sewage generated. Meanwhile, populations of the cities grew. Storm sewers carried everything that flushed off the streets, and began to carry most household sewage too. Industrial water use and sewage creation increased and went right into the waterways. At the beginning of the century lakes and rivers in/near US cities were choked with pollutants and waste materials.

Some pioneering treatment facilities sprang up at the end of the 1800s to break down raw sewage before it was released into natural waterways, but most cities treated their wastewater barely if at all until the 1970s. The useful role of bacteria in decomposition was known since the 1880s, but few treatment operations used bacteria. Most operating treatment facilities before the '70s were "primary" wastewater treatment plants, only using mechanical separation methods. The landmark 1972 Clean Water Act called for *major* water quality improvements across the country and basically required all cities to build "secondary" treatment facilities—at quite an expense. In some places it has taken 30 years to comply. Boston released large amounts of untreated sewage into Boston Harbor until a modern secondary treatment facility was completed in 1988. The city of Los Angeles didn't get its act together until 1998 when its Hyperion Treatment Plant was finally completed. Until a few years ago LA was routinely dumping millions of gallons of raw sewage into the Santa Monica Bay because the old facility was too small. Across the country *most* cities still release some amount of raw sewage without any treatment because of overflow events. This usually occurs when rain storms greatly increase the volume of water flowing to the treatment facilities that handle combined-sewer inputs, and handling capacity is exceeded. And of course, spring or hurricane flood events often send all of a city's sewage into flood waters.

Modern Sewage Treatment

Sewage treatment facilities are ugly and found in desolate outskirts of town. Most were built or upgraded in the early 1970s—an era of bad architecture and creaky vinyl-covered fur-

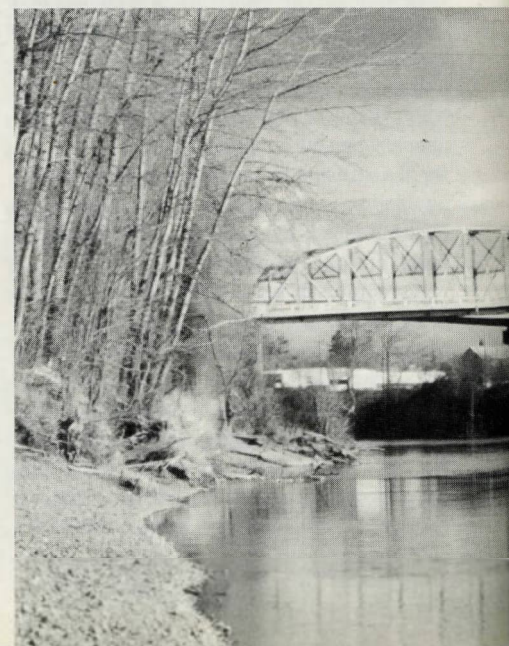
niture. Not to mention, they stink like sewer gas. These days, almost every sewage treatment facility is a "secondary wastewater treatment" operation with a series of pipes, screens, tanks, troughs, service buildings, and unromantic machinery surrounded by barbed-wire fencing and fields labeled with occasional "Do not touch/drink water. Keep Out" signs.

The treatment of sewage is a combination of mechanical and biological activity. 98-99 percent of what flows into a treatment facility is water, but it takes a lot of effort to get the 1-2 percent that isn't water back out. Cities have systems of sewer conduits that are hundreds and thousands of miles long drawing wastewater from public and private buildings and from street drains. Currently most industries that use large volumes of water are required to have their own sewage treatment plants on-site—which significantly reduces the burden on public treatment plants.

What's in the sewage when it arrives at the sewage treatment facility? A lot of nasty stuff: soaps, cleaners, household hazardous wastes, dissolved heavy metals and synthetic chemical compounds, caffeine, food, feces, urine, shards of yet-undissolved toilet paper, pulp, oils and greases, cigarette butts, coffee grounds, seeds, Band-Aids, condoms, chewing gum, skin, plastic tampon applicators, cotton, rags, cans and bottles, tree parts, twigs, wood, miscellaneous pieces of metal and plastic, wrappers, small bones, bacteria, rocks, sand, silt, and other grit.

The Southerly Wastewater Treatment Plant in Columbus, OH is typical of modern secondary treatment facilities. The treatment process involves three main stages: Primary Treatment, Secondary Treatment, and Disinfection. Correspondingly, these stages are mechanical, biological, and chemical in nature. As the plant successfully separates water from what is not water, another process of treating and handling that seedy, nasty 1-2 percent occurs.

1. Wastewater comes to the facility. It



is gray with little shards of toilet paper and an occasional tree branch. It gets sent first through a building where "screening" occurs. Screens with not-very-small openings block larger objects from going further and rotating bars pull off rags and insoluble paper, cans, bottles, and tree parts. Everything captured here gets toted off to a sanitary landfill. All of it is hazardous waste, because it is covered with raw sewage.

2. The water flows along to channels and tanks where sand and gravel (not flushed down the toilet, unless you eat rocks- but coming off the streets through storm sewers) are removed through settling. This is an important step because the grit harms the other machinery in the plant, and getting rid of it cuts down on maintenance. Anyway, as before, the stuff that is removed is taken to the sanitary landfill.

3. The raw sewage minus grit and tree limbs is pumped to an elevated height so that gravity can move the dirty water through the rest of the plant.

4. Next, a lot of air is blown into the wastewater to get rid of some of the stinky sewer gasses that have built up (like methane), and to help the oils and greases to separate themselves. Aeration increases the dissolved oxygen content, which is useful later.

5. That was just the pretreatment. The dirty water is moved to settling tanks where solid particulate matter separates from the water molecules by sinking to the bottom or floating to the top. Most such settling tanks are cylindrical, and characteristic features of a treatment plant. The heavy muck is called primary sludge (containing what is left of everyone's poop), and the floaters are called scum. Machines drag across the surface and the bottom of the tanks to remove what willingly separates. Inflated condoms, plastic tampon applicators (that aren't supposed to be flushed either), and odd, gas-filled chewing-gum spheres float around before they are removed. The water that is left over is much cleaner than what we started with, and it is called primary effluent. Many treatment op-

erations before the 1970s and 80s released this water to waterways. But, biological treatment can make it much cleaner.

6. The primary effluent is directed into troughs filled with recycled sludge rich in trillions of bacteria hungry for dinner. This soup is aerated again, like a dirty whirlpool bath, and the active bacteria make the water warm. The bacteria eat up 95 percent of the remaining particulate matter and also digest and break down harmful chemicals and organic compounds. Some will even eat TCE and gasoline.

7. Finally, the water is separated again through settling, and the bacteria-rich sludge is partly recycled and partly composted, incinerated, or used as fertilizer.

8. The secondary effluent is chlorinated at this point to get rid of extra bacteria that remain. But, right after chlorination, the water is dechlorinated by the addition of sulfur dioxide (SO_2)—taking it down to a strict standard of "no measurable chlorine residual."

9. The water is aerated one more time to fill it with dissolved oxygen. Fish and other aquatic organisms depend on it, and it occurs naturally in moving water. The end-product of the sewage treatment plant is *not* drinkable water. Its quality and level of dissolved oxygen should be appropriate to go back into a river ecosystem, not into our houses.

10. Finally, the water gets piped to the nearby river, lake, or ocean and returns to the natural water cycle (until it gets taken up by a drinking water plant).

Meanwhile, the sewage treatment plant dewaterers all the primary sludge/scum and burns or landfills it (nasty stuff), and makes fertilizer from the cleaner waste-activated sludge. Some plants capture the sewer gasses throughout the process to produce energy to run their whole operation. Others produce energy from burning sludge, or make money from selling the more refined late-stage sludge to fertilizer companies.

And you and I and everyone else wash our cars, take our showers, and flush our toilets, sending dirty water in a steady stream down the pipes for another cycle of cleaning.

Us vs. the Natural Water Cycle

Most people in our country live in sanitary separation from waste disposal. It is nice to be removed from the smell of sewer gas, but the result is that most of us don't have a clue about the water we bring in and send out of our houses. Our Victorian embarrassment over bodily functions separates us further from the reality of human wastes. Sewage is not a topic of "polite" public discussion. Few of us ever poop in the woods, and the closest most Americans come to pre-plumbing sewage disposal is port-a-potties. Some women raised and living in cities might never urinate or defecate anywhere but from a toilet seat in their lifetimes. Almost everyone uses treated and purified drinking water, 5 gallons at a time, to flush away a few ounces of urine and toilet paper. We water plants and wash our cars with drinking water. It's a waste of energy. Freshwater is a precious resource that we borrow from the rest of the ecosystem millions of gallons at a time for our convenience.

We are shaped by our environment and by the engineering projects that shape our urban landscapes and modern life. Focused on buildings, pipes, and concrete, we drive by rivers and streams and ponds in town without thinking at all about our tap water and storm sewers. For quite a lot of people the toilet and drain are the end of the line of their wastewater. It's easy to forget or not know where all the used water goes. People dump solvents and battery acid down street and sink drains because they live their lives thinking this way. If we stop thinking about our water the moment it goes down the drain—instead of considering the entire range it will traverse, then there are no precautions





to take or concerns to be felt.

Failing to understand the connection between human urban/suburban activities and the natural world is a really big problem. Every person should see themselves *first* as part of the environment, and *second* part of a human settlement. But that point of view is rare. Lacking such perspective, water flowing in rivers and underground aquifers is seen only as a resource for people to use. We dam streams because streams are there for the purpose of giving us flood protection, hydropower, and drinking water reservoirs. We drain ancient aquifers because they have no other purpose than for us to use them up. We fill in wetlands because we can't farm or build on them. And the consequences of this ignorant attitude are that we have ruined our rivers and compressed valuable aquifers. Rivers become useless habitats for the creatures and plants that once thrived in them—and then we complain about fish disappearing. The entire web

directed movement of urban water deceive us into thinking this water exists separately from the hydrologic cycle and "natural" water. But, pipes leak water into the "wild" groundwater. Drinking water is sprayed into lawns and flows into "wild" urban streams. Runoff carries motor oil and antifreeze from parking lots into rivers and lakes. And, even today, raw sewage flows straight into waterways during heavy rainfall events. Our secondary effluent, the treated end-product from wastewater treatment plants, is some of the best water the city sends back to "nature."

Unfortunately, now that sewage treatment is an almost universal activity, we are finding that the country's rivers are *still* largely polluted. Sewage treatment facilities are a practical necessity and significantly cut down the burden of pollution in our streams, estuaries, lakes, and harbors. But the streams stay dirty and dead anyway because valuable wetlands, marshes, pools,

and riffles have been lost and destroyed over the past 350 years of escalating human settlement. The natural cleansing we lose by filling in wetlands and channelizing streams is compensated by settling tanks and bacterial troughs only at the output of our urban activities.

Cities and industry now contribute far less pollution to the nation's streams than non-organic agriculture. Modern agribusiness sends millions of tons of fertilizers, synthetic chemicals, soil, silt, and raw sewage (from livestock) straight to our rivers without any treatment at all. Most of our poop and spilled motor oil is ending up in the microscopic bellies of bacteria or in sanitary landfills. But we are obviously still to blame. Our greed for cheap food, hydropower, barge-friendly waterways, and unlimited water keeps the hydrology of our continent from recovering.★

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water knows no borders

Waterways, more than any other part of our ecosystem, know no national borders, yet water has increasingly been treated territorially. The cutting up of river systems by state boundaries has aggravated the problems of responding ecologically to floods. Instead, water is dammed into political conflicts between states.

Attempts to divert the sources of the Jordan in South Lebanon and the Golan Heights provoked the Israeli-Arab war of 1967, there is still no agreement over fair access to water for the Palestinians on the West Bank who, since the occupation began in 1967, have been barred from digging new wells or renovating old ones... The CIA speculates that World War III will (continue to) be fought over water...

While the above might lead one to believe that water is a major cause of war, Jean Robert concludes that throughout history water has been a catalyst for peace rather than war. Since immemorial, people riparian have learned to make peace by concluding agreements about the use of their shared water. Conflict today stems not from conflict over water but rather from the fragmentation

and alienation created by national-state borders and from the sheer size of contemporary engineering projects which often create outrageous concentrations of power in the hands of a few elites (derived from Ward).

Historically, river valleys and their tributaries have been recognized as the natural loci of water sharing. Jean Robert describes the first golden rule of water policy as follows: "no new waterworks - or transportation, energy or other 'developments' for that matter - should ever be proposed if the affected community's right to say no to them has not been clearly recognized and if the non-realization of the project is not publicly debated as a concrete option...."

As long as water remains divided by nations, dominated by national and international elites, defiled by corporate pollution and diverted by mammoth engineering projects people will be afflicted by warfare, water stress, water-borne diseases, etcetera.

-the Black Swamp-No Borders Collective

Hopped-Up on H2O

by jason kucsma

When Zima introduced the concept of a clear malt liquor beverage, people said they were crazy. When Pepsi launched the crystal counterpart to their caramel-colored caveat, people said Crystal Pepsi would bomb. When St. Ides offered the innovative fruit-flavored malt beverage (Crooked I), people said it can't and shouldn't be done. Despite the naysayers and market pundits, these companies threw caution to the wind, and my, where it has taken them. Okay, actually all of these are big business flops that flew in the face of convention and suffered the consequences with factories left pumping liquid products that will one day be considered "before their time." As I walked and rode my bike to nearly every convenience store in a one-mile radius this evening in search of the elusive caffeinated water, I realized that caffeine-enhanced water may also be ahead of its time. In an attempt to explain the absence of this utilitarian beverage, I want to look at why the idea of caffeinated water has not caught on in a culture where people pride themselves in being workaholics stretched well past their physical limits.

If you're anything like the number of people I have mentioned this perfect product to in the last three weeks, you've either never heard of the stuff, or else you *have* heard of caffeinated water and thought it came and went with pogs sometime in the early nineties. And if you're anything like the general public, who

seems totally disinterested in 90% of the caffeinated water beverages to open shop since Water Joe hit the market in 1996, you probably think that bottled water that is enhanced with caffeine is something akin to eating genetically modified corn at a barbecue on styrofoam plates – totally unnatural. I stood outside a coffeeshop while a guy smoked a cigarette, drank his coffee and told me how fucked up it was that some company could go screwing around with water and how he would never put that "freakwater" in his body. Uh-huh. So what makes people who have no problem consuming beer, wine, booze, cigarettes, genetically-engineered food or small children shun the marriage of caffeine and water in a wholesome union of fortified goodness?

Before we look at what causes people to shun caffeinated water, it might help to examine exactly what it is and who the purveyors of this potion are. Most caffeinated waters boast that the water is mineral water from the source, wherever that source may be. For Water Joe, the source is the Nicolet National Forest in Mountain, Wisconsin. I mention Water Joe primarily because it is one of the only brands (aside from Espresso) that I believe is still in production. Other brands that have gone from factory to store to graveyard include Aqua Kick, Krank2o, Highwater, Java Johnny and Nitro Water. The water is enhanced with caffeine in a process that is secretly protected by its manufacturers, but we can assume it involves extracting caffeine from one of over 60 leaves, seeds or fruits that produce caffeine and combining it with fresh mineral water. Somehow, in these magical factories, the caffeine extract is married to water in a process that renders the flavor of the water unaffected. Now, some will tell you that caffeinated water tastes different—that it has a plastic or metallic taste to it. However, none of my taste tests over the last couple of years corroborate this, and I find caffeinated water tastes just like other bottled waters. We could explain the plastic taste as coming from the bottling process or the metallic flavor as a sensitivity to the minerals in the mineral water, but I'm also inclined to entertain the thought that for most people, their evaluation of caffeinated water is all in their head. Convinced that caffeinated water is totally unnatural, some folks are willing to find (or fabricate) a number of reasons why we should dismiss caffeinated water. But why?

One possible reason for the kneejerk contempt for the caffeinated water industry is the distrust of the unknown. I'm sure that when

expedient possibilities presented by the unique challenges and opportunities afforded it. But we have arrogantly decided that Nature's ways are not good enough. Natural rivers are too unpredictable, wetlands placed in the wrong places, and drainage patterns flood our most desired locales. So we damn the rivers, drain the marshes, constrict the runoff patterns to turn the mosaic of the watershed into a grid of ditches.

But nature does indeed know best and nature re-members. We ignore this at our peril. For the rivers will ultimately re-cover their natural paths and wetlands will forever plague us with their mildew and moisture.

The manipulation of water-ways reflects the corporate capitalist paradigm of humanity's relationship with nature. Command and control battles with natural forces will lead to short-term profit and long-term collapse. Living in harmony with natural water-ways, as most human communities have, allows for an entirely different long-term outcome.

-the Black Swamp-No Borders Collective

On July 29th 2000, while visiting Philadelphia for an unconventional vacation a flood rolled through the neighborhood where I usually live (inner-city "Toledohio"). Streets collapsed, basements flooded and the neighborhood took weeks to repair. Upon returning home I felt lucky that the flood had flowed around our house (nearby houses suffered severe damage). Months later an article appeared in the neighborhood newspaper which showed an 1890 map that explained the flood damage patterns. It turns out that as recently as 90 years ago a stream ran through the neighborhood into the Ottawa River. As the neighborhood developed the stream was cemented over block by block until it no longer existed. When the flood occurred the water re-membered its natural pathways... Every house that suffered a collapsed cellar wall and every area of deep flooding was on the stream's historic path. (Thanks to William for his excellent insights...).

Natural cycles have developed through billions of years of ever-shifting physical conditions on this planet. Indeed, one of the greatest strengths of nature is the vast variability useful in adapting to the harsh conditions extant on the Earth. Allowed to its own devices, nature is forever shifting to the most

nature re-members

someone suggested water would be a helluva lot tastier if someone stirred some dye, sugar and artificial fruit flavoring into it, people railed against Kool-Aid as well, but look how far we have come. Now we welcome the presence of cancer-causing agents like aspartame in our beverages as long as it means that soda won't go straight to our thighs. Still, we tend to think that caffeine-enhanced water is an abomination; to all that we have been taught is good and wholesome.

Well, let's examine this creature's components and see exactly why the idea of drink-ing caffeinated water is not such a bad idea. One element of caffeinated water is, umm ...water. The life source that sustains your body. You are made up of almost 90% water. You lose over 2 1/2 quarts of water over the course of a day. Whether you are sweating, pissing or just breathing, your body is expelling water from itself all day long. And since water in your body is essential to temperature regulation, digestion, and toxin removal we must regularly consume water in order to maintain the delicate balance that is required to keep us from crumpling into a dehydrated mess on the floor. Most experts recommend drinking a 1/2 ounce of water per pound of body weight and the ratio should increase to 2/3 ounce if you are physically active. Of course you get water from eating fruits and vegetables, and a portion of the liquid in the beverages you drink like coffee, tea, soda or juice counts toward your daily water intake, but you should still drink a lot more water than most of us consume daily.

The other element of caffeinated water is obviously the caffeine. As I mentioned before, caffeine is an organic compound found in a number of plants. It is known medically as trimethylxanthine and appears as a white crystalline powder with a bitter taste when it is extracted from coffee or tea to make them decaffeinated. For a quick and dirty version of how caffeine works to keep us awake, I consulted Marshall Brain and the *How Stuff Works* Web site <www.howstuffworks.com>. When we get sleepy, it is actually the result of the binding of adenosine (created in the brain) to adenosine receptors, which in turn causes the nerve cell activity in the brain to slow down and blood vessels to dilate. Caffeine works sort of like an impostor by binding itself to the adenosine receptors without actually causing the other physiological effects that adenosine instigates. So now all the adenosine receptors have been filled up by caffeine and can no longer "see" the adenosine. This increased neural activity causes your pituitary glands to think there is some sort of emergency to attend to and it begins to produce adrenaline, causing your heart rate to increase, breathing tubes to open, muscles to tighten and so on. Many of us drink sodas and caffeinated beverages to maintain our sacred positions as cogs

in the machinery of production at our regular jobs. Many of us also (gasp!) even manage to live our own lives with activities, friends and interests outside of our ridiculously long work weeks. So how do we find the energy to stay sharp in both versions of our lives? We often rely on stimulants like coffee, tea or soda. With a little help from the organic compound, we allow caffeine to keep us powered when the man has worn our bodies past their allotted limits.

Unlike substances like alcohol, cigarettes or crystal meth fabricated in the basement of your local speed freak's home, there is little evidence that caffeine has long-term effects on a person's body. Sure, anyone who has regularly consumed caffeinated beverages may feel like we've become addicted to caffeine when we think we can't go without a cup of coffee, soda or tea to start the day. And the first time we try to forego the pick-me-up, we might experience a headache, irritability or restlessness – all side effects that are due mostly to the abrupt alteration of our body's chemical balance and often avoided by making gradual changes in our consumption rather than quitting cold turkey. While caffeine does temporarily raise a person's blood pressure, the change is often minimal and lasts for only a couple of hours. Of course it is smart to keep your caffeine consumption in check when you are pregnant or have a physical condition that merits a restricted diet, but the information I have read says that moderate use of caffeine is not so bad for you. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration classified caffeine as Generally Recognized as Safe (GRAS) in 1958 and that the daily consumption of 300mg of caffeine (about three cups of coffee or a six-pack of soda) is not detrimental to your health. The FDA reaffirmed this stance in 1987 and the American Medical Association and American Cancer Society confirm the safety of moderate caffeine consumption. Granted, the acidity of three cups of coffee or the pure sweetness of six colas might eat a hole in your stomach or rot your teeth, but caffeine is not the culprit here.

Which brings us back to the question of whether or not water enhanced with caffeine is a good idea. If moderate amounts of caffeine are okay for us (and often quite enjoyable), then why the irrational distrust? If there is a product that allows us to enjoy the benefit of caffeine without the guilt of drinking coffee stained with the blood of South American farmers' or imbibing soda implicating us in corporate cola colonization, shouldn't we at least give it a chance? While I probably won't be filling the fish tank with Water Joe as their Web site suggests doing or replenishing my dog's water bowl with it as the darker side of me has contemplated, I will continue my quest to find a readily available source of trimethylxanthine-enhanced water and unashamedly drink up. Cheers. ★



Filtering Through

by Martha Riecks

The fastest growing segment of the bottled beverage industry is in water. Back in the 1980s, sodas certainly eclipsed the bottled waters available at the market. But at some point, Perrier, Evian and the generic gallon of spring water expanded to the point where they now have their own aisle separate from, and almost eclipsing, the sodas. Along with the bottled water market, in-home water purification systems and bottled water cooler delivery are standard. Tap water is a basic fact of life in the Western world, but nowadays it's simply not good enough. Bottled water is the norm; with filtered tap water the minimum expected.

The products that are out there just keep developing and seem to be doing more than just fulfilling the demands of their market. It's a market that they created, and continue to lead the consumer into in the quest for a neat and nifty way to improve everyday life.

I grew up in West Virginia drinking tap water and I was happy with it. Granted, we tended to keep a pitcher in the fridge so the chlorine could evaporate, for a nicer taste. But when straight-out-of-the-tap was necessary, that was just fine.

In 1988, the Brita pitcher came to the United States when the Clorox Company bought the distribution rights from the German company. With a current total of 14 pitcher styles, one faucet mounted filter and a new sports bottle filter, Brita claims to be the leading manufacturer of household water filtration products. The design demanded by the millions of consumers is fairly simple; water drips through a little plastic cartridge full of activated carbon and an ion-exchange resin, removing the chlorine, benzene, lead, mercury, copper and other strange tastes or substances that might be lurking in your tap water. Concerned vegans, do note that it's carbon from "coconut shells that have been subjected to a special heating process," not bone charcoal.

Looking back, I guess my foray away from tap water started simply enough, when I moved to Pittsburgh. Over 90% of housing in this fine city was built before 1970 and might contain lead. There's a little form for you to read acknowledging this when you sign your lease so that you know to not eat the paint chips. We assumed that lead was probably also in the pipes and so we bought the Brita pitcher. Coincidentally, this was the same time Pepsi bought out the University's beverage contract and moved onto campus

with their vending machines full of overpriced 20-ounce bottles in an extremely limited variety of Pepsi, Diet Pepsi and Aquafina.

Pepsi introduced Aquafina in 1995. It's an interesting product—perhaps the first mass-marketed bottled water without any claims, other than "Purity. Guaranteed." Aquafina is not a spring water from a pretentious aquifer lying deep beneath the Alps nor an acclaimed watering spot along the Appalachian Trail. The source of Aquafina is a faucet at the PepsiCo bottling plant, the purity achieved by reverse osmosis, which basically uses pressures and centrifuges to push the water molecules through a membrane and away from impurities in the water.

Aquafina came into the market during the designer during the height of the spring water craze. But with this popularity of spring water came the realization that spring water is just that, and in a few minor but well-publicized cases, contaminated spring water reached the shelf. Unlike tap water, which is regulated by the EPA and tested rigorously, bottled spring water is food product and regulated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It can be tested as little as twice a year, so new contaminations can be missed. Presumably, it was these concerns, and the desire for the guarantee that the water would be perfect, that created the market for this bottled tap water.

When I moved to Washington, D.C., I knew for a fact that Crescent Apartments was built in 1973. No lead release form here, but we continue to make our water with the Brita pitcher. Of course, now that I'm looking into it, I've read that newer houses are much more likely to contaminate your drinking water; in older homes, the pipes are encrusted with mineral deposits, blocking lead, but in new homes without this self-created lining, lead can seep into the pipes. Whether there were substantial levels of lead in the water doesn't really matter I guess. I was hooked on the Brita's chlorine-free taste, for it never occurred to me to not continue filtering my water.

In 1999, Coke decided that they needed to join the crowded shelves of the water section and introduced Dasani. Another reverse-osmosis purified version of tap water from area bottling plants, this product is enhanced with the added addition of "a special blend of minerals for a pure, fresh taste." Combining the purity of reverse-osmosis tap water with minerals reminiscent of spring water, Dasani is less of a drink than a marketing campaign, a source of relaxation and rejuvenation. Coke is almost

ignoring the purity of the product, presumably what created the market for waters like this. What they have created is an artificial mineral water, marketed as a revitalizing mineral water, and making the sale based on product idea alone.

And now I'm in Ohio, back with contaminants. Pesticides here, at the start of the great Midwestern farm fields. The Brita pitcher has been retired, and replaced by a combination of the Brita Ultra Faucet Filter System and The Watermill. The former is used for cooking water, in hopes of removing the pesticides that I believe are lurking there while the latter is the source of our drinking water. An eye-catching kiosk, designed to look like a windmill, The Watermill takes our city water and runs it through an extensive 13 step regime, which includes reverse osmosis, charcoal filtration, particle filtration, ozonation and so many more purification methods I can't actually remember them all. It's probably a very similar purification process to the methods for the soft drink companies' waters, but for only a quarter per gallon, you can fill the container of your choice. Truly, water from the Watermill tastes great. Like water should, clean and cold, and refreshingly tasteless.

In 2000, Brita began marketing its Brita Ultra Faucet Filter, to keep pace with the Pür Company's faucet-mounted filter while Pür is busy marketing filtration pitchers to keep up with Brita. It's quite a bit pricier than the classic pitcher system, probably because of its expanded claims. In addition to the lead, copper and chlorine removal, this "Advanced Filtration" system catches the microscopic cysts *Cryptosporidium* and *Giardia* that can slip through some municipal treatment plants, while filtering out 90-99% of several common pesticides and herbicides and a lengthy list of other dangerous-sounding substances. Please note of course, that "The contaminants or other substances removed or reduced by this water treatment device are not necessarily in all user's water."

I'm not at all surprised that I worry about the water I'm drinking, that I continue spending time, energy, and money on procuring a more refined version of this necessary beverage; I just can't figure out why the typical American consumer does. You see, when grocery shopping, I'll study the labels intently, comparing the proportions of ingredients I can pronounce to the preservatives, chemical flavors and artificial colors. (Then I'll wonder why it took me two hours to pick up 10 mea-

sly items.) Products claiming "All-Natural" or "No Artificial Anything" are only eclipsed, of course, by the notation of Certified Organic. And when it's my turn to run down to the vending machine, I find myself telling co-workers "Well, I'll get you the diet soda, but I feel obligated to tell you I think that aspartame will kill you."

Just a little over 10 years ago, most of the filtration products and bottled waters our culture depends on weren't around. Today, most everyone I've worked with or shopped near wouldn't think of drinking tap water. The majority of these people eat the unpronounceable ingredients without giving them a second thought. They actually pay companies to come and spray their house and lawn with insecticides and pesticides, yet they gripe about the extra 25 cents per pound for organic produce. And they are willing to pay \$1.25 for the a 20-ounce bottle of same substance they're already paying the municipal utilities about \$10 a month to supply to their house. Tap water at home is simply not good enough. Any water in pretty blue or green packaging is.

This seems to be the way in which our consumer culture works. It is all about solutions and easy fixes, not eliminating the problem. And, in recent years, it has reached the point where the problems are no longer considered, nor introduced to us. You can even wonder if they really exist. But we needn't give them any thought because a bright company has already solved them for us with excellent marketing specialists. We don't think about the problem, we just buy into this cycle.

Those of us who lean towards the left usually look for ways to break out of cycles like this one. And usually, it's incredibly easy too. For instance, instead of buying traditional produce, then purchasing Fit Fruit & Vegetable Wash, a product claiming to get your produce cleaner and remove pesticide residues better than water alone can, I buy organic produce. Instead of purchasing the commodity solution, I am actually solving and eliminating the problems of pesticide ingestion and environmental contamination.

But I just can't figure out how to break the water cycle. What I know about environmental processes and water treatment, learned during the course of my environmental science degree, has me concerned about what is lurking in my tap water. Purchasing the Ultra Brita filters and refilling my gallons at The Watermill, not the tap, are a solution to my concerns about what I am putting into my body and how chemicals could affect it. A solution that leaves me dependent on the Brita Corporation and Watermill, Inc. But I can't stop drinking. And that is surely why the purified water industry is exploding, with that basic fluid that truly has us hooked. ★



Photo by Michael Barkin

I liken the experience of perusing my local library for source books on direct action strategies to the time I read Al Burian's zineology *Burn Collector* and H.P. Blavatsky's *The Key to Theosophy* at the same time. Here I am, sans coffee, among the dusty shelves and cranky library folk scouring a cornucopia of direct action bibles trying to suck in a mind-numbing amount of sublime and passionate raw genius. Whether aligned with the ideology or not, the loaded volumes penned on the subject of direct action and community empowerment are a staggering testimony to human philosophical and organizational potential. The content is similar throughout the leftist hemisphere based widely on the same principles and structure, but the tone is the most revealing aspect of the source material in terms of the evolution of direct action models. Pages of more recent works flaunt covers slathered in graphic flare while the older, less emotional siblings sit proud in institutional looking hardcover versions. As a group of manuals they make quite an impressive family portrait with individuals distinguished by particular self-interest using language and biases colored by era and the political climate of the time.

Social change ideology, at heart, is rooted in a concept of justice and equity while the action taken for such goals causes dividing



It is Worth a Sentence

The Infernal Noise Brigade Make a Direct Action Handbook

By Tess. Lotta

lines in terms of method. There are traditional categories individuals and grassroots camps will encounter when organizing based on the guidance of documentation. Examples are found in Hanna and Robinson's chapters outlining institutional-based direct action and individual-based direct action (67-99). And there are hurdles to be surpassed deciding on approach when utilizing handbooks. Oppenheimer and Lackey's *A Manual for Direct Action* repeatedly distinguishes their bias as against violent direct action (ix). Individuals desiring to group or to join risk possible turn-offs due to the thick hedges sculpted on the landscape of direct action. The current state of the feminist movement, for example, has experienced an internal discomfort in the quest for era individuality. Terms like "Lipstick" feminist (for moderns) and "First Wave" feminist (old school) have emerged as a necessity to the movement for classification purposes. They do serve to excavate the history of the movement as Women realize a quandary when identifying themselves within organizational or movement discussions. Sex work activist Penny Arcade poked a sarcastic finger at this recently, "Second wave feminism? I didn't realize I was done with the first wave yet!"

The positive spin on the branding coveted by social change movements is that con-

trasting execution of similar ideologies has served to spark fresh approaches. Movements can be influenced by current trends, cycles, political weather, and technology and therefore stay relevant. The Infernal Noise Brigade are a hefty pack of activists that have banded together around the tactic of mixing art with revolution. Not a new concept, but as evolution would have it, the INB have improved the pesky alignment of the important pinky toe that is the activist generation borne from alternative culture.

The Infernal Noise Brigade as a band and organization is a tough entity to label, being that labels are so dear to wrapping our brains around most anything. But Greyg Filistine, co-founder of the INB captures it when he says, "At present we are a tactical mobile rhythmic unit . . . a sonic support system for in-street political activism." This can be whittled down to calling the group an "anarchist marching band", a moniker popular with indy media and corporate media alike. Further exploration would uncover an activist co-op of talented folks schooled from the D.i.Y hard-edged, in-your-face reality check of the Punk movement (not dead, thank you). As individuals gathering for a purpose to make social change, the INB people are all about pooling ideas, ideologies, methods, missions, and findings to

form a strong crosshatch of rebel rousing. But to wind that brain fully around this, we will utilize the example set by the manuals and break it into parts.

Chapter One: Matrices of Change (Hanna and Robinson 41)

The organism that is the Infernal Noise Brigade consists of several (sometimes up to 30) musicians from a variety of nationalities that share a common thread of ideological-political DNA. Filistine explains that, when in need of an affiliation, he has no problem with the "anarchist" label, an opinion shared by all the members that I interviewed. The goal is to create the least amount of potential for exclusion and members popularly use ideology associated with anarchism or libertarian socialism like "anti-authoritarian", "non-hierarchical", and "for social change" to describe affiliation.

The organism has evolved a loud voice as a formative striking tool—the marching band. The marching band consists of a singer, majorette, drill team core, and peripheral scouts that augment the nucleus of musicians that have assigned her or himself a particular instrument. The instruments are usually fashioned from the traditional gear used in inter-

national music forms but are embellished by industrial rigging suiting them for tactical street performance. The innards that fuel and keep healthy the marching band is the activist copop tethered to an agenda of direct action by cultural disruption. The marching band drives this mission by utilizing performance art, a genre building multi-cultural slew of musicality, and a loudspeaker contraption called the NoiseKart[™]. INB weld-smiths fashioned this audio assault vehicle from a shopping cart. It contains an amplified CB for live voice, and a digital audio system that blasts guerilla recordings of everything from street musicians, uprisings, and, as Filistine describes "intoxicated mad religious processions" caught on tape by members of the INB traveling abroad to study international music forms and experience culture.

Filistine provides a sampling of the musical influences, "Taiko, Moroccan Ecstatic, South African Trance, Algerian Rai, Hip Hop, and Samba can all be heard in our music. [Members] bring in their influences while others explore influences outside of their own culture. All this mixes together and is improved upon from a structured source."

The compositions are built from a rhythm that a member carries to practice. A pattern emerges as that member provides whistle commands to signify pauses, time changes, and certain beats. "My role as singer," adds Ronica Shanyal, "is plugging into these rhythms. I sing either classical or folk songs from Turkey, India, and Indonesia." Shanyal sings in the style and tongue native to each. The musicians, including Shanyal, not only follow commands for musical changes, but marching rhythms and tactical formations are dictated by majorette, Seraphina, using other visual and audible commands.

As with any marching band worth their salt the INB have scrappy, handmade uniforms that add to the audio-visual assault. The uniforms are strikingly similar to those coverings used by Zapatistas being primarily black from face to foot. The drill team members are staffed with mock rifles, flags, or shields, and when the entire ensemble moves in rhythm the music becomes a potent viscerogenic journey. The virgin experience of the Infernal Noise Brigade in action can be adrenaline boggling. The music explodes the senses like a thunderstorm. The syncopated rhythms carved by the variety drums and cymbals pound through the cacophony of protest noises. Shanyal's voice travels through a mic and amp fashioned from a bullhorn, which adds a floating melody to the thickness of the rhythms. It is the music of revolution and it raises history in the soul and spurs action in the apathetic.

"The marching band formation is impressive," comments Shanyal; "to activists, non-activists, and authority mongers. I know it scares police when the marching band comes toward them in full regalia." Shanyal has a

slight grimace when recalling these particular experiences. "There is something aggressive about it and I appreciate that."

The members have also noticed that during a protest the music and formations bring order and unification. Cymbal player BQ recalls an experience had in Prague protesting the IMF/ World Bank summit, "We were playing while moving from one point to the next and we turned a corner into about 300 people standing in an intersection. As we passed right through them a mass started moving with us and we became this steering wheel for a huge group."

"[The marching band] gives life to actions," Seraphina, a performance artist with the fire-eating troupe Magma Vox, adds her perspective as the INB majorette. "I am into changing the whole energy of a group and the INB definitely provides that at protests."

Chapter Two: Maintaining and Deepening Member Participation (Mondros and Wilson 64)

The Infernal Noise Brigade formed from the remnants of an influential Seattle performance art-noise band called ;TchKung! who, armed with an activist intent, introduced the infant alternative rock scene to industrial performance art and activist street performance. ;TchKung! built quite a network of skilled musicians and seasoned performance artists, and with the WTO descending on dotcom Seattle in 1999, core ;TchKung! members jumped on the opportunity to farm within the network and build a protest strategy. The attractive ingredient for the creation of their civil-disobedience demonstration model was the combination of the music and performance genre that ;TchKung! perfected molded into the archetype of a marching band. The main INB crew was able to rapidly shape the idea from the larger posse of similarly motivated artists.

"Many of us were just feeling uninspired by the way people were confronting social issues," says BQ of the activist climate. "Instead of complaining, the big [motivation for] joining the INB was asking questions about the kind of protest that happens, what kind of presence do you want to make at the protest."

The process of designing an answer to those questions led the INB to a utilitarian need for a structure. The group decided that because all members espouse differing viewpoints on direct action and ideology, rules would be set by consensus before each demonstration. A few basic protest rules still hold from the original



photo: Tyson Smith

Celebrations are intended to fuck with the acceptance of the structure of everyday life. It is kind of a wake up call to how we live ... with music out in the open not caged in a club.

outline for WTO, but the members feel strongly that the "by-event" consensus model works well for them. Dialogue is wielded as a spade to dig out where individuals stand, and when diamonds are found, an action is fashioned using art as a universal blueprint. The INB places value on participation in a combined movement unconcerned, in general, about where divisions might occur, and do not burn much time on idiosyncratic line drawing.

"What is cool and sometimes frustrating," reveals Shanyal, "is that not everyone is on the same page politically ... what we are trying to avoid is getting bogged down by process but also creating a structure which allows us to make decisions."

This forging of structure pushed the marching band into a quasi-organization. The handbooks make a good case for this process. Hanna and Robinson assert that "organizing is a group process by which a number of people define a common self-interest or unmet need, and strategize and implement plans of action to meet that self-interest or need" (Xiii). INB members strive to marry common sense ideological points rather than compromise individual viewpoints on strategy.

"While some members may have no problem with property damage," says Filistine, "The INB cannot do it while we are marching together because we are too identifiable. But that [rule] does not reflect how a lot of us feel about the validity of doing these things."

Chapter Three: Transformative Social Change Strategies (Hanna and Robinson 151)

The INB have divided their gigs into "demonstrations" and "celebrations" intended for different messages and, not only are different colors worn to distinguish the two, but also the consensus-made rules will be a bit more loose for the latter. For example, members have agreed that they can drink alcohol at celebrations because, although much of the time police are present, the atmosphere is generally celebratory and there is much less risk of the use of escalated force by police. The celebrations are planned in conjunction with other groups, as in the recent New Years Eve march centering on an effigy of the Monolith in Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*. The parade route was to end with the burning of the

Monolith at a designated point until police foiled that, but the effigy, placed in a public park by a guerilla installation team, served to busy the corporate media covering yuppie-Disneyland Seattle far into the next week. The parade went on as planned and managed to confiscate much of the street area along the way.

BQ explains that the, "Celebrations are intended to fuck with the acceptance of the structure of everyday life. It is kind of a wake up call to how we live." The point here is to teach people how to get comfortable using public space in a way not allowed by law. These are not organized protests per se but people are invited to congregate at unified celebrations and are encouraged to follow the band in, "Not walking on the sidewalk," continues BQ, "... with music out in the open not caged in a club."

"If it is a party in the street we politicize it," Filistine explains how the two types of actions execute the agenda. "If it is a demonstration our focus is to add culture and art into that. We want to infect one with the other."

This concept hints at the schooling that some of the founding INB members had in the early Punk scene. Visionaries like Jello Biafra, activist and lead singer-writer for The Dead Kennedys, ignited a musical counter-culture that gained velocity as a soapbox for civil disobedience because Biafra, as a prime example, excelled at using art as intelligent confrontation. One glance at the artwork of the DK's discography is proof that Biafra spared no medium. Combining a visual disruption with an audible one is clearly an influence drawn on by the INB.

"A wild rhythm in seven," Filistine explains, "... is inherently disruptive. So not only are we out there disrupting the street by being in it, in formation and uniform, we are playing [international] rhythms disruptive to western music culture."

Discipline is a key factor to the success of the INB in the street. To make the point, long weekly practices of musical compositions and learning in-line formations and marches are necessary. But members understand that a quality direct action strategy relies on absolute commitment.

"The musicality and formations are in-

teresting because they show discipline," Shanyal offers her take. "There is a lack of discipline within what you see in many activist venues. I think it is important to raise awareness that we can be disciplined."

BQ adds, "A large part of the direct action message is the package it comes in. [The relied upon strategy] is habitual; they say this, we say that, they do this, we do that. The INB is a fresh package with no slogan, it is mostly a non-verbal element which brings something to the [classic] demonstrations that you cannot tune out, or that cannot be tuned out."

Epilogue: The Pursuit Of Empowerment: Strengths And Challenges Of Practice (Mondras and Wilson 227)

When describing that by creating Jazz, African American musicians gave voice to the Black experience when one was not allowed, Jazz musician Branford Marsalis once said, "The artist understands how to take a life that is considered invisible and make it highly visible." That is why the theory of melding art form as voice to social change agenda is so important to make real, constantly. The multinational membership of the Infernal Noise Brigade creates the melody of a globalized movement and in disciplined formation stands on the front line confronting not only the opposition, but also the strategy in the way we make revolution at present. Filistine explains that for the INB, "[Activist] globalization is close to our hearts because it is an umbrella for a lot of different shared movements; the environment, labor, international Women's issues, etc. ... coming from diverse political and cultural interests, we can gain perspective on music, aesthetics, politics, and culture and find the common ground."

The INB travel to other countries to learn and participate in global protests, but taking the success of what they have accomplished using a street-activism model and expanding it further is the present topic of debate within the group.

"What is amazing about activism," Shanyal comments, "is that we are growing and changing, but we need to be changing at the speed of business. There is so much advertising that says to 'join the mainstream'. I want to use tactics that are just as good, animated, and slick that provides another message."

Preserving the tactile angle used to deliver the "speed of business" message is of major importance to the INB. "When you are performing in the street," says Filistine, "a

memory is being struck, you are right next to it, it is visceral in a world which is becoming increasingly virtual. I use computers a lot and I am glad I have [the INB] to keep me actually touching and pounding things—making direct noises."

"We just had a five hour meeting on what expansion means and how to do it," BQ explains how the debate is waged. "Everyone has different ideas so it is in a formative moment." But Filistine says that the group is unanimous in the decision to not make their form of direct action a product by recording and distributing CDs. "Even if it is a leftist commodity," he speaks to the group's ongoing exposition on the subject. "Expansion that way would make it a commodity." Unless of course the INB record and distribute themselves and use proceeds as travel support to more in-street protests, or as a benefactor, but conscious capitalism is another topic to tackle later.

Shanyal, whose activism started with the MOVE organization and who now holds a position as the Peer Education Coordinator for self-defense non-profit Home Alive, considers the challenges the Infernal Noise Brigade faces within the movement. "I want to be part of [a movement] pushing the issues of gender, sexual orientation, race, and class within the activist realm. If we use the same techniques, and then continue having all the marches be predominately white people, the movement is not going anywhere."

How to transport social change agendas to the borders of a listening audience through to that of a complacent one, and past that of privileged white ideology into the actual experiences of those represented, is a clearly excavated by the INB. From a historic perspective, the genius of Black slaves revealing Underground Railroad routes through field hymns struck an essential spark of empowerment. A similar blueprint for modern uses lies in the manner by which subversive information is carried through art movements; it must be as ingenious and brave. The unwritten Infernal Noise Brigade handbook for this strives to be uncomplicated. Method and ideology swing wide to make diversity a reality, perhaps a bettered organizational model of the coveted printed handbooks. In a bare-bones conclusion, Seraphina strips it down this way, "Participation, especially in the INB, has given function to my art." ★

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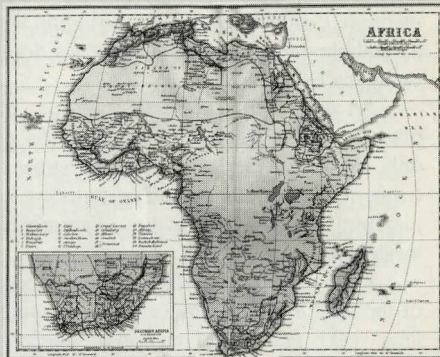
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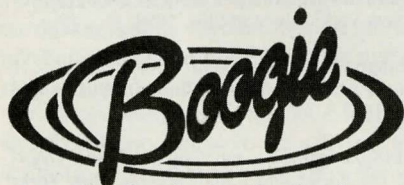
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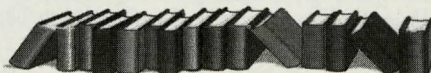
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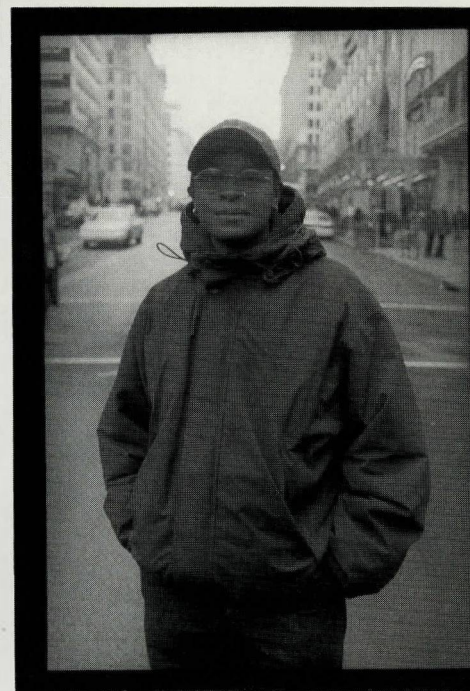
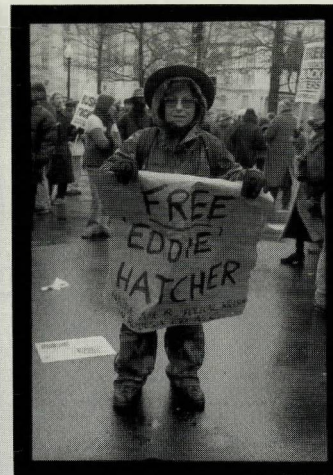
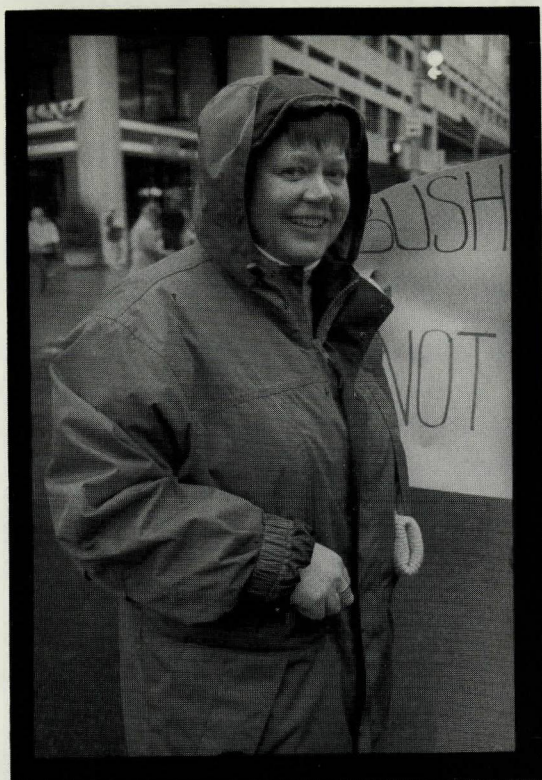
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welcoming george w. bush

inauguration day 2001

photos by ailecia ruscin

[politics]



Page 77: A woman yelling at police that we had the right to cross the street. This page, Clockwise from left: Cheryl from Virginia. Supported Gore in the election. "I think Bush

was selected, not elected." On the issues she said, "I'd like Bush to support abortion rights, overturn the death penalty federally and keep a strong economy going." / Canadian visitor. "I'm here because we wanted to see an inauguration." / Susan from North Carolina. Supporter of Eddie Hatcher, a Native American man wrongly jailed. "I wasn't supporting either candidate, but I voted for Gore. I don't think they gave us much of a choice." / Wendy from NYC. "I am a black lesbian who is also a woman. That's three strikes against me, but I organize around all issues of oppression. I want to make sure that all of us are not left behind. I want Bush to know we're here and we're not going anywhere. He has to deal with us."

Protesting the Inauguration: A Personal Story

by ailecia ruscin

Why do I trek across the country for huge protests? I'm not sure. In some ways I view the national protest scene as a pep rally/family reunion for activists (self-described or not) to get together and revive our energy levels. All of the commotion and partying gets us ready to go back into our own communities and continue the fight. We just need that adrenaline rush.

The World Trade Organization protests in Seattle brought a lot of national attention to the efforts of thousands of individuals and groups who have been fighting in their communities for justice. To me, the threat of globalization is the erasure of community and culture. What happens when the world becomes one giant homogenous supra-CULTure controlled by a couple international governing bodies? Will we have communities to be fighting for? The Seattle protests helped spark more interest in radical organizing in our community. But why go to protest the inauguration of a man into a system you already think is flawed?

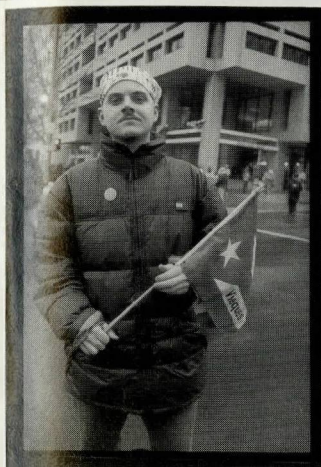
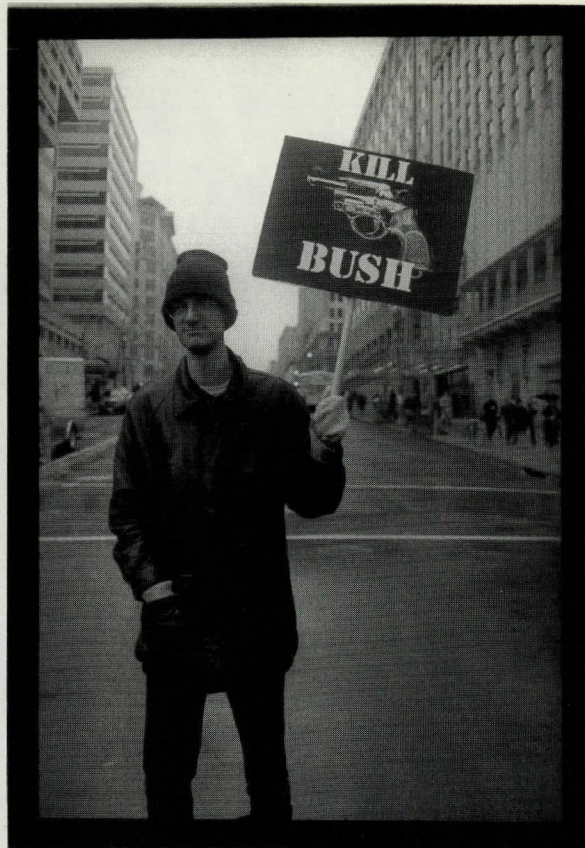
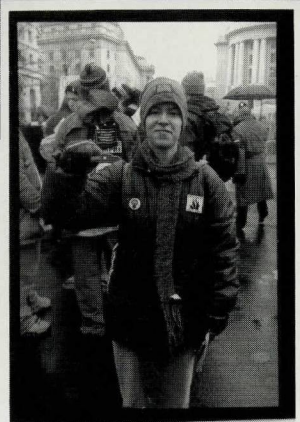
I decided to go protest the inauguration mainly so I could take a road trip across the country with my friends and cohorts. I was hoping this American rite (the road trip) would help bring all us together on what we're doing back in Lawrence, Kansas. Trapped in a car for 24 hours with no leg room provides a certain amount of necessary torture to begin the discussion of who we are and what we want in the future. "I won't stop and let you pee unless you tell me the top ten things you want in our future infoshop."

The road trip to DC was everything I hoped it would be and the protest actually ended up okay. I had made the decision not to get arrested before coming. I figured I couldn't afford to miss school in only my second semester of graduate school. I decided to spend my time roving around between marches and kind of playing the "photographer" role rather than "participant."

I started off at the meeting place for the anarchist black bloc. The mood was nervous as people adjusted their masks to cover their

identity. Most reactions to me taking photos were negative as the whole purpose of "blocking up" is anonymity. The march began and I snapped away at the banners, which doubled as message and security. The idea was that the banners could be used to shield those inside who needed to alter their appearance to participate in various actions. I separated from the march when we reached the main gathering point organized by the International Action Center. I conducted various interviews with people to kind of get a feel for why people had traveled out for the inauguration. From Republicans to Canadian visitors to queers and Socialist: so many people were represented.

At one point a woman on a bike rode down and asked people to come help out the black bloc who were trapped up at 14th and K. We all ran up the street to see what was going on. For no apparent reason, the police formed a circle around the bloc and wouldn't let anybody go near them or get out. Those of us across the street were held back by police with nightsticks and warned not to attempt to



This page, clockwise from upper left: A Republican family from Ohio. The father said that his family was out "to support George Bush because I think he'll make a good President. I think Bush will make Reagan look like a wimp." / Alex from New York. On his controversial sign, "I've gotten some laughs. Number one, it's my way of saying I have the right to express a radical point of view, and number two, guns are for a reason, for when we get ridiculous people in office." / Nego from North Carolina. Works with a newspaper called Cop Watch that prints stories of police brutality in the community. She said, "I would have been here even if Gore would have won. Personally, I don't think the system has anything to offer me as it is right now." On mainstream gay rights movement, "I was here for the fuckin' gay rights march this past spring. It was nothin' but a fuckin' fundraiser for Gore. It was entirely white. I thought to myself, 'this is not a movement, this is a fuckin' party.'" / Luis from New York City. "I came because I want Bush to know that we know he lied and cheated to get the Presidency and to let him know that there are many issues he needs to address once he does take office. I want Bush to know that he's not going to have an easy ride these next four years." On the issues he said, "I came here for peace in Vieques and Puerto Rico."

cross the street. One anarchist kid climbed a street pole to raise the black flag for support. The bloc cheered from across the street. The press went wild shooting photos. One woman yelled up to tell the anarchist to "hold a sign with some meaning" since he was getting a lot of press attention. I asked the woman wasn't the black flag enough of a message? She did not agree. (This scenario only partially highlights the animosity people feel for the black bloc who has been targeted repeatedly in the mainstream press as trouble-makers with no agenda other than destruction. There is a real need for some educating on anarchism.)

Well, back to the story. Finally we saw that the black bloc had been released but only through a back route so they could not meet up with us and potentially outnumber the cops. We joined up with them and began marching through the streets. All kinds of people joined the march. At one point the march broke through a police checkpoint and we all ran through down to "Freedom Plaza" where many of the more mainstream left

groups were meeting to stand together against the President.

In Freedom Plaza a kid climbed the Navy Memorial and brought down the flags. They were replaced with up-side-down American Flags and Black Flags. The crowd cheered. Then the cops merged out from the police line at Pennsylvania Avenue and attempted to arrest the kid. The kid "staged dived" into the crowd and ran safely away. Later, I caught a picture of the "fine American" who took down the American flag and returned it to its patriotic orientation.

The dynamics going on in Freedom Plaza were amazing. The police who merged out from the police line were soon surrounded by protesters and cut off from the rest of the police. A quick police maneuver was used to get the police "island" safely back into the police line. Power to the people I say. The crowd was also able to un-arrest people who were taken by the police. When an undercover police officer got out of control hitting people, the crowd swarmed in to surround him. This

type of crowd action kept the people feeling powerful in the midst of a police state.

As the President drove by on Pennsylvania Avenue, the motorcade sped up to glide by the group of dissenters. I can only imagine how it must feel to be issued into office by the middle fingers of the nation. People yelled, "You're not my President." Bush supporters stood in bleachers with their cowboy hats and fur coats and of course that's the only picture we got from the mainstream press.

All in all, I think it was important to go protest the inauguration. For once my parents were actually proud of my participation in a protest. January 20th was rounded off perfectly with an awesome vegan meal at Soul Vegetarian with Midwesterners we've met through the last year. The road trip helped in the group bonding department and life is back to normal: balancing work, school, community organizing and something that attempts to call itself a social life. Now its time for me to start a lesbian advocacy group to keep an eye on the President. I guess I'll call it Bush Watch. ★



Above: The police set up check points all along Pennsylvania Avenue and were given the authority to do random bag searches. Right: Leslie Ann of The Socialist Alternative in New York "[We] supported Nader but critiqued him for not speaking about race relations." On building a youth movement, "It's important to build a movement with a class and race analysis and include working class and people of color. We can't have a blind youth movement."



Inauguration Day: What You Didn't See on TV

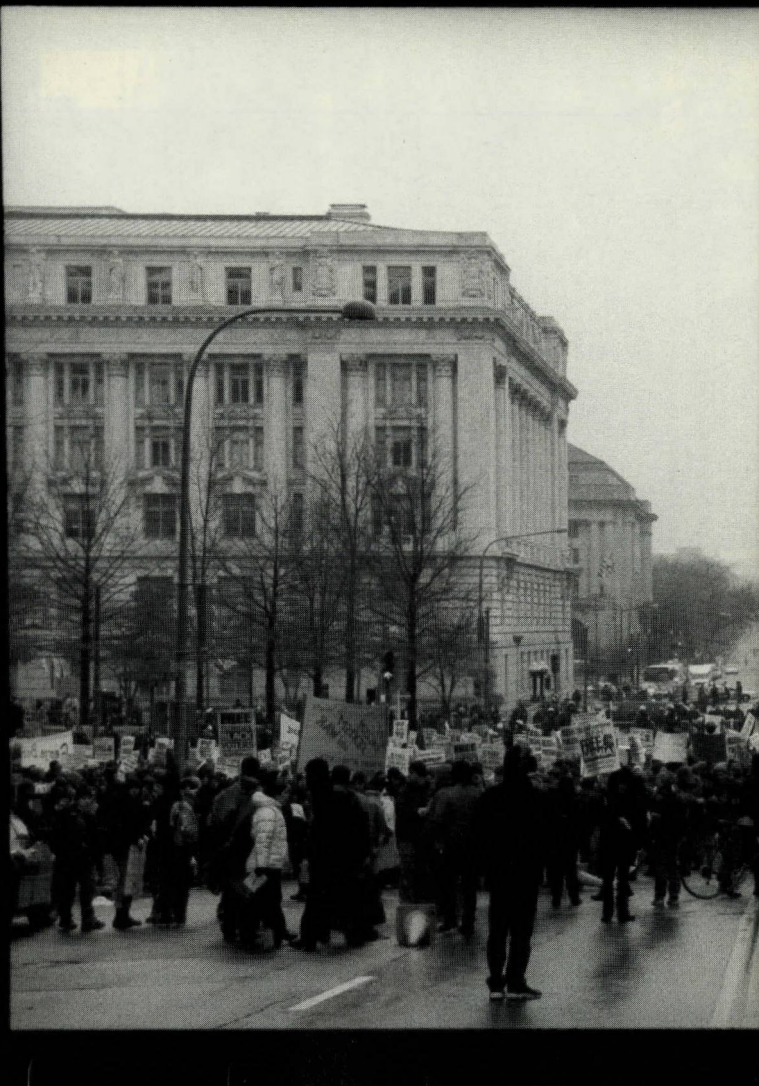
by Scott Indrisek

ACTION

SATURDAY, JAN.20, Inauguration Day. Washington, D.C.

A group of us rode the metro from Takoma to Dupont Circle, which was the main meeting point for most of the protest groups. Dupont Circle is a medium-sized "park," with a fountain in the middle, and they'd erected a large stage on one end. At around 8 a.m., the mood was bright and cheery, although the turn-out was fairly dismal. A few people walking around with signs that read HAIL TO THE THIEF, an old woman in an American flag dress who claimed to be George W.'s grandmother, etc. We saw a group of men and women dressed in caribou costumes enact an inspired piece of theater about the sanctity of wildlife preserves. All in all, the atmosphere was one of complete civility and harmlessness, and I couldn't help feeling a bit disappointed.

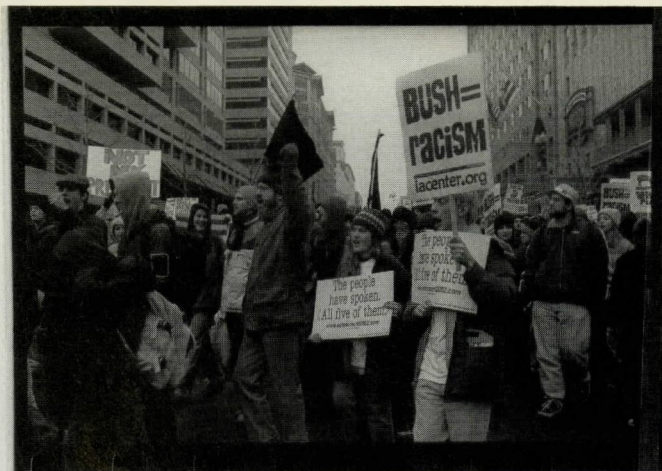
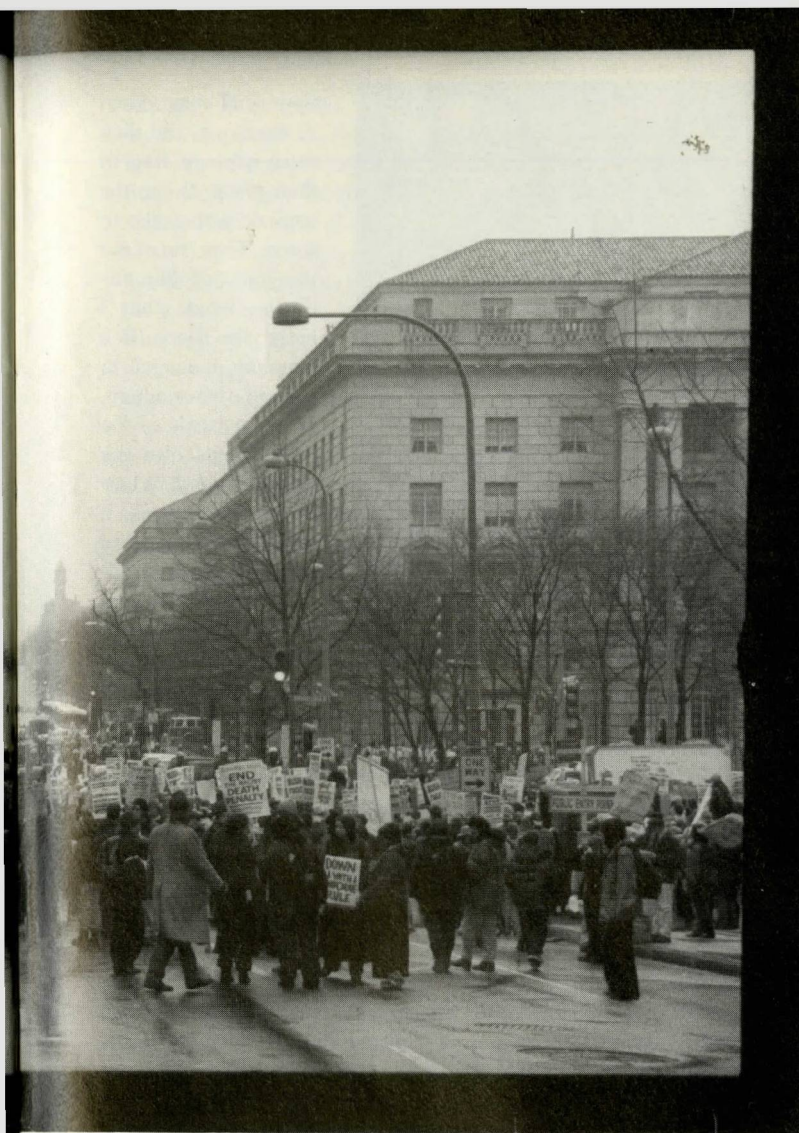
After an or so, Dupont began to fill up. Speakers addressed the crowd that was packed in tightly, standing in mud around the stage. What struck me most was the lack of venom in anything I heard for the most part. In general, the gist of the speeches seemed to say that the election had been thrown, that George W. Bush was not a rightful president, the kind of things you had heard bantered around the street every day for the past two months. A lot of people were holding up Gore/Lieberman signs. Rather than directing any criticism at the system at large, or making any judgements about the fundamental basis of American politics, most of this protest was aimed at insulting George W. and therefore indirectly praising his defeated opponent. I met with one man named John, standing on the outskirts of the crowd, handing out fliers. He explained to me that his goal was to inform people of an-



other fact that has been thrown about a lot recently—that whether Bush won, or Gore won, it wouldn't have made one damned ounce of difference. This was lost on most of the crowd, who seemed content to agree on the stupidity of our current President and the shame involved when "all the votes are not counted."

Around 10 a.m. a large contingent from Dupont Circle began marching away from the park in the direction of Pennsylvania Avenue. Alongside the street, residents stood in their doorways to observe; occasionally a passing car honked its horn in squawking approval. The mood was still very complacent, very much within the bounds of acceptable behavior. Occasionally it seemed that the thrust of the morning would be an opportunity for non-violent protestors to chuckle at the witticisms on each other's placards.

The first signs of trouble came when the Dupont Circle crowd was stopped at a barricade; no one could really see who or why the procession had been halted; the size of the group grew larger, everyone was hedged in by other people and by a line of busses parked along the curb. The first helicopter of the day flew ominously overhead, back and forth, sweeping over the street. When it became obvious that no one was moving, a smaller segment of the crowd took off down a sidestreet, intent on circumnavigating the blockade. We walked down a block to the left, took the next right, and eventually found ourselves on the opposite side of the intersection. Across the way we could see the crowd that we had just left, still corralled by metal fences and cops. The police had effectively split the march up into separate quadrants, each kept in place on a separate corner. I was in front of an officer holding a baton and wearing some very fancy Nike gloves evidently



Center: The mass rally to protest the inauguration at Pennsylvania Avenue. Top: Many people chose to not "block up" to march with the Black Bloc. Above: Anarchist women with banner before the Black Bloc march.

designed especially for riot cops working the protest beat. Nothing much happened for a few minutes, until someone from the Black Bloc ascended a traffic pole and set up shop above the red, yellow, and green lights—he waved a black flag, lit a small American flag on fire, the cinders tumbled down the street, etc. No one bothered him for the longest time—eventually a police commander made a half-hearted attempt to dissuade him, to no avail. The cops held us at the curb; at one point, for no apparent reason, they pushed all the demonstrators back five feet, then very quickly allowed them to return to the same spot they'd been in earlier (perhaps a practice exercise, or just a chance to vent hostilities?).

Things settled down at the intersection, and the crowd proceeded away from the blockade. The numbers thinned out for a while—I started to think that maybe the momentum had been lost, that the few scenes on the intersection were the high point of the day's conflict. A few protestors started gathering objects from along the street: cones, barricades, pieces of wood, etc. Somewhere along the way they acquired a massive construction cart, approximately seven feet wide and 12 feet long. This they pushed down the street, loading the cones and other refuse inside, until it became a long wooden boat sailing down the avenue. Along the march route a long chainlink fence was toppled (to no effect, and with very little reasoning as far as I could tell, except for the obvious desire to break something tangible). The window of a hotel was smashed with a chunk of cement from the curb. Any pretensions that the mood was settling down quickly evaporated. The crowd suddenly bottlenecked again, coming upon yet another police checkpoint. The majority of protestors scattered out of the way, but the group

pushing the massive construction cart re-aligned themselves, then used the cart like a sledge/battering ram, shoving it full force at the metal barricade, knocking over the fence and pushing a cop out of the way at the same time. Suddenly things were happening very fast, everyone started running full-tilt through the newly busted opening, I linked arms with a stranger and began jogging quick as possible down the street, following close behind the construction cart which was still coasting right down the center line. Before I knew what was happening I noticed a green car parked a few meters up, directly in the middle of the street, a fact that seemed odd given that this was a barricaded area (later I discovered it was an unmarked police car). The group with the loading cart kept pushing the cart, gathering momentum, headed on a collision course for the car. When they got within a few feet they let the cart go, and it smashed directly into the front hood/passenger door area of the car. It was only until my group was running past the scene did I realize that someone had been sitting IN the driver's seat at the time, the guy got out of the car and started yelling, everyone scattered. Suddenly a few blocks up I saw someone from the media, holding a video camera, pointing at a figure lying in nearby bushes. "That's fucking murder," he says, "that's a fucking murderer," pointing at these two kids now lying in the bushes, and everyone gathered around, and the two kids lying in the bushes are mounted by a cop holding his club up over their heads. Everyone gathers around, screaming. I don't know if the kids in the bushes had been responsible for the damage to the car, but in retrospect, I doubt they were. Eventually they were either let go or arrested, and the rest of the crowd dispersed.

From the scene of this debacle it wasn't very far to Pennsylvania

Avenue, the main route that the OFFICIAL inaugural parade was to wind down. Obviously, there were metal corals blocking the street. Protestors pushed up against them, the temperature was again very high, it looked like something was about to happen any minute. The cops were lined up behind the barricades. At this point in time, the proceedings were definitely being directed by the Black Bloc (who receive an unfair amount of media attention/persecution, but in this case it is the truth as I saw it that



The stand off at K Street.

afternoon). Members scattered away from the barricades and held an impromptu meeting in the center of the crowd, meanwhile chastising any of the press who tried to snap a photo of the proceedings. On all sides of the corralled protest group, the "legitimate" organs of dissent were still doing their thing: giant puppets, a group of girls singing the National Anthem in order to make some vaguely sarcastic statement, a couple of people wearing pink paper-machete pig helmets, etc. What had looked harmless and slightly boring in the morning hours soon seemed insufferably ineffective and impotent. The "radical" shout of HAIL TO THE THIEF had been replaced by "1, 2, 3, 4. We declare a class war" and "Capitalism, no thanks..we'll burn your fucking banks."

Keep in mind that this contingent was not, by any means, a MAJORITY of those in attendance, but rather a very vocal minority, and since it was this segment of the protest population that I shadowed for the entire afternoon, it must be understood as a journalistic bias (for the simple fact that the actions of the Black Bloc and sympathizers account for a majority of what I witnessed, mainly because I got very tired of watching people waving signs in the backrow, or chanting charming little insults aimed against George W.). The ideological center of the protest had shifted (at least momentarily) away from the morning's opposition, which had condemned the 2000 election without making any reference to a larger scope. In other words, the concentration had ballooned away from the Florida vote-counting issue and on to less trivial issues (one may argue that the vote-counting issue is certainly not trivial, but it certainly is insignificant if one believes it to be a mere manifestation of an underlying problem within the system. I can think of no better example than a sign I saw that read "R.I.P. DEMOCRACY: 1776-2000," which clearly tried to show the misguided election results as the watermark around which everything went to hell, before which the whole world was just pure sunshine...perhaps a slight attempt to remain patriotic while still raising the smallest rucus possible..).

Back to business: the Black Bloc meeting ends, the decision is made to proceed a block further down, still on Pennsylvania Avenue. Here there is another crowd (mostly peaceful, inobtrusive protestors) again blocked in by metal barricades. In the center of this area there is a large structure, approx. 40 feet tall, from which are suspended various maritime flags. It isn't long before another black-clad protestor mounts the base of the podium and starts unraveling the ropes from which the flags hang. Surprisingly, there are no police during these first moments. There is time enough to undo every string of maritime

flags, pull them down to the street, and then raise a black flag in their place. When the cops do arrive, it's in force. They surround the base of the podium—from what I heard, the Black Bloc members managed to leap off of the podium, over the heads of the police, and into the crowd beyond. Whatever your politics, it was difficult not to find something deeply admirable in this action. With the president about to drive down Pennsylvania Avenue, waving at his support-

ers (most of whom were facing the protestors, across the avenue sitting on bleachers), it was a cheery thought to think that he might do a doubletake when confronted by the skeletal flag structure, stripped of its former color, flying an ominous black cloth that flapped back and forth in the chilled, rainy air.

The next hour or so remains in my memory as a swift conglomeration of confrontations followed by brief relaxations. The cops used no tear gas or rubber bullets, as far as I could tell. When they did attack, it was mainly with plastic shields and clubs. Jabs, of course, were all made down low...if my history is correct, this practice began following the 1968 convention in Chicago, during which the media had a field-day photographing cop's clubs held in the air mid-blow. Now it's fairly difficult to get a good photo of any such thing, mainly because all of the contact is around the torso. It's also interesting to note that the main rallying cry when the police did descend was "The whole world is watching," another verbal crib from that late 60s period.

During the afternoon, I saw one girl get hit, and she was ushered away and given medical attention. Another fight broke out later, between two men in plainclothes. At first I thought two protestors were battling, but it later turned out to be a protestor and a plainclothes cop. There was no real violence on the part of the protestors, albeit the occasional plastic bottle or mass of soggy paper thrown at the riot cops. If anything, the power was in intimidation, as the entire mass of people descending on the advancing cops, literally forcing their lines backward. The amount of video cameras on hand (private and media-operated) probably caused the authorities to think twice about indiscriminately lashing out at non-violent protestors. Physical shoving and intimidation on the part of the police did occur, but as far as blatant attacks, they seemed to occur rarely, if at all. Other post-protest accounts I have read cite the use of tear gas, and early in the route I did notice a large plume of smoke drifting down a sidestreet a few blocks away.

And then, as quickly as it had begun, it was over. Members of the Black Bloc removed their bandanas and suddenly milled about like ordinary mortals. The crowd began to thin, heading away from Pennsylvania Avenue. Militancy was replaced by a jovial, hippy-campfire mood, with protestors beating on drums and dancing haphazardly. Read: the revolution will not be won by force, it will be won with dreadlocked hair and frisbees.

I stood about on the street for a few minutes, unsure of what to do. I looked to my left and to my right. Everyone was leaving. Some

remnants of the parade were still coasting by, huge cartoon floats. The idea of the early afternoon was gone, that sterling image of two hundred people clambering over a metal divide, climbing on secret police cars, dancing with the Republican debutantes as they cowered and the cameras rolled and the whole world watched—this evaporated, replaced by a dirty, soggy sidewalk littered with crumpled banners and placards. The soggy black flag still twittered from its perch on the maritime pole.

Eventually I left, with the rest of the masses, to go take a piss and get much-needed nourishment. The streets surrounding the parade route were calm. A woman in a fur coat stood in front of a hotel, verbally sparing with a passing protestor who dared to criticize her choice of attire.

Later that night, it was back to business as usual. Drinking at the hostel with my new Ohio friends, riding the Metro down to the river at two in the morning. When I left DC on Sunday morning, post-inauguration, snow was falling down. We drove back to New Jersey, there was a new president twitching his hands over our 50 states. The air didn't feel any different.

REACTION

The aftermath of that weekend has lacked the contagious excitement that I felt, shouting in unison with hundreds of other people while four lines of riot cops protected an entourage of black limosines cruising down the street. Compare it to a long comedown after a rosy drug experience, or the unwinding sigh and post-coital cigarette following sex—any metaphor will do. I'm sitting outside in my hometown of New Brunswick, New Jersey, trying to imagine what this small college town would look like if it were overtaken by a crowd of thousands, blocking traffic on the main boulevard. Maybe no one was able to crash the gate on Pennsylvania Avenue, run out arm and arm and surround the parade floats, beating drums, disrupting the solemn military processions, knocking over debutantes with massive paper-mache puppets. This is no sign of failure. The key will come when a method of protest can be found that combines each disparate element—a middle ground between the Weather Underground and Ghandi, free from empty rhetoric, dedicated and unafraid. As they've said a million times, it only takes one small spark to start a fire—and hopefully, some day in the near future, this gate will come. ★

Conspirator for Pleasure

The Arch Conspirator by Len Bracken
(Adventures Unlimited Press, 343 pp. \$14.95)
Reviewed by DMYankowski

For those who are familiar with Situationist theory, Len Bracken is already well known. As the author of *Guy Debord: Revolutionary* (Feral House, 1997), and translator of *The Real Report on the Last Chance to Save Capitalism in Italy* by Italian situationist Gianfranco Sanguenetti (Flatland, 1997) and *The Right to be Lazy* by Paul Lafargue (Fifth Season, 1999), Bracken has made a notable effort along with Berkeley based Kenn Knabb and others to bring the far left Situationists from Europe to a North American audience.

In his latest work, Len Bracken is not solely a pro-situationist, historian, or conspiracy theorist ... he is a chameleon. In fourteen different essays dealing with a wide range of topics from conspiracies to civil war, Bracken reveals himself as a drifter, journalist, outlaw banker, ghostwriter and more weaving in and out of roles as easily as he does epochs in history. Drifting through antiquity to the present, Bracken challenges the ubiquitous notion that history has reached an end.

Wading through everything Bracken presents can be informative but burdensome. For me, the most substantial and compelling essays are chapter 6, "The Neo-Catiline Conspiracy for the Universal Cancellation of Debt", an impassioned appeal for a banker revolt; chapter 12 "A Lucid Assessment of Our Chaotic World: An interview with Ignancio Ramonet", an interview with the editor of the influential leftist paper, *Le Monde Diplomatique*; and chapter 14, "A Zerowork Theory of Revolution Including the General Theory of Civil War".

The last chapter "A Zerowork Theory of Revolution Including the General Theory of Civil War" is Bracken's longest and most developed. Here he creates a civil war typology showing how the state apparatus and civil war protagonists often behave in a covert and short-sighted manner. Drawing from examples in the past and present, he explains how the current ruling class would have us believe we are at "peace" when our situation more closely resembles Sun Tzu's concept of "pure war" where no opposition is feasible. In response to this guise, he attacks the American work ethic as central to social control and suggests a theory by which individuals can reclaim their activity from a work-a-day world and presage a general left-wing revolution.

Today's work environment which requires workers to invest an enormous amount of time in and out of the workplace for disproportionate wages despite technological innovations, national abundance and an absurd proliferation of commodities that could conceivably lessen our workload is analogous to coercive labor. Bracken borrows Nietzsche's definition of a slave to make his anti-work argument: "...those lacking the freedom to

spend two-thirds of their day as they please." However, I would add that just as important as critiquing work itself is critiquing the institutions that feed our work ethic, most importantly family and education. It is the economic dependency and misery cultivated by the embattled family, coupled with the *school-to-work* training camps we call an educational system, that foster a workerist mentality from the beginning. I would also add that community resource sharing and reviving otherwise dwindling voluntary associations in America could be effective in bolstering our independence from paycheck slavery and inducing new economic relationships.

Bracken misses an opportunity to elaborate the best example of work resistance that, in part, led to civil war: The American Civil War. While The American Civil War obviously did not lead to a left-wing revolution, the issue of coercive labor was an important aspect of the debate that raged before and during the war. Instead he brushes it off as a "war of succession" and provides only a short explanation. Recent scholarship has shown that due to daily resistance by slaves such as sabotage, theft, absenteeism, slave revolts and runaways, slavery as an institution was narrowly on the verge of crisis. Instead of devoting so much time to Spartacus' conspiracy, as Bracken did, it may have been more useful to look at Denmark Vesey's slave revolt. Whether we are in fact slaves or the modern equivalent, wage-slaves, valuable lessons can be derived from more recent and geographically strategic examples.

Following the sensuous footsteps of Raoul Vaneigem and Georges Bataille, Bracken unabashedly declares, "Its time to revive and modernize the debates about pleasure that raged in 4th-century Athens." For Bracken, the practical goal of revolution is pleasure. However, in his rhetoric there is a sometimes-subtle machismo. Statements such as "Man gives to woman, who in turn gives by receiving" that seemingly reduce sexuality to intercourse and male initiation should be closer scrutinized.

Employing a heavily romantic tone, *The Arch Conspirator* can be both poetic and excessive. However, facing the crushing blows of economically and socially enforced alienated labor, day after day, has left the majority of us with little recourse but a prolific attack on the work system where every weapon counts including a romanticism that appeals to the popular imagination.

Overall, Len Bracken's chameleon anti-specialization and attack on coercive social relations as manifest in history and currently through work are teaming with insight and inspiration. What *The Arch-Conspirator* needs most is you - the reader - to walk away armed with a delight in pleasure, prepared to conspire against alienated labor in the fight for self management.

Kristian Williams *The Criminalization of Anarchism*

*Lessons from American History:
Haymarket, Sacco & Vanzetti, and the Contemporary Political Climate*

I. Authority and Repression

On November 30, 1999 the political landscape in the United States changed. Unions, human rights organizations, and environmental groups were seen acting in concert against a common foe — the World Trade Organization, and the process of economic globalization it represents. For the first time since the Cold War ended, capitalism was publicly understood as something that could be opposed. And anarchists stepped prominently into the fray, portrayed by an eager media as the extremist fringe of a new movement.

The state's reaction to such opposition is not surprising. It is the nature of power to preserve itself, so any challenge to the structures of society must prompt some response from those who guard the existing order. "Repression is a process by which those in power try to keep themselves in power by consciously attempting to destroy or render harmless organizations and ideologies that threaten their power" (Wolfe 6). Repression may be accomplished through propaganda and other ideological means, or — when these fail — through harassment, violence, imprisonment and the like.

"Criminalization," as I am using the term, has two related meanings. Primarily, it refers to the process by which a group of people, an organization, or an ideology is identified with criminality. Secondly, it refers to the usual consequence of that process, namely that the ideology or organization is treated as though it were illegal or, at the very least, as evidence of a crime, whether or not it actually is prohibited by law. Sometimes this process is managed from above; other times, it emerges as an unplanned consequence of prejudice in law enforcement.

In the language of social scientists, "Criminalization is the assignment of criminal status to people through norm-enforcing mechanisms such as arrest and trial" (Gibbons 38). One way of accomplishing this is to pass a law against some activity in which members of the group are engaged; another is to criminalize the people themselves. There is usually no need to pass specific laws against the group in question, as the directed enforcement of existing, supposedly neutral, laws may produce the same effect (Wolfe 85). For example, there is no law against being African-American, but racial profiling persists and

"driving while black" often leads to police harassment. In this sense, the African-American population has been criminalized.

Since the WTO protests, the strategy of criminalization has been applied to political dissidents, especially anarchists, with vigor. It is not a new approach, but it works. "Thanks to the mainstream media, many people came away from the events in Seattle with images of what they perceive to be anarchism: black-clad youths, faces obscured by bandannas and gas masks, setting dumpsters on fire and trashing Starbucks. . . . [T]his is only a slight variation on the bomb-throwing anarchist with the handlebar mustache who inhabited the pages of American tabloid journalism in the early part of the century. . . ." (Parker 6). The police, the press, and even some demonstration leaders immediately denounced the anarchists, blaming them for the property damage associated with the protests. This, unfortunately, has set the tone for the campaign to follow.

The events of November 30 were certain to have repercussions. In this essay, I will consider the repression facing anarchists today, and draw comparisons to two historical cases — the Haymarket affair, and the Sacco and Vanzetti trial. I will outline the process of criminalization as it has been employed both historically and in our contemporary circumstances, with special attention to the advanced program of repression underway in Eugene, Oregon.

II. Haymarket

The Haymarket affair began the first major red scare in American history, coming as the country was swarmed by strikes demanding an eight-hour day. On May 1, 1886, in Chicago alone, 40,000 workers walked off the job, and another 25,000 joined them in the days following (Yellen 59). On May 3, police attacked a picket line at the McCormick Harvesting Works, killing several strikers. Enraged, August Spies — an anarchist — printed a circular calling a demonstration in Haymarket Square the next day. The flier urged workers to come armed, prepared to defend themselves.

About 3,000 people attended the demonstration at Haymarket, but as night fell and rain clouds gathered, the crowd dwindled to a few hundred (Zinn, *People's* 269). As the evening's last speaker was finishing, 180 cops appeared

and ordered the crowd to disperse. Someone — it has never been determined who — threw a bomb at the police, injuring 76 officers. Seven later died. The police fired into the crowd, killing several protesters and injuring nearly 200 (Zinn, *People's* 265).

Eight anarchists — August Spies, Albert Parsons, Adolph Fischer, Samuel Fielden, Michael Schwab, Louis Lingg, Oscar Neebe, and George Engel — were charged with murder. Of those accused, most weren't even at Haymarket, and those present were on the speaker's platform, in plain sight. Nevertheless, all eight were convicted, seven sentenced to hang. Parsons, Spies, and Engel did hang; Lingg committed suicide while awaiting execution. The survivors were eventually par-

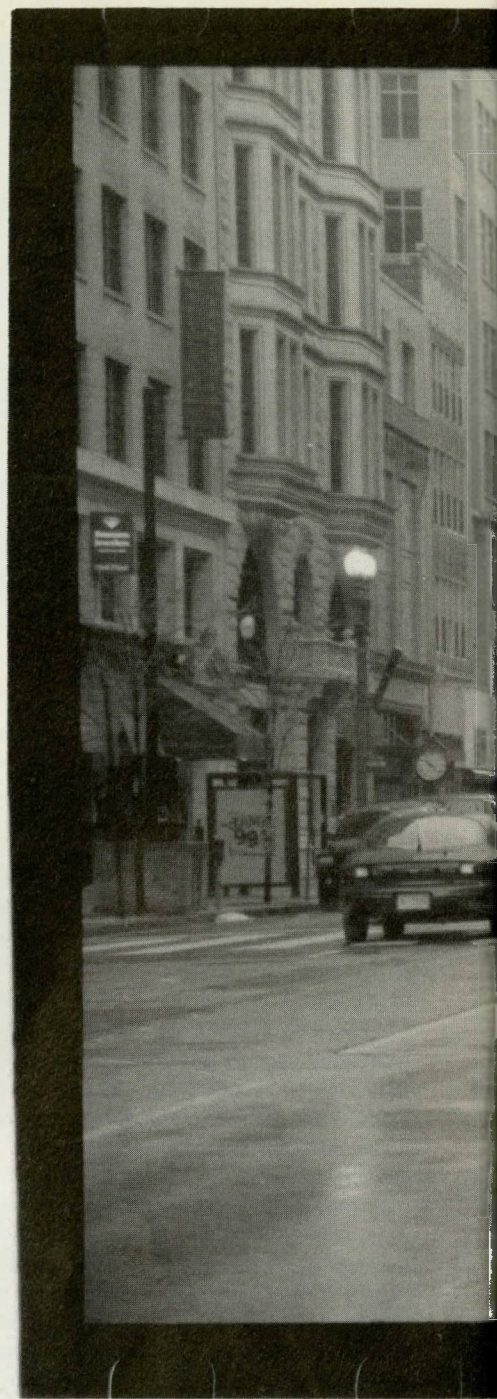




photo by ailecia ruscin

done by Governor Altgeld because, as he put it, "much of the evidence given at the trial was a pure fabrication" (Avrich 422).

The tool for convicting innocent men of a capital offense was the claim that they had advocated violence, and were therefore responsible when violence ensued. The prosecutor's case centered on the claim that, whoever it was who threw the bomb, he had surely been led to do so by the writings and speeches of the accused (Avrich 255). As evidence, the jury was read the most inflammatory anarchist writings available. Some of these were written by the defendants; others were not. Such details were unimportant. Guilt by association was the order of the day.

Outside the courtroom, the press cried for

blood. "Denouncing 'anarchists' and their like as 'vipers,' 'ungrateful hyenas' and 'serpents,' the *Chicago Tribune* characterized the 'toleration' which had been accorded them 'excessive, ill-considered.' . . . the *Chicago Journal* called for 'sharp, decisive measures' and 'prompt justice,' while the *Chicago Times* urged a 'speedy trial' to wipe out the stigma of the Haymarket meeting. . . ." (David 209).

Such rhetoric had the desired effect. "In the popular mind, accordingly, anarchism became identified with foreigners and subversion. . . [T]he stereotype of the anarchist as a foreign-looking, black-cloaked, bomb-wielding fanatic dedicated to chaos and destruction, became firmly established during this period" (Avrich 219). Consequently, the Haymarket

case divided the eight-hour movement, isolating the radicals and removing the defendants from their natural base of support, the labor unions. The Knights of Labor, for example, declared that they had "no affiliation, association, sympathy, or respect for the band of cowardly murderers, cut-throats, and robbers, known as anarchists" (Dulles and Dubofsky 188-9).

The press' efforts also helped justify raids on the homes and offices of other radicals, and attacks against the eight-hour movement as a whole. In the two days following May 4, over 50 raids occurred and countless suspected radicals were arrested. Chicago's Mayor Harris suspended the right of free assembly and ordered the police to break up any demonstra-

tions (Brecher 47). Across the country, state legislatures passed laws restricting the rights of unions, and courts began issuing convictions against strikers *en masse* (Rayback 168-9).

In this climate, the prosecutor managed to turn the trial from a question of guilt or innocence to a contest between anarchy and order. In his closing statement, State Attorney Julius Grinnell made this explicit: "Law is on trial. Anarchy is on trial. These men have been selected, picked out by the grand jury and indicted because they were leaders. They are no more guilty than the thousands who follow them. Gentlemen of the jury; convict these men, make examples of them, hang them, and you save our institutions, our society." (Nelson 192-3). As a result, the eight men were convicted, not because of their actions, but because of their ideas. They were, as Fischer put it, "tried here in this room for murder, and. . . convicted of Anarchy" (Avrich 288).

III. Sacco and Vanzetti

Like the Haymarket martyrs, Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti were targeted for criminal prosecution in large part because of their politics. They, too, were anarchists, caught in a wave of repression during a period of pronounced class conflict. In other ways, however, the cases are very different.

Sacco and Vanzetti were working class immigrants, a cobbler and a fish-peddler respectively. They fell under suspicion when they tried to pick up a friend's car from a garage; the car resembled one used in a robbery a few days before. They were taken in for questioning and charged with the April 15, 1920, murder of a paymaster and guard at the Slater and Morrill shoe factory in Braintree, Massachusetts. On only the thinnest evidence, they were tried, convicted, and on August 23, 1927, executed. Fifty years later, Governor Michael Dukakis pardoned them both, officially declaring that they had been denied a fair trial (Zinn, Upton 463).

Unlike the Haymarket bombing, the crime in this case was not itself political. No one claimed that it was immaterial whether or not Sacco and Vanzetti pulled the heist, or whether they killed the paymaster and the guard. But, as with Haymarket, the successful prosecution of the case relied importantly on

who the defendants were, rather than on the evidence against them. And Sacco and Vanzetti were foreigners, and anarchists.

Ironically, their political views were first



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presented by the defense, as the explanation for their behavior when arrested — for carrying guns, for lying to the police (Morgan xix). Their arrests took place during the Palmer raids, in which foreign-born radicals were rounded up and deported, sometimes by the thousands. Moreover, Sacco and Vanzetti had recently learned that their friend and fellow anarchist Andrea Salsedo had died in federal custody (Zinn, *People's* 366-7). The prosecutor expertly turned their explanations against them, treating their anarchism as evidence of a criminal character. In this, he had a great deal of help from the press: "Every explosion was blocked on the front page into a 'Sacco-Vanzetti Bombing,' when, so far as evidence was concerned, it might have been caused by gas, home-brew, bootlegger's grudge, rack-eteering, or whatnot" (Ehrmann 96). In the end, the prosecutor played on the prejudices of the jury — against immigrants as well as radicals — and worked scant evidence into a conviction warranting execution.

IV. Two Models, One Process

Two models present themselves.

With Haymarket, leaders of a blossoming movement were attacked explicitly because of their prominent roles. The state sought to make examples of them, and hoped at the same time to incapacitate the anarchist movement by eliminating its most vocal and visible leadership. This episode both intimidated other

potential leaders and established the pretext to repress the eight-hour movement as a whole.

The attack against Sacco and Vanzetti was less directed. Here, the police faced an apolitical crime and, short on clues, constructed a case around the most vulnerable suspects on hand. The defendants' politics, their class, and their ethnicity all made them easy marks for the criminal justice system, and the prosecution fit in nicely with a larger campaign against radicalism. But whereas the Haymarket affair represented an attack directed at the leadership of the anarchist movement, the Sacco and Vanzetti case was an opportunistic attack against two representative members.

Despite the differences, each case is an example of a single phenomenon, best described as the criminalization of anarchism. Both trials share this important feature: the state's strategy relied on and contributed to the popular association of anarchism with criminality. In neither instance was anarchism made illegal, but it was treated as though it were — leading to raids, arrests, prosecution, and punishment.

As a strategy for repression, criminalization is especially useful, in that it is self-reproducing. Condemnation of anarchists in the press, for example, serves to promote public prejudice against them, which can then be used to justify arrests and pursue convictions. Prosecutions and convictions, conversely, make good fodder for the media, which then reinforces the association of anarchism with crime. The cycle can begin at either point.

One measure of this strategy's success is the degree to which it isolates the target group from its allies. Whereas other kinds of repression may generate public sympathy, criminalization can lead the "respectable" left to disassociate itself from the group under attack. As a result, the movement becomes divided, and is thereby weakened. Radicals and moderates alike become vulnerable, offering the authorities an opportunity they are unlikely to pass by.

V. A Contemporary Case

Recently, as Eugene, Oregon has gained the reputation as a hotbed of anarchism, it has also become the current standard-bearer for repression against that movement. During the past two years, police in riot gear have attacked almost every demonstration in Eugene, with predictable results — dozens of injuries, arrests, and complaints of brutality (Zucker 8). Such attacks seem motivated by political, rather than legal concerns: of the 80 arrests

[politics]

made during demonstrations between April 24 and June 18, 2000, only 13 resulted in any charges (Eugene Police 7-8).

This strategy has been encouraged, if not engineered, by authorities high in the municipal government. In a July 12, 2000 letter to Mayor Jim Torrey and the Eugene City Council, for example, Lane County District Attorney F. Douglass Harclerod "urge[s] the City of Eugene to use every lawful means to prevent future anarchist demonstrations . . ." (4).

The effects of this repression have reached beyond Eugene, and have been felt outside of the anarchist movement. In March, 2000, police in Tacoma, Washington persuaded leaders in the steelworkers union (USWA) to cancel a mobilization against Kaiser aluminum because Eugene Anarchists were going to come and — according to Tacoma Assistant Police Chief David Brane — "blow up the Port of Tacoma" (Castro A1; Parrish 4). A few weeks later, a May Day demonstration in Portland, Oregon was broken up by police firing less-lethal ammunition, beating demonstrators with batons, and charging the crowd with horses. Nineteen people were arrested, dozens hurt. Official explanations relied heavily on the presence of anarchists from Eugene. (Dawdy 18; Portland Police 5).

Perhaps more troubling than the attacks on demonstrations is the legal campaign against two Eugene-based anarchists — Jeffrey Luers and Craig Marshall. On June 16, 2000, Luers and Marshall were stopped in the nearby city of Springfield for a broken tail light. Eugene police ordered them held and

later claimed to have followed them from a car dealership where two vehicles had been set on fire. The two men were charged with arson, and pled not guilty. A few days later, charges were added relating to the attempted bombing of the Tyree oil company — an explosion which, had it occurred, would have threatened the defendants' own neighborhood and many of their closest friends. Again, they pled not guilty.

While authorities are "not at liberty to share the evidence or the facts associated with the arrests until the appropriate court-appointed time" (Torrey 1), they are only too happy to talk about the defendants' politics: "Authorities say that the attempted arson is the clearest sign yet that anarchists, whose street demonstrations during the past year have sometimes created riots, are willing to put the public at risk to achieve their political aims. 'When people build bombs that are designed to hurt people, designed to damage property, that's not civil disobedience and that's not First Amendment freedom of speech,' said Kent Mortimore, Lane County's chief deputy district attorney. 'That's terrorism, plain and simple, and we're going to treat it that way'" (Denson and Tallmadge A1).

Such scare tactics are familiar from both the Haymarket case and Sacco and Vanzetti's trial. And, true to the script, the authorities have done their best to use the case to isolate the anarchists from their allies. For example, Eugene Police Commission Chair Munir Katul wrote to City Councilor David Kelly: "I was hoping that political leaders such as

yourself would distance this violent hate group from mainstream liberalism. . ." (Councilor 4B). The media, again, has been most helpful in this endeavor, using other suspicious fires to remind the public of the charges against Marshall and Luers. For instance, in a brief article about an attempted police station bombing, the *Oregonian* spent nearly a third of the article outlining the accusations against the two anarchists before noting that "no link had been established with the latest fire" (Incendiary D5).

Though political and media pressures continue to build, the court has been slow to act. A trial for Luers and Marshall began on November 17, and ended in mistrial on November 20, when Luers' attorney died of a heart attack. The fallout from those few days has been complex: Fearful of a seven-and-a-half-year mandatory sentence, Marshall entered a guilty plea on November 22, accepting one count of Conspiracy to Commit Arson and one count of Possession of an Unlawful Device. Both charges refer to the fire at the truck dealership (Bishop 1D). Marshall did not confess to the crime, but only admitted that the evidence existed. He was sentenced to 66 months at the Oregon State Penitentiary. Luers' trial has been re-scheduled for April 3.

The initial trial provided a glimpse into the prosecutor's story. According to Eugene Police officer Greg Harvey, the police spotted Luers and, recognizing him from a demonstration earlier in the day, decided to follow him. He and Marshall traveled together to a ware-

Hideous Dream:

Racism and the US Army in the Invasion of Haiti
(Stan Goff, *Soft Skull Press*, 483 pp.)

Review by Jordan Green

In 1994, the US military invaded Haiti ostensibly to reverse a military coup d'état led by Raoul Cedras and to reinstall the popularly-elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

Stan Goff has written a stunning memoir of his experiences in Haiti as a member of the US military who gradually gained a critical perspective on the neoliberal designs of American foreign policy. Goff was a member of the Special Forces, a division of the Army that specializes in "unconventional warfare and counterrevolution." Perhaps the most famous Special Forces operative was Sgt. Barry Sadler, author of the 1966 Vietnam-era sentimental patriotic anthem, "Ballad of the Green Berets."

The author, who took part in the invasion and describes himself as "in mid-life a budding Red," concludes that the real purpose of the invasion was to head off a genuine revolution in order to ensure Haiti's subservience in the neoliberal global economic order.

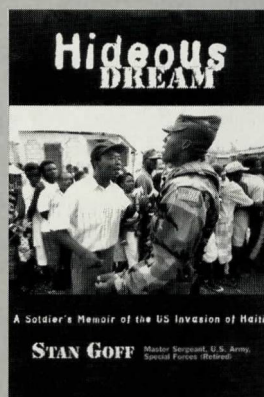
Haiti typifies the "humanitarian intervention" of the Clinton era: a deeply conflicted foreign policy mandate that proved to be a mix of misguided compassion, military posturing of the Empire, and blunt enforcement of the prerogatives of elitist economic control. Indeed, as the occupation developed and troop fatigue set in, the Clinton administration engineered a ruling coalition with Aristide as its titular head and an unbound rightwing FRAPH death squad network free to terrorize the population into submission to guard the interests of the elites.

"The mission was never to restore popular power," writes Stan Goff. "It was to put Aristide's face on a neoliberal fraud."

As reported by Allan Nairn in *The Nation*, US arms shipments crucial to the launching of FRAPH began around July 1993. A Haitian officer trained by the US military told Nairn that he was responsible for procuring weapons for coup leader Lt. Col. Michel Francois.¹

Goff describes the Special Forces as a white supremacist organization, starting with members' use of the demeaning slur "boukies" in reference to Haitians. More alarming is Goff's disclosure that another Special Forces (SF) team, headed by one Master Sgt. Frank Norbury, paraded in T-shirts emblazoned with Nazi SS lightning bolts. Even a member of Goff's team could barely contain his enthusiasm for an impending race war, boasting that he was stockpiling weapons for that eventuality.

In the larger picture Goff paints, however, there is nothing inconsistent about this white supremacist infiltration of the SF with the larger aims of US foreign policy. Indeed the whole history of US involvement in Haiti — from the US Marines' enslavement of Haitian laborers, to US support for the notorious Duvalier regime, to the post-invasion CIA direction of FRAPH² — bears this out. Goff suggests that the paternalism of such a system requires



house, and then to a site near the car dealership. At this point, the police lost sight of the pair, catching up with them outside of Springfield after the fire was reported (Schwennessen, Trial 7D).

BATF agent John Comery testified as to the evidence seized at the warehouse where Luers and Marshall stopped that night (Schwennessen, Jurors 2B). These items — thread, stove fuel, matches, and sponges (Bishop 9D) — provide the only link between the defendants and the incident at the oil company. They were stored in an area to which at least sixteen other people had access (Schwennessen, Trial 7D).

The defense attorneys pointed to the circumstantial nature of this evidence, and highlighted the fact that the material seized consists entirely of common household items. They also noted that there were fingerprints found on the bomb at the oil company which didn't match Luers' or Marshall's (Schwennessen, Trial 7D).

The prosecutor's case leaves unexplained a great deal more. There have been a number of suspicious fires in the Eugene area, both before June 16 and since. Some of these, like the police station bombing, could have been politically motivated; others don't seem to have

been. Even some police sources suspect that they are the work of a serial arsonist, not a would-be Guy Fawkes. Discussing three fires on the night of June 24, Sgt. Jim Fields told the *Register-Guard*, "The fear is someone is just going around starting fires" (Police 3C).

Furthermore, statements alleging a political motive for the fires are clearly speculative: "Company officials aren't sure, but they suspect anarchists may have caused the fire [at the car dealership] in retaliation for the company renovating a piece of property at 7th Avenue and Washington Street, which may have been a popular hang-out. . . ." (Schwennessen, Pair 3B). "The detective said he thinks Luers and Marshall might have targeted the oil company because

of its former affiliation with Unocal, which some environmentalists say is despoiling Myanmar's tropical forests" (Denson and Tallmadge A1).

The details of this situation match well with the pattern developed in the Sacco-Vanzetti case. While Luers and Marshall were known in the area, and made no secret of their political views, it seems unlikely that their arrests were calculated to decapitate the movement. Instead, the police had a crime with no

real leads, so they created a case around two people whose politics and social standing made them vulnerable. The trial fits nicely with a broader campaign of political repression already in effect, and helps reinforce the perception that anarchists are dangerous, bomb-throwing lunatics.

VI. Conclusion

The months following the WTO protests have witnessed a renaissance of police action, including assaults on demonstrations, raids, arrests, and prosecutions. In the course of these events, anarchists have received attention out of proportion to their actual numbers or activities.

This makes sense for a number of related reasons. First, it seems natural that the authorities would target what has been portrayed as the vanguard of a much larger movement. Second, anarchism is already associated in the public mind with lawlessness, chaos, and violence, making it especially vulnerable to criminalization. And finally, there is the inherent antagonism between anarchists and those in power.

Historically, the left's response to similar situations has been neither honorable nor effective. The rush to distance respectable organizations from extremists has made all activists vulnerable to increased repression, and compromised their effectiveness in achieving their aims. If this pattern holds, we can expect



Hideous Dream Review continued from page 87

the use of soldiers trained to view their Haitian conquests as dehumanized brutes, animals, and pathological monsters. His accounts of SF behavior bear this out.

As a self-described "slow learner," Goff originally supported the "liberation" of Haiti. There, he came to recognize a massive naivete in his belief that he could subvert the official order that dictated that US military personnel should collaborate with the Armed Forces of Haiti, who had terrorized the Haitian people. Goff enthusiastically embraced the spirit, if not the letter of "Operation Restore Democracy," putting his team to work detaining death squad leaders, organizing town meetings, cleaning streets, and vetting Haitian soldiers who would be suitable to serve under civilian rule. This eventually led to his removal from Haiti and the Special Forces.

In one particularly beautiful and brutal passage, Goff deftly encapsulates the crushing poverty and stunning spirit of resistance of Haiti:

"Everyone is aware of how poor Haitians are, without really imagining what poor, largely un-

employed people, especially kids, do with their fallow time to avoid feeling sorry for themselves. One thing they do is throw rocks. Haitians, boys and girls, women and men alike, are world class stone hurlers. They practice from a very young age on moving targets. Chickens and dogs . . . If there is nothing else to do, children (and even adults) will pick up a stone and fling it, with near nail driving accuracy, at the unfortunate canine or fowl who has strayed into the impact area. The dogs are especially favored targets, because the marksman is rewarded for his or her accuracy with a satisfying yelp, invariably producing laughter from the marksman and all appreciative spectators.

"I believe if there is really a cosmic justice that transcends death, the Somozas and Kissingers and Hitlers and Suhartos and Sharons and Ollie Norths will be reincarnated an appropriate number of times as a Haitian dog."

Goff's admiration is evident in his account of an anonymous demonstrator flinging a stone across a four-way intersection, across the heads of hundreds of demonstrators, between two American soldiers,

nailing a Haitian sergeant in the head.

Goff, as someone married into a multiethnic family, is described by his interrogator as being "awfully sensitive about the subject of race."

The investigative officer asks, did Goff tell foreign and US journalists that the CIA was probably part of the coup? "I told them that there were connections between the CIA and the FRAPH," replies Goff. "Everyone already knew it. If I sugar-coated it, I would lose all credibility."

"Don't you think that borders on sedition?"

"Only if honesty is tantamount to sedition."

The investigator then takes him to task for acting favorably towards Aristide's Lavalas, the only mass-based political party in the country, and reminds him that he has been ordered to work with FRAPH.

In an earlier section, Goff describes poignantly describes his "baptism by fire in the question of race" as a young infantryman in Vietnam: his erstwhile alienation from the platoon for not sharing in the mirth of a gratuitous killing of an innocent Vietnamese woman and subsequent initiation into the cult of vio-

the repression facing anarchists to rapidly spread. The criminalization of anarchism may prove to be the first step toward the criminalization of dissent altogether. While real differences in ideology, strategy, tactics, and organizational models do exist, and should not be ignored, it is crucial that we not let the state exploit these differences to weaken our movements.

Solidarity is our best defense. ★

For more information on Luers' and Marshall's case, contact:

Eugene Peaceworks
454 Willamette Street #205
Eugene OR 97401

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I am grateful to Missy Rohs, Gaetano, and Daniel Buck for their comments on an earlier draft of this essay.

lence by tossing a burning heat tab onto the thatched roof of a local hovel. "It was a brotherhood of youth," he writes, "engaged, voluntarily or not, in a race war."

Twenty-four years later, Goff finds himself in Haiti, trapped in the same vicious cycle of racist aggression, betraying his conscience by obeying orders to collaborate with the brutal Haitian army:

"I wanted to vomit. I wanted to go home. Here was the badge I sought disappearing before my eyes. I had wanted so badly to do this one thing. One decent thing to salvage me and my country ... One decent thing to make amends for rationalizing the Indians scavenging in the hopeless trash dumps of Guatemala, for ignoring the torture victims in El Salvador, for my ignorance of the Third World that existed 30 miles from Ft. Bragg in the poverty-wracked Black communities of Eastern North Carolina. Just one decent fucking thing as absolution."

The fix was in.

In the final outcome, Aristide finally reclaimed his presidency in November 2000, elected by an overwhelming majority as our own elections remain mired in vicious partisan dispute and tainted by unsettling reports of voter disfranchisement.³ In a country with skyrocketing food prices, a plummeting national cur-

rency, and an internationally-indentured economy, Aristide's Lavalas Party has also taken a majority in the Haitian congress. Earlier this year, Haitian courts convicted 16 coup participants for the April 1994 massacre of hundreds of slum dwellers in Raboteau. Among the convicted was CIA agent Emmanuel "Toto" Constant, who now resides in New York City.⁴

In response, Georges Fauriol, director of the Americas Program at the Center for Strategic & International Studies in Washington, DC (a thinktank which also issued a recommendation of arbitrary detainment and torture of Palestinians in its recent Middle East report) has written a scathing criticism in *The Wall Street Journal*. He attacks Aristide's party for failing to act promptly enough in instituting IMF-mandated structural adjustment and privatization changes and for not instituting judicial reform. "Washington needs to re-impose some discipline," urges Fauriol ominously.⁵

Meanwhile, in 1998 the Special Forces began training the Mexican military — also instructed at the School of the Americas in Fort Benning, Georgia — in counter-insurgency techniques against the Zapatistas.⁶

Goff's account is vivid, poetic, and at the same

time unsparing. He writes with an evident affection for the Haitian people, a distinct notion of his own fallibility, and a dogged if errant thirst for justice. *Hideous Dream* reads as unflinching expose, knowing political primer, and epic human tragedy.

¹ Nairn, Allan, "Haiti Under the Gun," *The Nation*, January 8/15, 1996

² Nairn, Allan, "Our Man in FRAPH: U.S. intelligence's secret ties to Haitian paramilitaries." *The Nation*, October 24, 1994

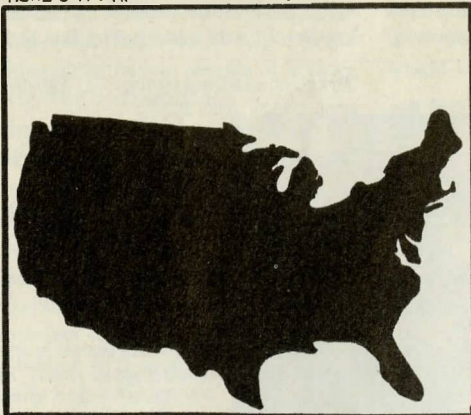
³ Gonzalez, David, "Haiti Cast Ballots, Preparing Way for Aristide Encore," *New York Times*, November 27, 2000

⁴ AP, "Haiti Court Convict 16 in '94 Coup Massacre", *New York Times*, November 12, 2000

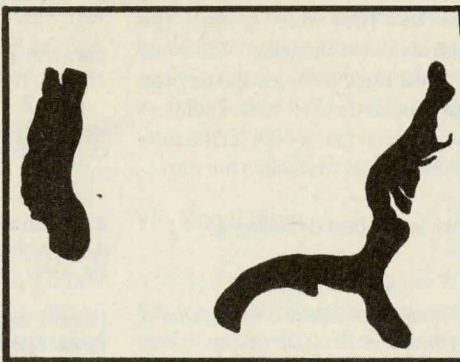
⁵ Fauriol, Georges, "The Americas: A Look at the Record of Clinton's Protégé in Haiti," *The Wall Street Journal*, November 3, 2000

⁶ Reding, Andrew, "The Risk of Using the Army for Too Much," *Los Angeles Times*, August 9, 1998

HERE'S A MAP OF THE LOWER 48.



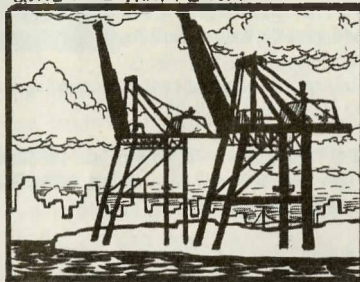
NOW HERE'S A MAP OF THE LOWER 48 AS PERCEIVED BY SOMEONE WHO LIVES ON THE COAST. SEE A DIFFERENCE?



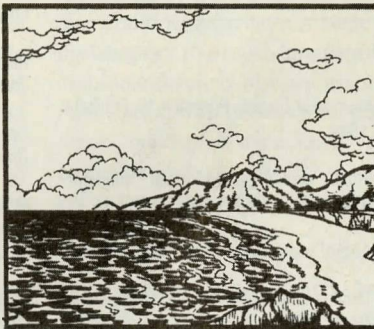
FOR SOME REASON, PEOPLE WHO WERE BORN AND RAISED NEAR THE COAST - WEST OR EAST - TEND TO WANT TO STAY THERE. WHY? I DON'T KNOW FOR SURE, BUT I'M GOING TO SPECULATE.



MAYBE IT'S THE IDEA OF BEING ON THE EDGE OF THE CONTINENT. THIS IS WHERE ALL THE GREAT INTERNATIONAL PORT CITIES ARE, AND WITH THAT AN INFLUX OF NEW PEOPLE, IDEAS, AND CULTURES. THE INLAND PORT CITIES JUST DON'T QUITE HAVE THAT FLAVOR.



OR IT COULD BE THE CLOSENESS TO THE BEACH AND ALL THAT ENTAILS. I'VE KNOWN SEVERAL PEOPLE WHO USE THIS REASON, EVEN THOUGH THEY HAVE NOT BEEN TO THE BEACH IN YEARS!



NOW I MAY JUST BE TALKING OUT OF MY ASS, WHICH I HAVE MADE A CAREER OUT OF. BUT BEFORE YOU DISMISS MY RAMBLINGS, TRY THIS ONE OUT FOR SIZE.



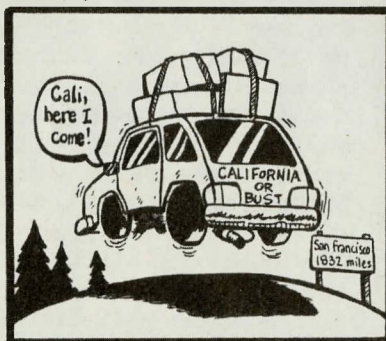
FIND SOMEONE FROM THE MIDWEST OR OTHER INLAND AREA. GIVE HER/HIM A LIST OF VARIOUS CITIES, COASTAL AND INLAND. ASK THEM WHICH ONES THEY WOULD CONSIDER LIVING IN. THEY WOULD MOST LIKELY MAKE DECISIONS BASED ON FACTORS OTHER THAN COASTAL PROXIMITY



NOW GIVE THIS SAME QUIZ TO A COASTAL NATIVE. WHEN AN INLAND CITY COMES UP, THEY PROBABLY WOULDN'T CONSIDER LIVING THERE. AND WHAT'S THE REASON?



YES, IT'S IRRATIONAL! BUT HEY, I'M A CASE IN POINT! I MOVED FROM EAST COAST TO WEST, WITHOUT THINKING OF STOPPING ANYWHERE IN BETWEEN!

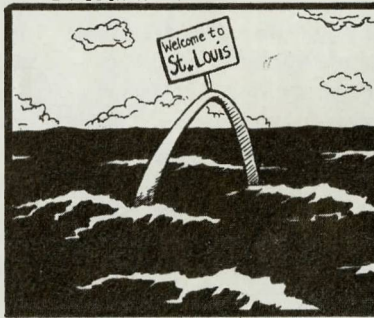


shawntfr@hotmail.com

AT BEST, A COAST-ER WILL MOVE TO CHICAGO AND PRETEND THAT LAKE MICHIGAN IS THE OCEAN.



IF THOSE INLAND CITIES **REALLY** WANT TO ATTRACT MORE PEOPLE, ALL THEY NEED TO GET IS A SEASHORE! THEN AGAIN, WITH GLOBAL WARMING, THAT MIGHT HAPPEN SOONER THAN WE THINK!



SHAWN GRANTON ★ FEB 2001

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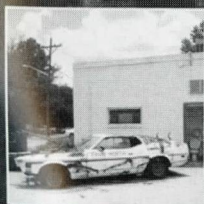
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-Mos Def, *New World Water*