

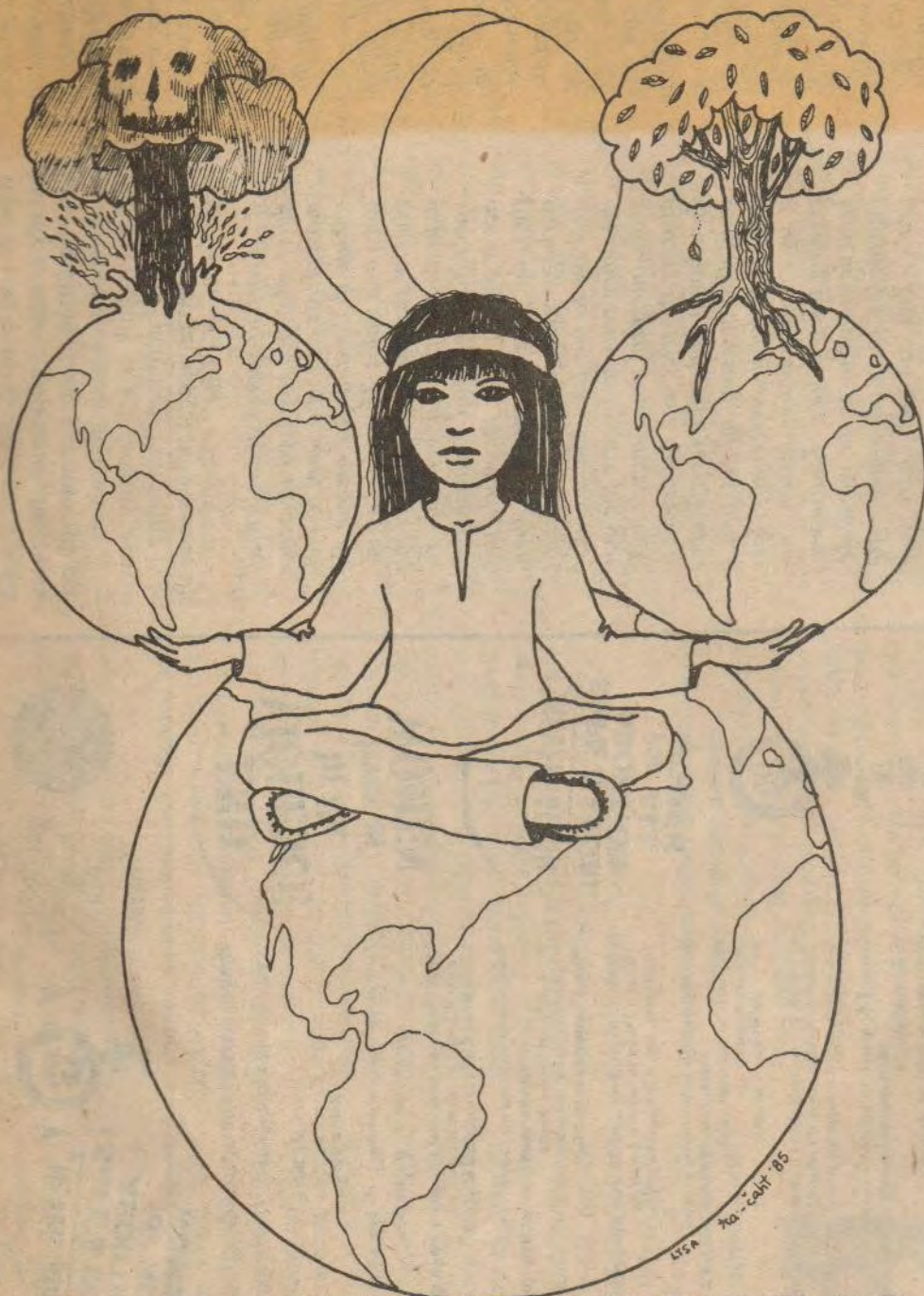
KICK IT OVER

NO. 14

WINTER 1985/86

"THINK GLOBALLY" ISSUE

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Poisongirls Interview

Bookchin's Radical
Democracy

Chomsky on
Central America

Jerk-off Politics

Italian Green
Movement

Mohawk World-View

Sexual Anarchy

THE TIME TO CHOOSE IS

NOW!

cover art by Lisa Chipps-Sawyer

"All these things are related..."

an interview with Jake Swamp, Chief of the Wolf Clan (Mohawk Nation)

Introduction

Anarchism may be a European doctrine, but anti-authoritarian traditions exist in almost all cultures. This is something *Kick It Over* would like to explore more in future issues. In this excerpt of a longer interview (parts of which appear in the "End of Year" 1985 issue of *FUSE*, 489 College St., fifth floor, Toronto, ONT M6G 1A5), Jake Swamp talks about the political traditions of the Iroquois people and how they've influenced the ideologies and structures of both the U.S. and the Soviet Union. If you're interested in learning more about the Iroquois perspective, write to *Akwesasne Notes* newspaper for a copy (\$1.50 plus postage), Mohawk Nation via Rooseveltown, New York, 13683, U.S.A.

Our people, when our constitution came into being, were diverse, they were divided and they had wars amongst each other. We call this the "dark period" when people ruled by their strength alone. The strongest was the one that ruled. It wasn't 'til later on that the Peacemaker was born and raised, and he was taken in by our people. He came to our people first — the Mohawk people — because they were the worst ones. We are told they were even cannibals, eating other human beings; they were so mean and bad. And the different villages of the Mohawks were situated in such a way that they were at constant war with one another and with the other villages.

There really were five nations at the beginning, but our nation is the first one that consented to follow another way. This is when our constitution came. This is when it's told that, now from this day on, you are ruled by council. When you have problems amongst yourselves, you will settle your disputes by council. No more will warfare be known.

And so they (the Mohawk people) travelled amongst the other nations we were at war with and now we became one. We were the first United Nations of the world — five nations unified themselves into one body, one heart. And from this sprung the white roots of peace, they call it. They planted a great tree — a white pine. They uprooted this tree, and in this cavity, they threw all the weapons of war, and they said that undercurrents of war travelling fast under the ground would carry away all these weapons and nobody would ever see them again.

So they planted the tree again. They said from now on: all you leaders — 50 leaders in the whole Confederacy — will counsel your people forever under the principles of the tree of peace. And those principles are that all the people will be of one level — nobody will be higher than the other — and all the leaders are all of equal height. And all the people have a voice. The leaders, instead of making decisions for the people, the decision comes from the people, and the leaders sanction the decision.

The woman is the leader of the nations. She is the one that appoints the leaders because she is the one that raised the people, she is the one that raised the men and the children. She knows exactly what they're going to be as a person. So he doesn't know — the leader doesn't know — if he's going to be a leader. They come to him and put him in that position. If a young man should want to become a leader and tries to be a leader, immediately it disqualifies him because he wants to be a leader (*he laughs*). It's a real humble position and that's how it operates. The principles behind this is the natural surroundings, and, whenever we gather for a meeting or for ceremonies, the first thing that happens is to make our minds clear about everything that's around us. We do a thanksgiving ceremony for

each and every element of nature. Before we even start to talk about the issues, we have to first bring our minds together as one in relation to our natural surroundings, and then that creates the atmosphere to go ahead and talk about our problems, because when you make a decision about something, naturally it's going to affect maybe the water, or maybe it's going to affect the trees. So keeping that kind of foundation in your mind about life itself before you make any serious decisions, it's going to help with the decision.

We are broken up into three parts here in Akwesasne by clans — clan families. And those clan families, when they come together, are how we make laws. We have a structure where the issues are put to one clan. They deliberate on these issues, after they have deliberated for some time and have come to a conclusion, they pass it over the fire to the next house, or next party, which is our clan, and we deliberate on this question also, and, if we become of one mind with the other house or the other side, together

come to a decision, we present it to the third clan, and they have veto power over that decision. If something is wrong with it, they have the power to send it back.

And, in the meantime, the clan mothers are sitting there and they're watching the proceedings of the Council. If one of the leaders walks away or strays from the Constitution, and its law of watching out for the seventh generation, she will direct him to go outside, and he'll go out the men's door, and she'll go out the women's door, which is in the east. She'll take him aside and give him a scolding (*he laughs*) and, when she thinks he's ready to go back and continue Council, she'll let him go back and continue, and he'll continue to counsel, but she'll watch him real close. And if he makes a mistake again, this time she takes one of the men who takes care of the ceremonies, who takes care of the spiritual things. Together they'll go outside and they'll have council together, and he'll lay out the principles, or the law, to remind him of the sacred duties he's been entrusted with, and to come back to where he's supposed to be. And again he goes back in, and again he continues to counsel. The third time — that's it! (*He laughs*.) And she'll get the meanest one — the biggest warrior, and she'll say to him: "It's all in your hands."

And the warrior will lay it out: "Today, as the sun is shining in the heavens, you have been wrong in your



Chief Jake Swamp

handed down throughout the centuries. When they take the horns off, blood starts to come out of his horns. It's only a symbol; it's not really happening.) "Alone you will walk the forests. If anybody should decide to follow you, they too will no longer recognize their path or their way in the forest." That's how it is when they remove the title from a chief; it's like he's alone. He can be here, but he's alone. There's no more purpose to his life because he can no longer see the future. That's what is meant by the blood — it covers his vision. It's very seldom that it ever happens. I've only seen or heard of it once. It doesn't happen very often.

(At this point, there was an interruption, and when Jake began speaking again, he did so by making reference to an earlier part of the transcript which does not appear here — ed.)

Getting back to the United States Constitution patterning itself on the Confederacy, back in 1754 there was a meeting at Albany, New York. This is when they came together, the 13 colony leaders. They were always quarrelling amongst each other. Virginia, and all these different places, they were always quarrelling about lands and lines of demarcation, who had control of this area or that. So, our leaders, at that time, were watching these people who were trying to survive in our land that's foreign to them, and were always arguing with each other and about their existence. And, since they (the Mohawk people) have been living this way for many centuries — governing themselves and it's been working for them — they said, "Why don't we come and show you how to govern yourselves so you will not quarrel so often." So they brought these belts, their wampum belts, and took them and travelled to Albany.

Today, if you go into the museum in Albany, you'll see a picture of this meeting. Benjamin Franklin was there, and all those people. In fact, Benjamin Franklin later said, "These ignorant savages have such a good system amongst themselves, why don't we do the same?" You can really pinpoint how the Revolutionary War became born from that day on if you follow the history real close.

But to take it further, they only took part of it. They didn't give a voice to the women. Their voice only started to be heard maybe 50 years ago, and they had to demand it. On the other hand, communism, Marxism — all that stuff — I think that had its roots here also. Because Lewis Henry Morgan came over here and studied our people in the Confederacy. He studied economic history and how we interrelated with each other. He went back and Karl Marx picked up on his book, and another revolution got started. So all these things are related. □



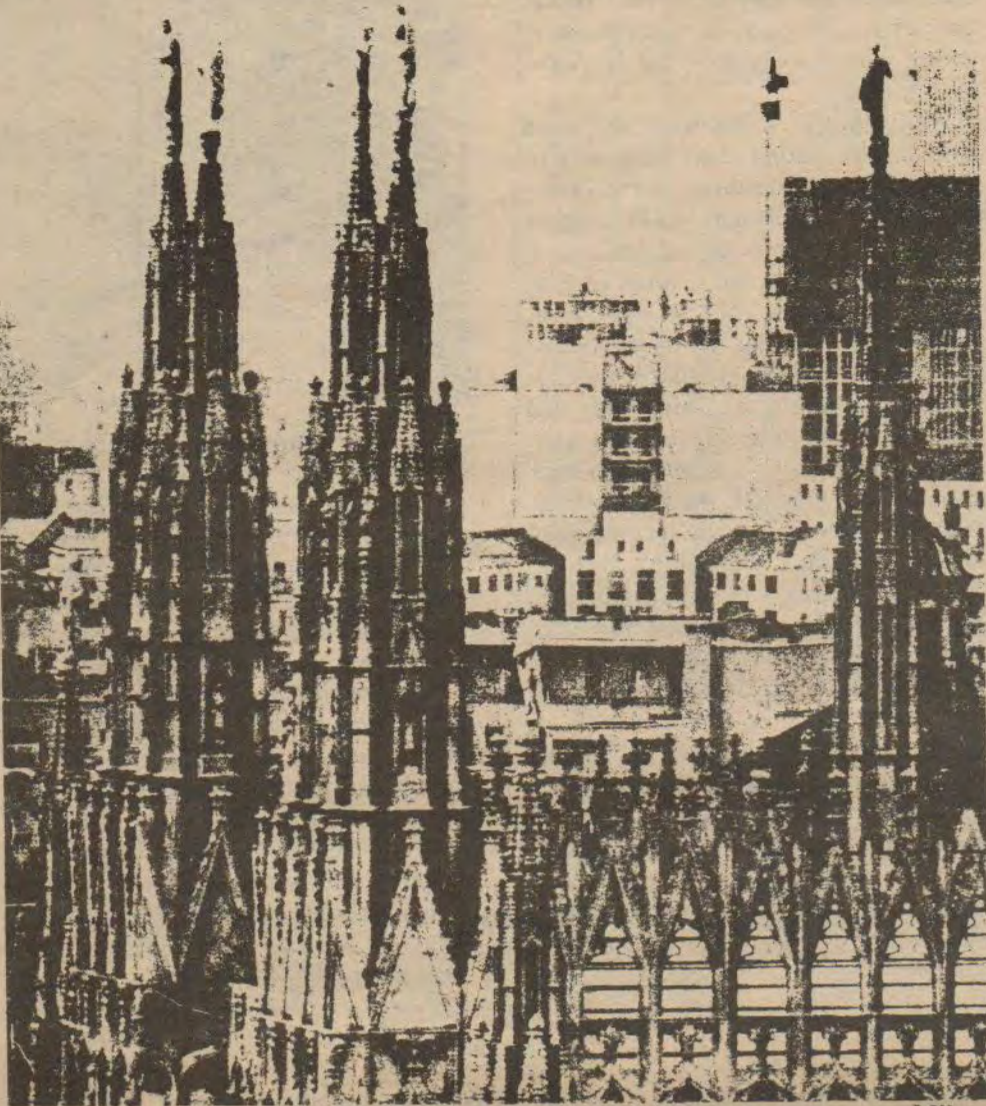
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our minds have become one, so it becomes law between the two houses. What is done now is that, while all the deliberations are going on between the two houses, there are people watching — sitting and listening. And after we've

actions. Your mothers have requested I remove your title from you." (The title is signified by deers' antlers. When a man becomes chief, they put antlers on his head as a symbol of his position and, with it, goes a name that has been

The Greening of Italy

Luciano Lanza



Milan

This article appeared in a recent issue of *Volontà*, an anarchist journal published in Milan. Translation was done by a friend of the collective, Gianni Corini, and edited by Ron Hayley and Alexandra Devon.

March 26, 1985. It's ten p.m. Milan lies grey and polluted but, as irrational as it may seem, I love Milan; it's my home town after all. Suddenly, the phone rings. I am rather annoyed. I've had a long day which just ended an hour ago with a meeting about the latest issue of *Volontà*. I pick it up. My annoyance turns to astonishment when I discover a representative of the Milanese Green Party at the other end. The conversation

unfolds like this:

Green: "Dear Luciano, what do you think of Bookchin's anarcho-communalism?" I don't understand. I pause and then say, "Interesting position; it should be thought through further, I guess." My caller boldly goes on: "We have to get a list of people together here in Milan that believes in the rotation of duties." I still do not understand what he is getting at, so I say, "Good." The Green presses on: "The representatives will have to express the collective will, and they will have to be accountable at all times. We have to establish a new rapport between constituents and their elected representatives to get rid of professional politi-

cians." Frankly, I've heard him state these very same things on other occasions. I do not understand why he is repeating them to me now — at ten o'clock at night. Finally, he gets to the point: "Luciano, I proposed your name to the committee, and I am in charge of asking for your participation. Would you be our candidate?" A loud, irrepressible laugh deafens the Green's eardrums.

Really, I did not expect such a proposition. I recover right away and shilly shally. "What do I have to do with it?" The Milanese Green tries to win me over with flattery, listing my political accomplishments. The phone call ends with the Green urging me to think it over and to give him an answer, a positive one he hopes, within seventy-two hours.

My answer will instead be negative. I have never liked electoral competitions. I am a convinced abstentionist, and I am not about to change my opinion at the age of forty. The strength of my convictions is certainly not due to conformism, but because I believe the reasons which have kept me from the ballot box are still valid. To be honest, that phone call is creating a problem. In view of the next administrative elections, I was going to write an editorial on the Italian Green movement. I had gotten together preliminary information and documents, and had interviewed a few Green list representatives. I was all set, thinking I had researched as much as I wanted to, and was all set to put pen to paper when the phone call, proposing my candidacy, came. Now, if I were to be easy on them, readers would doubt my objectivity. On the other hand, if I'm too harsh, they might think I want to keep as much distance as I can from them for fear of being identified with my unsuccessful "colleagues". It would not be fair to pass the buck to someone else on the *Volontà* staff; therefore, let's go get 'em!

The Ecological Movement in Italy

It is a known fact that in Italy a true and proper ecological movement does not exist. Turmoil, sporadic struggles, and local initiatives to protect the environment are a new phenomena in Italy, except for a few isolated instances. The Italians were the last ones in Europe to realize that our cities were polluted, as were our fields and coastal waters. The Mediterranean itself is becoming a huge waste dump, polluted by state-owned and privately-owned industries. The disgusting and alarming situation of the environment failed to stir the conscience of many. It was thought that the revolution would settle everything, pollution included. Then, the revolution slipped further away and, finally, in greater numbers, people started to realize that it might be worthwhile to do something to save the environment before taking over the Winter Palace.

Besides this, the expansion of the ecological movement in other European countries provides a strong impetus: committees were born, collectives with all possible shades of Green were created. As I mentioned earlier, this is a very recent phenomena and cannot boast a long tradition as in Northern Europe. Already, in the mid-sixties, the

Provos in the Netherlands had launched a campaign against pollution created by vehicles in cities. Hundreds of white bicycles in Amsterdam appeared. Anyone who wanted to could use them to move around, leaving them behind when they were finished for the use of others. There was a lot of interest in this experiment, which can be considered the first political initiative with ecological content. Such initiatives were not taken into consideration in Italy, and were regarded as a Northern European neo-anarchist extravagance.

So, here we are in Italy in the middle of the eighties in a situation of extensive environmental degradation, where our few remaining natural parks are severely threatened. Motives to initiate the ecological struggle are therefore abundant; ecological groups are responding to an objective reality. But we also know that an objective reality is not enough to stir up a mass movement. The need has to be felt and become part of people's consciousness (of their values or priorities) for it to become a social and political issue. This is obvious, and does not require further comment.

An ecological movement does not yet exist in Italy, but we have scattered groups in almost all cities, the development of which is being nursed by direct involvement in administrative elections. This approach is rather curious and abnormal. Usually, we witness the codification, in political terms, of a social issue when it has already taken a non-institutional shape and developed into a movement. What we are seeing, in this instance, is the reversal of the traditional dynamic: first, the political form, and then the movement (*not unlike Canada — ed.*).

The Greens to the Elections

To give a detailed account of the Greens' political program is a difficult task, for under the common umbrella of environmental protection exist different proposals, depending on the cities and the regions formulating them. The Green promoters are a very heterogeneous bunch. You go from the radical environmentalists to refugees from '68, passing through all possible shades up to the old sleazy, traditional politicians attempting a recycling into the Greens.

As I've pointed out: very different people and programs. From infiltrating the institutions to protect the environment to the utilization of institutions to gain for people the possibility of discovering a sort of direct local democracy; from absolute bio-degradability to the desire to form a new semi-traditional political force; from the rejection of political professionalism to the old-fashioned militance; from an uncompromising "against everybody for a different kind of green" to the "consciousness for a political mediation". The question is: how to single out those elements which will give us the key to interpret this new phenomenon?

It's almost two months until the elections and it's difficult to give an adequate answer to this question. Yet, after speaking with a few Green representatives, having polled the opinions of sympathizers and supporters, it may be possible to formulate a cautious evaluation. The most interesting data emerging from the green puzzle is the

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use, partially alternative, of the local institutions, specifically the municipal councils. In fact the Greens were able to "radicalize" rotation of elected representatives like the Partito Radicale did a few years ago. If biodegradability were to be practiced, it would introduce a new element in the way institutional politics is done. The elected turn into delegates with a provision for withdrawal which makes them more like the carriers of a collective voice than an unquestioned representative. This is, of course, what they say they will do, but there's no guarantee they will carry it out. Yet, in making an analysis of the Greens, the above is a marginal issue. In other words, in order to understand the political novelty of the Greens, their good will is to be treated as a secondary factor. The glib guarantees of the Greens will wind up succumbing to the iron logic of power which will probably preempt these intentions. As an anarchist, I am too shrewd to fall for it; I know that every new forming political structure loves, at times in good faith, to come across as the element able to break the established logic of the management of public administration. Albeit, my "historical memory" does not prevent me from comprehending the positive aspects of the question: a new "party" believes itself to be the interpreter of the social need for direct democracy. And it will answer to the question with a mediation: the introduction of direct democracy where the decision-making process is taking place, i.e. in the existing political institutions.

One could assume that, in Italian society, a will to participate is shaping up, a request to partake in the decision-making process after the long years of regression and post-regression. With one substantial difference though: the political commitments of the sixties and seventies are definitely gone. The great ideologies, the comprehensive visions of the world are no longer moving the socio-political subjects of the eighties; what's moving them are problems and interests which may be limited, but which are definitely concrete, feasible, and capable of being accomplished today, not banished to a tomorrow truly radiant, but equally remote.

The social commitment of the "avant-garde" has therefore substantially changed in the last twenty years; it has become something different — something more recognizable in facts than in ideas, greater in particularity than complexity, stronger in realization than in hope, more in the real world than in dreams.

This is the context, very problematic at that, which we can draw from the Greens' program: partial transformation but a program which is readily applicable — from the existing institutions to the existing institutions. The Greens insert new themes into these institutions, and they are able, perhaps, to modify some aspects of their management. The whole thing can be assessed in two opposite ways: The Greens as the newest element trying to return credibility to the institutions, and as an entity interested in making a few changes in the short run, because to change everything seems impossible.

Anarcho-Communalism

Participation in managing local or peripheral institutions as part of an effort to bring politics into direct contact with people is not an option of the Greens alone. Murray Bookchin, the

leading anarchist theoretician in North America, considers "libertarian municipalism" to be possible, and not contrary to basic anarchist principles.

I better stress that Bookchin's municipalism differs greatly from Italian Green proposals mainly because it arises in a totally different social context, and also because it is seen as a way to transform society radically. A superficial reading of Bookchin's last book, **The Ecology of Freedom**, could lead one to believe that the important thinker is not very far from the position of the Greens. It was not coincidence that the Green representative cited Bookchin's anarcho-communalism to me on the phone. In an article not yet published in Italy, "Theses on Libertarian Municipalism", Bookchin makes his heterodox proposal more explicit. Elaborating on his earlier thoughts on libertarian municipalism (*the idea that radicals should seek to democratize local institutions — ed.*), Bookchin defines a new municipal politics as a "dual power" that counterposes committees, councils and assemblies and interfederal forms to the centralized power of the state. The perspective of dual power would not compromise anarchist, anti-authoritarian principles; on the contrary, it could change the way of being and function of the municipal councils so that validity and legitimacy can be given to more advanced forms of direct democracy. Also, according to Bookchin, the participation of anarchists in municipal institutions should be given deeper consideration without rejecting the idea with aprioristic positions. He finds it curious that anarchists, while always ready to look positively on a collectively-run industrial enterprise, are deeming participation in municipal politics — and, therefore, in elections even such elections as could lead to the establishment of local councils and other forms of direct democracy — to be repugnant. Bookchin's proposal gives consideration to forms like the town meetings, particularly in New England, which are a heritage of the American Revolution. To find similar structures in Italy, we have to go back to the time of the initial stages of the Free Cities (Communes) — that is, to the first centuries of this millenium. Therefore, in Italy, we cannot count on such a tradition. This circumstance makes it more difficult to understand the spirit of Bookchin's proposal. In theory, at least, nothing should prevent us from discovering or rediscovering the municipal sphere as a common ground for anarchists to intervene in and re-invent the practice of direct democracy. We will have to ask ourselves whether this road is viable and, moreover, productive.

In my opinion, it is certainly not in the situation like the one we are facing in the next election. Moreover, we have to ask ourselves whether it will be possible to modify, even with the radical action proposed by Bookchin, the logic of local institutions which are so strongly infiltrated with the logic of central institutions, i.e. statism.

Finally, anarcho-communalism in Italy today is unthinkable for the simple reason that it would not rest on a reality made up of local councils, libertarian associative structures, and forms of direct democracy. It could not be anything else, therefore, than a "black and red" (*the colours of anarchism*) variation of "Green" practice — for the top, another chance to develop a new way of "doing" politics for the bottom; in practice, the negation of anarchist action. □

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How would you describe a situation where five people work 150 person-hours and pay \$1200.00 of their own money to receive \$650.00 in return? Ridiculous? Unfair? Exploitive? We call it par for the course at **Kick It Over**.

Many people who have never been involved with publishing don't understand the financial realities we face. When people ask how many paid staff we have, I know it's time to explain a few things. We probably pay \$4.00 an hour for the privilege of working like dogs four times a year. We're a capitalist's dream!

Seriously, folks, we hear a lot about deficits these days. Well, we at **Kick It Over** are building up a monstrous one, both financially and in terms of energy. "How can I help?" you sob. We're glad you asked. There are lots of things to be done. Renew your subscription (even if it hasn't run out yet), give a sub. to a friend or suggest to someone they subscribe, send donations, become a distributor or talk to a local bookstore about carrying us. If you live in Toronto and would like to help with the work of producing the magazine, write to our post office box with a phone number, and we'll phone you back.

However, if you don't think **K.I.O.** ought to continue, just relax, put your feet up, don't do anything and eventu-



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ally maybe we'll disappear. It's much easier for a publication to die than to be born or to continue. So, on this — the fourth anniversary — consider whether or not you want to help us hear each other into existence, as a diverse, caring global community.

— the **Kick It Over** collective

p.s. Our most heartfelt thanks to all our sustainers, subscribers, distributors, readers and to those of you who have encouraged us by writing letters of support.

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an anti-porn feminist meet an s/m dyke?
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SONGS OF SUBVERSION

an interview with

POISONGIRLS

by Lynna Landstreet

Poisongirls, who recently played in Canada for the first time, at Lee's Palace in Toronto, are a British band who have their roots in the punk movement, but have grown much more musically diverse over the eight years they've been together. One thing that has remained consistent, though, through the five LP's, two EP's, and numerous singles (I think that's right) that the band has released, has been their commitment to their anarchist-feminist political convictions, expressed through both their lyrics and their involvement in the independent music scene. After releasing several records on the Crass label, they started their own label, XNTRIX, on which many other bands, such as Toxic Shock, Rubella Ballet, and Conflict got their start. One thing that particularly distinguishes Poisongirls, within the predominantly youth-oriented punk movement, is lead singer Vi Subversa's age — she recently turned 50. Also, the band's emphasis on feminism stands out, since even the politically-oriented punk bands tend to be mostly male-dominated.

The Toronto gig was quite an experience for me, not only because I got to meet and talk to my favorite band, but because it was the first time I'd attempted to organize a show. Even though I didn't do it all on my own, it was still very empowering to realize that putting on a gig is not some kind of arcane skill belonging only to an elite few, but something that anyone can do — with the advice and help of some friends. I also discovered that ticket prices don't have to be as high as they usually are. We managed to keep it down to \$6.00 — less than a lot of North American bands charge. Unfortunately, one of the side effects of organizing a gig is that you may be deluged with requests to organize shows for other bands, benefits for every political group you've ever participated in, etc. One thing that I'll try to do differently in the future is to hold all-ages shows, rather than using a licensed club, which can make an event inaccessible to anyone under 19 (unless they look older or have fake ID). Although, of course, we didn't ask anyone for ID, some clubs may insist on having their own people working the door, in which case the organizers have little or no control, unless they want to pass out free fake ID outside (Now there's an idea!).

I interviewed Vi Subversa, guitarist Richard Famous, bass player Max Volume, and drummer Agent Orange (the latter two have only been with the band a year) before the show.

KIO: On the new album, *Songs of Praise*, it sounds like your views on feminism have changed a bit.

VS: Well, there's been a lot of things happened. I first started using the word "feminist" about 10 years ago, and there was an assumption, a sort of magical assumption, suddenly, between women, that we could talk honestly to each other, that we could trust each other, that we could work together. And we did, and I think that we — when I say we, I mean I'm speaking for a lot of women — have actually changed the face of the world somewhat. But meanwhile, we're not working in a vacuum, and there's been a considerable backlash. The status quo has, I think, learned to incorporate us, and to defuse us quite a lot. The statement that opens that album is "I don't believe in the brotherhood of man. No state of grace, no five year plan." That's saying that the state of our system politics needs a kick up the ass. We can't take anything for granted anymore. And then I go on to say "I don't believe in sisters against the men. My sister has betrayed me yet

again." That's saying the same to us as women. What I'm wanting to say, what I'm wanting to do, is to say that we can't take anything for granted. I feel like going right back to first principles, to square one. We've got trapped in a lot of dogma, trapped in notions of what we think we ought to believe, and what we ought to be doing, and how we ought to be relating to each other. And some of it's just not true. It's just not happening, there's a lot of bullshit about it. So in a way I haven't changed, I've just had ten years of quite exciting and also quite tiring experience. And what I want, and I'm challenging any woman who wants to tackle me about it like you are, is to say: Let's not give up. Let's not lose heart because of what's happened, either in the lies between us or in the backlash that's coming back at us. Let's be brave enough to start again, where a lot of women started ten years ago, and indeed ten years before that, it's ongoing. So that's where I am, I'm prepared to start again. Whatever we've done of value in the last ten years will stay. I don't want to hang onto any false sec-

urity about what feminism is.

KIO: I've found that a lot of people, mainly because your lyrics are so strongly feminist, tend to assume that it's an all women band. How do the men in the band feel about that?

AO: Well, it's nothing if not deliberate.

RF: For me, the politics of Poisongirls comes under the heading of feminist, but it also comes under the heading of personal politics. I mean, the advances in the ways of looking at problems that came through what happened within the women's movement, I think, is the main change in politics that has happened over the last ten years. And Poisongirls for me, and I've been there since day one, has been about trying to make it possible to sing about things that are real. And if that means that that's defined as feminist, that's fine by me. I don't — well, I've juggled with the ideas, but I don't consider myself a feminist, because I don't think I can, it's not possible. But I also don't think it's impossible for me to be in a band which talks about personal issues from a woman's point of view. Especially seeing as Vi's such a strong and fluent thinker and speaker and poet, and in that way, I think that the ideas that go into the band are beyond feminism inasmuch as they're pushing away boundaries and not stuck with dogma.

VS: Well, I think that, what you said about it being about issues of reality, is

that feminism created a context for women to redefine reality, in a way that gave us some space, and that, before that, my childhood didn't seem to give me much space in the way that it gave boys space. There were a lot of places and a lot of activities that were out of bounds to me. And over the last few years, we have — women in the women's movement have — been pushing out the boundaries, trying to create more space for ourselves. And of course, this is going to change the view that men have of what space is available to them. They've got to share space more. I mean, I work with men, and I'm a sexual being, most of my life I've had heterosexual relationships — that's a horrible word, but I've loved men and loved with men. I've also had some relationships and loved with women. And all of us are sort of redefining what's possible. And as women take more space, the reality is that a lot of men, from the beginning and maybe still, are afraid that's going to leave them with less space, but I don't think that's right, actually. I think it's reclaiming space for all of us.

MV: (first part cut off by being too far from the tape recorder) ... Now men are taking on that responsibility too, on a very personal level. That's a huge problem for men too, and that is incorporated in feminism as well.

RF: I'd just like to say that I don't think the name "Poisongirls" was chosen as

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This is not a target. It is a peace symbol on the back of a young Muscovite.



Vi Subversa

Reviewer Reviewed

Ladies and Gentlemen:

George Woodcock's strangely negative article on the film "1984" (*Kick It Over*, June, 1985) is too biased and smug to have any value as a film review. At the same time that it fails to illuminate the film, however, it reveals a good deal about George Woodcock.

Right from the start, Woodcock tips his ignoble hand by setting up a straw man to knock down. John Hurt's Winston Smith looks like Orwell from behind, he declares, and this is a "cheap and elementary device for incorporating the author rather inappropriately into his own novel." It's doubtful that even Woodcock really believes this, since only a handful of people alive today know what Orwell looked like from behind, and neither the film's maker nor its typical audiences are among them. More likely Woodcock makes this glib, stupid accusation not for its overt content but for its indirect effects. It one-ups the reader and enables Woodcock to replace the challenging, legitimate question "Is this a good movie?" with the safe pseudo-question "What would Orwell think of it?" (to which nobody, including Woodcock, knows the answer). Most importantly, it gives Woodcock a pretext to pretend to speak for Orwell.

Having thus cloaked himself and his opinions in specious authority, Woodcock goes on to display a curious hostility toward the film's most central feature, John Hurt's portrayal of the protagonist, Winston Smith. Woodcock willfully understates this role's importance. He denies Hurt any credit for the film's good points and even begrudges him the back-handed respect implied by sustained negative attention. Woodcock feebly concedes that Hurt "acts well" but at the same time insists that his performance is bad enough to make whole chunks of the film "meaningless." Woodcock expresses these opinions only in passing, however; he

saves his really serious criticism for the film's settings.

Now, as a matter of fact, Woodcock's complaints about the settings are ill-founded too, because the settings are good. Far from compromising the story's "cautionary" intent, their drab, generically 20th century institutional look has a timeless familiarity that underscores the story's universal modern relevance. (By contrast, the alternative settings Woodcock suggests would have seemed dated and parochial.) What's remarkable here, however, is not so much Woodcock's literal-minded approach to the scenery itself, but rather his skewed priorities. Evidently something about Hurt's performance so repelled him that he can hardly bring himself to discuss it. What could it be?

Judging from the few remarks he does make about Hurt's Winston, the central issue for Woodcock seems to be virility. He calls Hurt's Winston "weak," "cringing," and "wretched," and considers him too wimpy to be credible as a rebel or lover. Hurt's gentle, soft-spoken, unhappy Winston simply isn't macho enough for Woodcock to comfortably identify with. But that kind of talk is unfashionable these days, so rather than own up to some fossilized ideas Woodcock impugns Hurt's performance and then, lest anyone think him sexist, calls the film "anti-feminist."

Of course, the film isn't anti-feminist, and the full disingenuousness of Woodcock's claim that it is will be obvious to anyone familiar with the novel and novelist he is defending. Whatever else he may have been, Orwell was a pretty sexist guy, whose writings ridicule feminism and endorse patriarchy. (Relevant passages are painstakingly inventoried in Daphne Patai's *The Orwell Mystique*.) The novel *1984* is no exception, presupposing a male-oriented view of sex, detailing Winston's rape fantasies, and presenting Julia as a hedonistic airhead who speaks an annoyingly stilted "feminese" and loathes other women.

Paradoxically, the film's very diminution of Julia's role, which Woodcock decries, leaves her much more real and likeable by mercifully sparing us all this. (It also tightens the film's focus on its protagonist, thus serving the interests of aesthetic economy.) Far from being sexist, the film's treatment of Julia and Winston's relationship with her is so politically correct that Woodcock's insistence on strick organ-for-organ parity in the nude scenes seem ridiculously petty.

But again, the "sexism" motif seems mostly a smokescreen; it's unfair, but not half as unfair as Woodcock's attack on Hurt's performance. The fact is that John Hurt is an exceptionally gifted artist whose abilities as an actor far exceed Orwell's as a novelist. This enables Hurt to transcend the notorious hollowness of Orwell's original Winston and invest the character with an intensely visceral, sympathetic presence and, more remarkably still, a palpable subjectivity. In the film, the agonizing clarity of Winston's inner life, and the stoical dignity with which he cherishes it, contrast startlingly with the servile orthodoxy of his peers. Far from suggesting weakness, these things in context express great strength and courage. (The more swashbuckling kind of heroism Woodcock seems to want is, after all, ruled out by the story's premise of absolute totalitarianism.)

The same inner life that makes up Hurt/Winston's rebellion also gives needed plausibility to his attractiveness to Julia. Sexuality and "own-life" are practically the same thing and, because Hurt/Winston's haggard face so perfectly reflects his alienation, his very homeliness assumes an elegant, existential kind of beauty. The film exploits this heavily in extreme close-ups and further eroticizes him by the use of closely-miked voice-overs that create an atmosphere of physical and spiritual intimacy with him. By the time Julia declares her love, her feelings are perfectly intelligible to the viewer. There is no need for her to explain, as she does in the book, that she

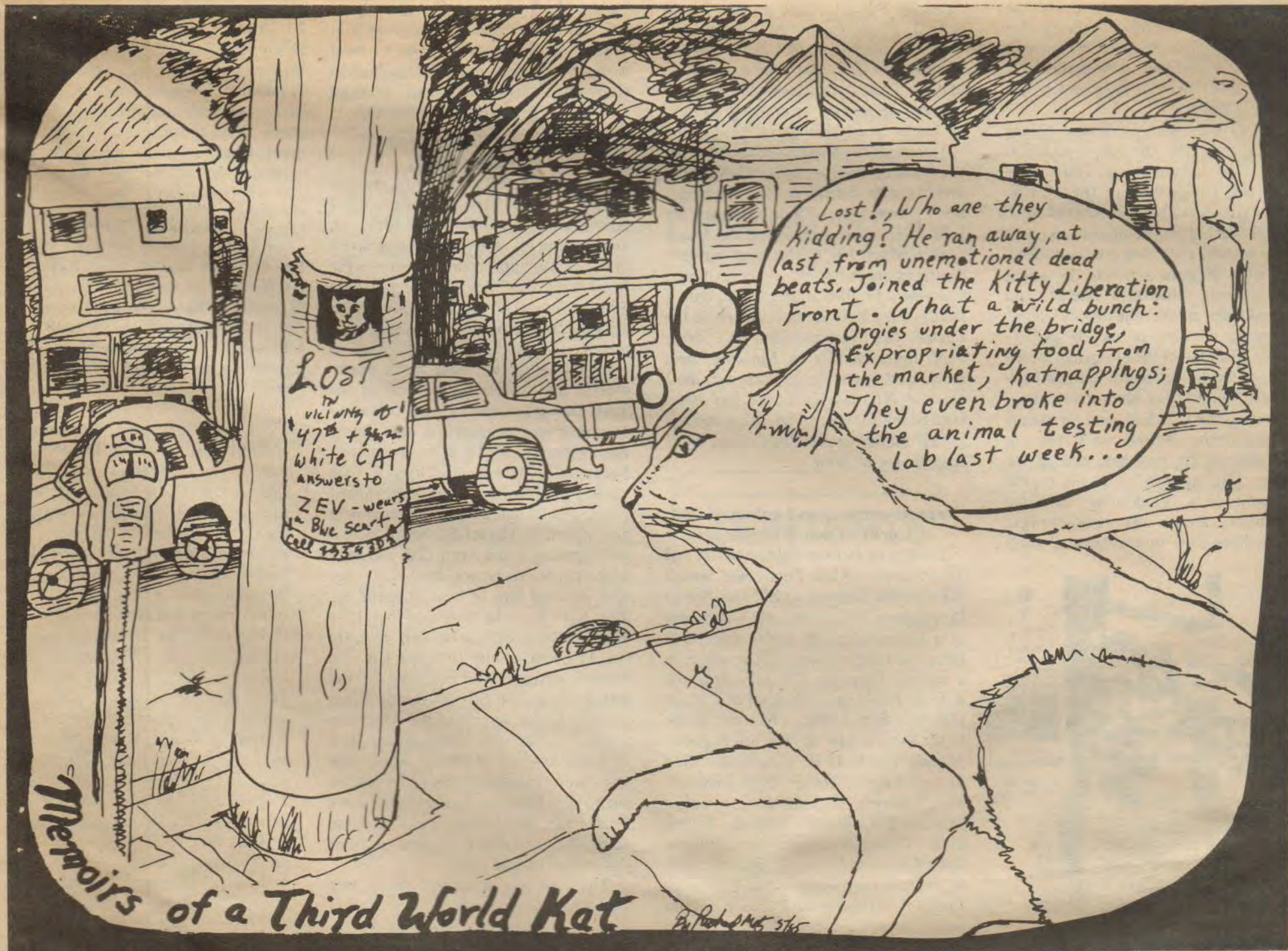
was attracted by "something in [his] face": nothing could be more obvious. That Woodcock could look at Hurt's exquisitely nuanced interpretation of Winston and fail to see its nobility or its sexiness shows appalling insensitivity to the way film communities.

Woodcock has one more major criticism of the film. He thinks the inherent limitations of film as a medium prevent the movie from giving much attention to the debasement of language, which was a major theme in the novel and in Orwell's later writings generally. This is true. The film makes no effort to reproduce Orwell's appendix on Newspeak. Nor, for that matter, does it seriously try to convey the intellectual meat of Goldstein's book or of Winston's introspections. However, this doesn't necessarily weaken the film. It helps the film sustain narrative flow and aesthetic unity in a way that the novel, because of its theoretical digressions, does not, and could therefore be viewed as an advantage.

What, then, does all of this add up to? The film is more focused and economical, more visceral, and more beautifully crafted than the novel, then that makes it a superior work of art. And Woodcock's inability to see this seems to result from a mixture of critical naivete and inappropriate motives. He doesn't really understand or respect the film medium, and judges the film not on its own merits but in comparison to the book. (This violates a basic critical principle and undermines his own case, since the book suffers by the comparison.) And he allows his judgment to be prejudiced by personal factors, such as his friendship with Orwell and his hang-ups about masculinity. The crowning irony is that all of this is done in the name of an author who has come to stand for exemplary critical acuity and unswerving fairness.

Sincerely,

Diana Blackwell
Colombia, MO.



an attempt to mislead the public. People have said, right from the beginning, "Oh, we thought it was an all-girl band, blah blah blah," and it wasn't a deliberate attempt to pretend that we're "girls". At the beginning it was a pun. A departing guitarist said "You ought to be called 'Poisongirls' cause it sounds like 'boys and girls'," cause there were two women and two men at a time. And we'd had fifteen names in two weeks or something before that, and it stuck. That's how names happen.

VS: I also say to some of the people who say "Oh, you're not girls, you're not all girls, only one girl," I say, "No, there are no girls, I'm a woman!" Puts us all on an equal footing for a start, cause there's a put-down implicit in the word "girl".

KIO: Yeah, if you're not a woman by your age, I don't know when you are.

VS: That's right... Another thing that's happened over the last ten years is that, together again with a lot of women, the men that we relate with have surely learnt a lot. A generation has grown up now with a whole lot of women doing a whole lot of work, at home, in the bedroom, in the kitchen, with a whole generation of children.

RF: It's hard to imagine that in 1976 the whole idea of women musicians was you know, Suzi Quatro... And that was it. And although it's still remarked that there are women working in music, at least it's accepted as a possibility.

VS: Having said that about the ten years that a lot of work was done, I am appalled when I listen to young women of my daughter's age, 18, teenage women and young women in their early twenties, to hear that they have exactly the same problems. Whatever has been done has been done between ourselves, maybe, in terms of creating a language. But I'm not going to kid myself, I don't think any of us can kid ourselves, that

we've made a lot of ground our there. Women are finding themselves at a time of economic hardship, and of an increasing kind of terror in the world, not a lot better off. And that's another reason for saying, look, let's start again, let's just start with all that energy as if we haven't had any disappointments, start again.

RF: The other interesting thing, which is, again, ten years old, is *Rolling Stone* magazine saying that the epitome of American feminism is Madonna and Cyndi Lauper. And you just think "WHAT?!" Well, *Rolling Stone*, I imagine, is a male-dominated industry paper, trying to subvert the term "feminism" to include more —

VS: More sexual availability from young women. That's it.

RF: But they do it in terms of saying that Madonna and Cyndi Lauper are actually "doing what they want to do in a man's world, and doing it as women," and that's really the American Way. And, you know, will it happen again? Will people buy it again?

KIO: It's like they've co-opted the word "feminism" to mean something else, something that's still serving men, serving society... About the song "The Offending Article", that really started a big controversy, and got you into a lot of trouble. Do you think that shows that people have a hard time dealing with angry women?

VS: With women allowing themselves to be angry, yes. When I was a little girl, before I discovered that I don't have to go on being a little girl, I was very frightened by anger. I spent a long time in my adolescence and young womanhood feeling that I wasn't angry, that I looked down on people who were angry, that I'd achieved some kind of a clear state. And looking back now at the things I was putting up with at the time, I was seething angry, I was shit-hot

angry! And a lot of the anger that I can draw on now is anger that I can remember. I feel like I was frightened by anger, I felt that anger was somehow ugly, almost obscene, for a woman. When my mother was angry, it was very frightening. When my father was angry, it was somehow O.K., he had a right to be angry. And men have images of anger which are — well, we find it hard to get away from images of angry men, the threatening men prowling around, but what about *our* anger? So, O.K., in "The Offending Article", I was surely angry when I wrote that. I was angry because of a certain complacency that I felt was creeping into one of the issues that are a part of liberation, namely the animal liberation movement. I felt that it was becoming sentimentalized, and a hell of an easy one. Especially in England, where everyone *loves* animals. And nobody was making the connections between the oppression of animals and the oppression of women, who are also treated like pets as long as they're pretty and docile, etc., etc. And I don't want to talk about people's personal lives by name, but I was in touch with a young woman who had a boyfriend who was an animal liberationist, and he screwed her, and she got pregnant, and I just wanted to say something to him and to all those lads who were kind of congratulating themselves on their liberationism, and could not see what was going on between themselves and young women and each other. And sure, there still isn't a safe and reliable contraceptive, and abortion is something that we have granted by a certain law which can be taken away, and has been, and none of these things should be forgotten at the expense of concern about animals. Sure, making the connections. It's right, animals are treated diabolically. But that's what that was about. And I know that a lot of people were

upset at the image of a woman castrating a man, or having the fantasy. I mean, I've never actually chopped a guy's prick off. I've never even actually met a specific guy whose specific prick I wanted to chop off —

KIO: I have!

VS: — but there are men in this world who have done such things that I wanted to be free to use that image of anger, and not sit on it any more.

KIO: Since it seems to be mainly men who are bothered by that image, how do the men in the band feel?

RF: I don't know how much of the background of the piece is necessary, but it was written from the heart, and it was also written as a kind of a mischievous piece, in the context of the anarcho-vegetarian elite, who you know, go around London and were getting into a sort of a moral trip.

MV (I think): And still are.

RF: And still are, and the way that they talk to each other, within the context of "acceptable politics", acceptable statements, is totally over the top. And you can be totally over the top about war, you can be totally over the top about religion, you can be totally over the top about vegetarianism, but some things you can't, some things you can't actually say. And by actually saying them out loud, that these things are real, and are thoughts that go through people's heads — you know, just like every pacifist has at some point thought "I would like to fucking *kill* that person", or "I would like them not to exist; I don't necessarily want to kill them, I just would like them not to exist." Which is the same thing, actually. And I think it was the confrontation of that, that got us as a band into a lot of trouble. Because of that piece, Crass, the band that we'd worked with for two and a half years, sent all our records back, all our artwork back —

continued on page 19

THE OFFENDING ARTICLE 1987

Substitutes for human love. Less risky than a human relationship. And when the 'affair' is over you can always put your pet 'to sleep'. An affair of convenience. The convenience of the dominant species. Capture. Domesticate. Exterminate.

Alongside the exploitation of animals for laboratory experimentation, the pet and petfood industry is enormous, feeding off our alienation from each other. Sentimentalizing animals to fit in with our deprivation and need for love, physical contact, and control. So the prettiest and most appealing pets are fed and pampered in return for companionship and obedience. Where have we heard that story before - the Miss World contests? The pretty docile pets of male sexist fantasy. Capture. Domesticate. Exterminate.

A new girl every year. A new wife every year. And the Nazis who selected the pretty Jews for their brothels in the concentration camps. They murdered the old and the ugly. Discarded them to use their bodies for soap, lampshades and even to feed their guard dogs.

I was a young girl child in the second world war. All men were soldiers. I couldn't tell from their almost identical khaki uniforms which were 'ours' and which were 'the enemy'. Some of them came home on leave and mingled their tales of fighting on the front with snickering stories about the reputed brothels of Port Said, where the prostitutes were on offer side by side with donkeys, who were screwed and abused just like the women were. Extra extra thrills and treats.... I couldn't understand the hot-eyed glances and laughter at these stories. I was frightened. I am still frightened.

And of course male military macho ethics approved of these brothels rather than encourage homosexual contact between the ranks. Military regimes are terrified of love developing between soldiers. Balls must mean toughness and courage. But the bullet rips through and reveals the vulnerability of male flesh. Almost as tender as a woman? Almost as vulnerable? They dare not admit that possibility.

Listen. Butchers are men. The master race. MANipulators. TorMENTors. MANufacturers of meat. Think about it. You rape and plunder the entire range of living creatures. You train the young to follow in your footsteps by word and by deed. Give up your knives. Take instead the vulnerability of your own body, your fragile penis. Cherish love between man and man. Learn the tenderness of your own genitals before you carelessly penetrate the bodies of young and fertile girls. Learn first the mysteries of contraception and love and respect. In the meantime do not be surprised if the rest of us rise up and turn against you. We can invoke nightmares of revenge worse than you can imagine. And the woman may rise up who will have her knife. And in the name of life she will take up her knife, and, castrating, will avenged even the least laboratory rat that, discarded, ends up in the tin of PAL you may feed your pet tomorrow morning.

GRAPHIC ARRANGEMENT: LYNNA

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SEXUAL ANARCHY: Setting Our Own Standards

by Alexandra Devon

Monogamy, Monopoly, Monotony or Superficiality, Syphilis, Sexploitation. Which is the correct line? I pose this question as I do to point out the judgemental nature of our approaches to other people's sexual practices. While the institution of monogamy (as in traditional marriage), or the institution of celibacy (as in enforced abstinence of young people and others) or the institution of heterosexuality (as the only sexual expression) are abhorrent because they are coercive, the practice of any of these is perfectly legitimate when it is a choice.

In spite of the fact that in the last twenty years we have seen a loosening of conventional morality to include a lot of previously denied sexual realities, there has, I believe, crept into the left a

tracted to women and became a practicing bisexual, had gone through a period of having many sexual partners and presently was involved in a monogamous relationship with a woman.

She opened her talk by saying the key question for her was "Knowing what I know, how should I live?" This was a point she was to return to again and again. Self-knowledge is central to how one chooses to live and relate to other people. She stressed the importance of examining and questioning your own needs, to determine your own priorities.

The different alternatives to monogamy that Deborah listed were casual sex, multiple relationships, serial monogamy and chosen celibacy. From her vantage point there were pros and

communicating this to those we relate to.

In the discussion which followed there was some validation of the cons Deborah had described in both multiple relationships as well as monogamous ones. One woman related the trauma of having two lovers accidentally arriving on her doorstep simultaneously and both decided not to see her anymore, which pointed out the need for honesty and exploded the myth of it being easier to be spontaneous in non-monogamous situations.

A woman, who quietly paced and bounced a new baby during the proceedings, responded that she felt multiple relationships can work, citing her own experience of being in a *menage a quatre* situation which had been going

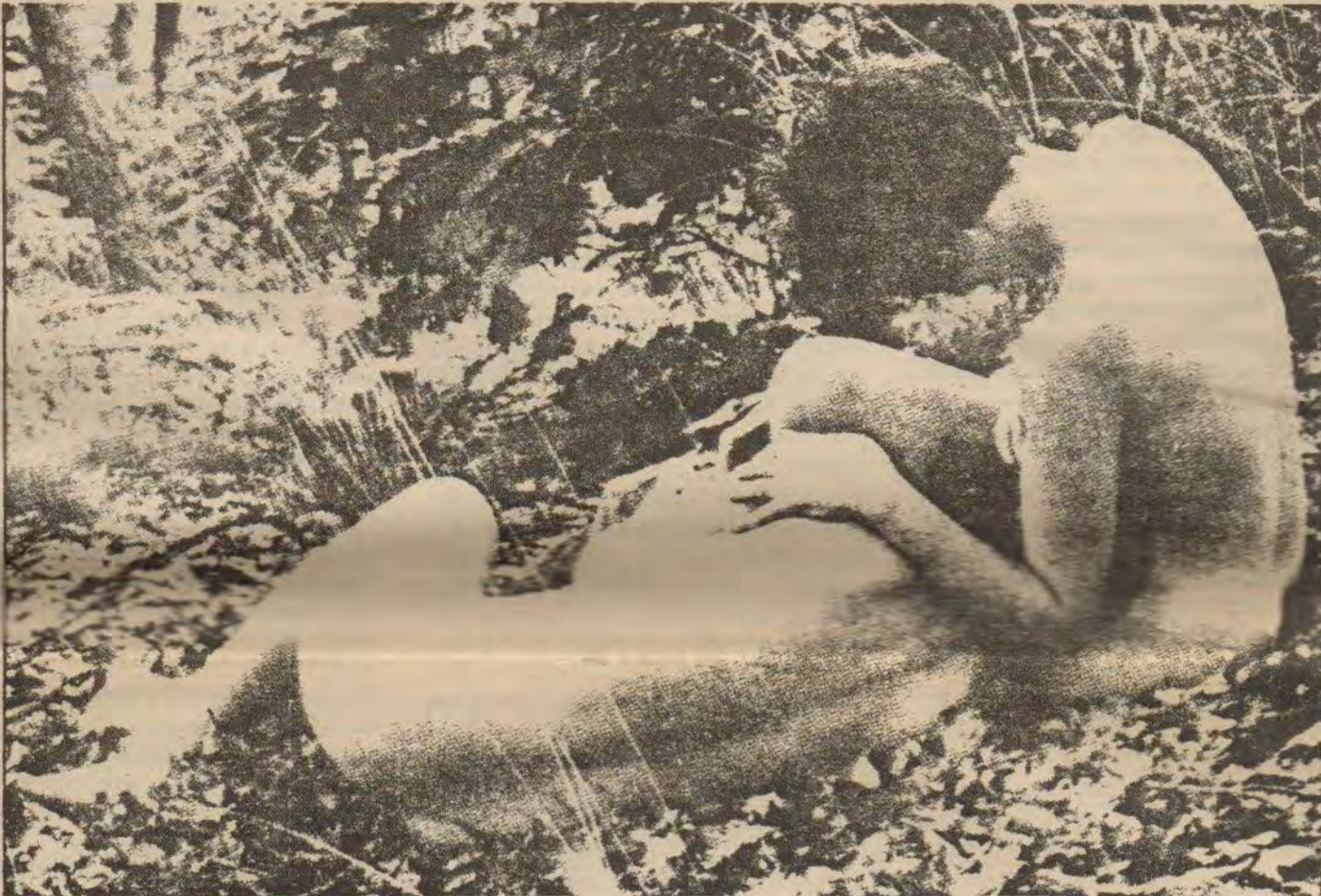
born again so I could once again experience the place of honour that I saw the new baby occupying. Apparently, this shocked my mother into realizing what was going on but the damage had been done. The point is that this was perhaps my first heartbreak. Had it not been that, it would have undoubtedly been something else. There is probably some time in a young child's life when we experience intense vulnerability for the first time. We all deal with this in our own unique ways, either by closing ourselves off emotionally, or depending on one person to satisfy our emotional needs to undo what had been done in the past or to get as many people as possible to relate to to avoid the hurt of depending on and being let down by one person. Dorothy Dinnerstein, in her book *The Mermaid and the Minotaur*, postulates that many of our sexual problems and attitudes towards women stem from our dependence on one female primary care-giver.

Added to these feelings of vulnerability engendered in us in childhood are the messages we begin to receive about sexuality and our bodies. Touching our "private" parts is said to be "dirty" (the use of the word "dirty" is interesting in its derivation from the word dirt or earth and the implications this has for the negative attitude to the living earth which sustains all life). Nudity becomes an issue very early on as little girls have bands of material stretched over non-existent breasts. The shame of the body follows closely with this covering up. I remember at the age of four begging my mother to let me take a shower with my bathing suit on.

Now before we have even reached puberty and are ready to begin embarking on mature sexual relationships, many children (even babies), especially females, have experienced some form of sexual assault. In my own case, I ran into an exhibitionist when I was ten. As such incidents go, it was relatively minor. I was not physically harmed but I have an image from that experience which is a child's image and it stayed with me for years. Having never seen an erect penis before, I remember contextualizing it by seeing it as looking like a long twisted balloon, like the tricks adults used to do with balloons at parties when they twisted balloons into dogs or other creatures. Later, when I saw a male penis in the context of a relationship, I felt that childish image return and frighten and sicken me. Gradually, that image was replaced by more positive associations and the power of that early image loosened its hold on me.

Then there are all kinds of other images of femininity and femaleness to contend with. From my first encounter with *Playboy* to a host of advertising images to school cheerleaders, there was an ideal set out which was obtainable by only a chose few. Yet there was always the lure of the partial achievement of the ideal through the buying of the training bra, the buying of make-up, the curling of hair. All of this at thirteen. This behavior was aimed at feeling O.K. about oneself, having a boy friend and the security and status that that involved. Here began the twinning of sexual desirability with relationships which made a fragile ego become inextricably bound up with intimate interactions.

One of the by-products of this ingrained insecurity is jealousy. This is often exacerbated by the inability of people in relationships to both be honest and accept honesty from others. That the great exponent of free love, Emma Goldman, wrestled with the difficulties of trying to live up to this ideal is appar-



new morality which at times would seem to fill the old void. In this old morality turned inside out women who choose to have children are called "breeders" by gay men, women who sleep with men are called "traitors" by lesbians, lesbians who engage in s/m are called "anti-feminist", bi-sexual women are said to be "taking energy from women and giving it to men", two people who choose to be monogamous are called "uptight", and women who are sexually active are still observed to "get around". I could continue but I won't. My point is that there is a lot of judging going on which obscures our understanding of one another.

It was not to find the correct line that I went to Deborah Gregory's workshop on *Monogamy and Non-Monogamy: Dilemmas and Priorities* at a recent sexuality conference called "Coming Together" held in Toronto in October 1985. Rather, I was interested in learning about how other women are working out difficulties of relating sexually in a society which seems hell-bent on ensuring that our relations with one another are as fragile and as alienated as possible. I wanted to hear of successes and failures in working out different arrangements, and to hear validations of and alternatives to my own experience.

The facilitator began by relating her own experience and laying out what she saw as being the various types of sexual relationships and their pros and cons. She spoke with some authority as one who had experienced most of what she described. She had married young and had a child, discovered she was at-

tracted to all these arrangements and these interrelated to each individual's personal needs and desires. In short, she was prepared to offer no correct line.

Of casual sex, she commented that it required an ability to separate emotions and sexuality, to some degree, because of the low level of trust which usually exists in these situations. Multiple relationships, she noted, often multiply exponentially the difficulties of a single relationship. Celibacy has the disadvantage of not allowing for experiencing passion. Monogamy can compromise your autonomy and sense of yourself. For those looking for pat or easy answers, she was not giving any. There are problems with any arrangement.

Questions she posed were, "How much time and energy do you have for relationships (this, in particular, was aimed at multiple relationships)?" "What power structures are you operating in?" She related the experience of a lesbian couple, one of whom wanted to be non-monogamous. The other partner was bald, felt less attractive and less empowered in a non-monogamous arrangement. "How great are your needs for trust, commitment and security?" "Is your commitment to non-monogamy or monogamy greater than your commitment to your partner?" "Is there a reclaimable monogamy?"

She ended her presentation by stressing the need for integrity in relationships, of being as true to yourself as you are to your lover, which means discovering what it is we need and honestly

on for ten years. The hour and a half was over quickly and window on a seldom-shared part of people's lives was closed.

The conference talked around and about the subject of sexuality, sometimes at several removes but one image which was articulated by Joanne Loulan (author of *Lesbian Sex*) recurred in many people's discussions and that was the "little girl with the broken heart". The aspect of how each of us has been wounded early in life and carries this hurt with us into our sexual relationships was referred to by many speakers. This aspect of vulnerability is key, I feel, and often ignored in a discussion of how and why we relate in various sexual ways. Too often we defensively say that a choice is simply a choice and that's all there is to it. In one sense this is true. Whatever way people choose to relate to each other sexually is valid and judgments should not be attached to this. That our choices are often influenced and shaped in negative ways is something to recognize and deal with on a personal (not moralistic) level.

One of the speakers at the conference who explored the "little girl with the broken heart" theme speculated that this "heartbreak" may have happened at birth, or the first time we were let down by a primary care-giver or when a sibling was born, taking our mother's attention from us. I related to this point, remembering my mother telling me that after my younger sister's birth she had gone into post-partum depression and had emotionally rejected me for a time. In my confusion, I had asked to be diapered and sent back to the hospital to be

ent in Candace Falk's book, *Love, Anarchy and Emma Goldman*. Falk's book draws its major inspiration from a recent discovery of love letters between Emma and Ben Reitman. Although these honest and explicit letters have been somewhat shamelessly exploited by Falk with their publication in *Mother Jones*, they provide a valued insight into Emma's life and ideals for those of us who value and understand Emma's attempt to push back the boundaries of convention.

In her speeches and essays, Emma proclaims the ideal of free love. She envisions: "...Some day, men and women will rise, they will reach the mountain peak, they will meet big and strong and free, ready to receive, to partake, and to bask in the golden rays of love.... If the world is ever to give birth to true companionship and oneness not marriage, but free love will be the parent" (from the essay on *Marriage and Love*). Of this essay, Emma writes in a letter to Ben, "The essay on marriage and love is the most brilliant, I suppose because I have so little of it. Well, are not all great things merely in the ideal. Thus, my ideal of love will die with me, never realized. Perhaps it is well it should be so." In part, what she seems to be doing in this line is complaining to Ben about his inability to provide her with the type of love she believed was possible.

In her letters, Ben's promiscuity seems to be at the root of Emma's dissatisfaction with their relationship. This is only partially the case. More than Ben's inconstancy was his inability to be honest and to take responsibility for his sexuality that irked Emma as the following letter indicates:

"And then there is that other thing, the thing so abhorrent, so utterly impossible to endure — your irresponsible, unscrupulous attitude towards women — your lack of honesty with them, with yourself, with myself. Oh, I know you will ascribe it to jealousy. But it is not. I have told you over and over again, if you really care for a woman, if you love her, no matter how much that may grieve me, I should have strength enough to face it. Or if you were honest in your dealings with women, openly and plainly telling them, 'I want you for a sex embrace and no more,' that too I could stand. But your complete lack of justice, of common humanity, of consideration for the rights of another, is simply killing me."

These tortured letters reveal the difficulties of living an ideal with the imperfect legacy which our acculturation has bestowed upon us. And if heterosexual expression (which is at least socially sanctioned) is problematic, gay sexuality has a myriad of its own problems. Dealing with one's own misogyny or self-hatred (if a lesbian), definitions of masculinity (if a gay male), and bearing the label of "deviant" are all very heavy issues to contend with. Being differently-abled or outside the bounds of what is considered "young" or "beautiful", and a host of other life situations greatly complicate how one is perceived as a sexual being and how, in turn, one perceives oneself.

I read the above essay to the *Kick It Over* collective and waited curiously for a response. Lynna admitted to feel-

ing jealous in relationships with women, even non-sexual ones, especially with bi- or heterosexual women who seem to place men as their first priority. Robyn (whose *Monogamy, Monotony, Monopoly* button gave me a starting point for this article) chastized her stating that "being jealous is as oppressive as eating meat and ultimately only hurts yourself." "That's not true," protested Christopher Alice.

Since writing my article, I read two articles in *Our Generation* by Alice Wexler and Marsha Hewitt ("*Emma Goldman and Women*" and "*Emma Goldman and the Case for Anarcho-Feminism*"). Both of them worked in a discussion of the split between Emma's ideal and her real love/sex life which Candace Falk's book, *Love, Anarchy and Emma Goldman*, for all its faults, explored quite fully. Neither of them agreed with Candace Falk's summation that Emma should have scaled down her expectations, but both felt she should have been more honest with and accepting of herself. As Alice Wexler writes,

Celebrating love as liberating and inspiring, "the harbinger of hope, of joy, of ecstasy," she (Emma) kept her darker knowledge to herself.

This, I think, is the deepest limitation of Goldman's sexual politics: that despite the anguished richness of her own erotic life, she was unable to reflect on it in any fruitful way. Though she certainly did not deny her own contradictory feelings, for Reitman particularly, she could not allow herself to think about them, to analyze them, or integrate her conclusions

into her lectures. She brooded endlessly over her obsession with the man, but never achieved any real insight. The superficiality of her lectures reflects not so much a failure of candour as of thought, she simply could not allow herself to think deeply about her own erotic life.

I would disagree that Emma never achieved any real insight or was unable to think deeply about her own erotic life. I think that her letters to Ben Reitman were very honest and insightful. Emma's failure to be more honest on the podium may have stemmed from her understandable fear of being more vulnerable than she was already making herself. We should be careful not to judge Emma too harshly by our own standards. The confessions contained in her love letters are the stuff of consciousness-raising groups, a forum which did not exist in her day. What her lectures did, however imperfectly, was to begin to create space for herself and others to begin to view sexuality differently.

Had Emma's letters to Ben Reitman surfaced during her own day, they would have certainly been suppressed and probably burned. It is fortuitous for us that the letters have been discovered and made public and that they have much to teach us about ideals and the difficulties of realizing them. I think Marsha Hewitt's admonition of how we should approach Emma's letters applies equally well to how we should face our own and each other's shortcomings:

"We cannot afford to dismiss these contradictions. We must begin to analyze them with dignity and humanity." □

In the Beginning There Was Woman a review of "The Spirit of Turtle Island"

Power: The creative energy of the universe ... the mysterious force emanating from grandmother Moon ... the determination of women nurturing through pain and persecution...

The Spirit of Turtle Island Native Women's Festival was a vibrant celebration of the strength and power of Native women through music, theatre and story. Co-produced by Dakota-Ojibway Productions and Womynly Way Productions, the unique festival was held in Toronto, August third, 1985.

In the creation story of many Native nations, woman was the first human, and this continent is Turtle Island. Daughter of Moon and of Thunder, she had fallen from the sky, trailing seeds from the Sky World in her hands. As she plummeted toward the sea which covered the whole world, geese spread their wings to gentle her fall. Turtle offered her back for Sky Woman to rest on. Other animals dove to the bottom and brought up earth for Sky Woman to spread upon Turtle's back. As she caressed the earth with her dancing feet, this Turtle Island grew. She planted the seeds, and gave birth. So Woman is the Spirit of Turtle Island.

Traditionally, Native women were the teachers and keepers of the culture, acknowledged leaders and decision-makers, respected for their strength and power. (In the Iroquois Confederacy, the clan mothers appointed, guided, and if necessary deposed the chiefs.) But European colonization exploited Native women and displaced them from their honoured position, to third-class "non-citizens". Today, as Native women recognize and rejoice in the power that has always been theirs, they are giving birth to their peoples' re-

newed strength and pride.

The Festival represented women from diverse Native nations. Co-producers Edna King, Ojibway, and Ivy Chaske, Dakota, welcomed the "full house". An Ojibway woman elder, Mary Roberts, opened the Festival in the traditional way, with a long prayer of thanksgiving in Ojibway. The living use of a traditional language is itself a sign of continuing Native power.

Alanis Obomsawin, Abenaki film maker, cast her enchantment as she introduced each Festival offering. Director of National Film Board films (such as *Mother of Many Children*, a superb documentary showing the varied lives of Native women in Canada), she flew in from Edmonton where she is currently filming the poverty of Alberta's Métis, and the despair within the Child Welfare System. She has the pain of Native women in her gut, but in her stories and songs she visions their

beauty and redeems their pain.

Alanis feels too, the pain of our Mother the Earth — our ultimate nourishment. The river near her reserve home is polluted, but in her haunting song, it still flows on, a symbol of hope. The English language represents and re-creates non-equality, but Alanis reminded us

"in all our languages
there is no he nor she.
we are the children of the earth
and of the sea..."

The Métis singer and poet, Jane Peloquin, who grew up "white" in New Brunswick, sang of the hurt, confusion and pride in later finding and accepting her "Indian-ness". Now working on a Master's degree in education, she shared the feelings of caring and respect which enable learning —

"put your arms around someone
let them know you care..."



The Sea Cows. photo courtesy of Ruth Dworin.

that you care and you'll be there..."

The Sea Cows (Monique Mojica, French-Jewish and Cuna Rappahannock, and Makka Kliest, Greenland Inuit) between them have 25 years of professional theatre experience. Their own presentation, the *Witch's Prophecy*, begins with delightful, earthy capering, but shifts to a harrowing tale told by witches in a competition for the best story. We soon realize that their award-winning story is not a story at all, but our own reality — the release of nuclear power from its safe and sacred place in the earth, the potential destruction of all life. With apologetic, chilling realism, the witches admit the story has already begun ... "it's already turned loose ... it can't be called back..."

The four Thunderbird Sisters came from a nation declared "extinct" — the Shinnecook Nation of Long Island, New York State. Their own contemporary Native American folk music takes hold of the critical survival issues facing Native Americans (and all of us) today — their right to be a People in their own land — women in struggle — government oppression — nuclear destruction. One song honoured the elders, the source of wisdom, the connection with the knowledge of "who we are and where we are going" ... "Old One, Wise One, tell us now the things we must know..." Another song honoured the Warriors — young men who uphold the welfare of their people in various ways.

A ringing, heart-throbbing song about Power closed the Festival. "The Sun is the source ... the Sun is life..." pulsed with meanings. The sun is symbol of the circle of life, the medicine wheel, the universal life-energy. Sun is bound to earth in the relationship which sustains life on this planet, and we ignore it at our peril. Sun gives solar energy, a planet-saving alternative to our present destructive energy forms. "The Sun is the source ... the Sun is life..." □

Democratizing the Republic and Radicalizing Democracy

an interview with Murray Bookchin

(Part 2)

This is Part 2 of an interview conducted last spring with Murray Bookchin in Waterloo, Ontario. In Part 1, Murray talked about the current changes in science, technology and class structure, the nature of the new social conflicts, and, above all, a new view of nature needed to put an end to ecological destruction. In this portion, he talks about developing a new libertarian politics. If you are interested in some of Murray's more recent writings, see the box at the end of the article.

KIO: One of the interesting things that a friend was telling me is that many of the "new age" and feminist spiritual communities of the 20's in Germany went along with the Nazis' mysticism.

MURRAY BOOKCHIN: That troubles me immensely since I have a great deal to do with Germany and I've done a lot of reading into their past. The attempt has been also to impute that tendency to the Greens in Germany and I regard that as grotesque simplification of what happened in Germany. For one thing the Vandervogel divided completely. Some elements went to the fascists and others went to the socialists. Some became reactionaries and some became revolutionaries.

KIO: What was the Vandervogel?

MB: The Vandervogel was the "wandering birds". It was a youth movement that developed earlier on in the 20th century which was suffused with the romantic love of nature, collective living, living close to the natural world, trying to discover within oneself intuitive sentiments and an aversion to capitalism. It's very one-sided to see in these movements nothing more than a drift towards an organicism — a people's community mentality that must lead to fascism with its blood and soil mythos. By no means did such a movement have to go in that direction and by no means did the movement consistently go in that direction. Many people in the Vandervogel movement were later to feed into the nature philosophies of Marxists like Ernst Bloch or into essentially anarchists like Gustave Landauer. They didn't all become Nazis.

In fact, Nazism grew out more of the 1st World War trench comradeship of soldiers in battle. That's what Hitler really regarded as community, a community of warriors in the trenches. Most tried to avail themselves of the organic drift in German thought and in German poetry and in the German romantic tradition, even going back as far as Holderlin and Hegel and Schelling, but Hitler himself was a brute and he used anything he could find including, and may I say this very markedly, socialist ideas. The Nazi flag was a red flag with a swastika on it, just as Mussolini adopted the black shirt because of the popularity of anarchism in Italy. They were called "blackshirts". The choice of the black shirt was an attempt to identify with the syndicalist tendencies of Italian workers and anarchist sentiments, so what does that mean, that anarchism leads to fascism? I can give a better case of the fact that socialism and social democracy leads to fascism than the fact that the German romantic tradition led into fascism.

Hitler called his party the National Socialist German Workers Party. They used the expression of the social democracy, "un camerade". They used the mass mobilization techniques of social democracy. In fact Hitler was boggled when he first came to Vienna by the great serried ranks of workers marching with red flags in Vienna and was in-

spired by that to finally create the whole theatre of the Nuremberg rallies. His program was anti-capitalist. He adopted the language of the socialist movement. Shall I now say that Marxism and fascism are equivalent?

KIO: One could.

MB: I don't believe that Marx was a fascist. I don't think he was trying to lay the groundwork for fascism. By the same token I don't believe that Schelling was a fascist or that the Vandervogel movement was laying the groundwork for fascism. This is utter nonsense. Besides Hitler was cynical about all of this. He used every idea he could find and patched it together into

they remember the extent to which you can suck Hitler out of socialism and even Mussolini out of anarchism? Mussolini regarded Proudhon as a teacher. I'm not saying that anarchism or socialism fed into Nazism. But I also insist where do people get off claiming that the German romantic movement or the German Vandervogel movement and the love of nature movements in Germany fed into Nazism? Why are they so selective? Why don't they look at their own ideologies and find the extent to which these feed into fascism, and how much more compelling a case can be made for that? It infuriates me because the German Greens are being

America — or more broadly in the world — around the green movement? What accounts for its complexity and its divergencies?

MB: Let me first of all explain what I mean by green politics because I don't mean parliamentary politics and I don't believe in capitulating to the state or trying to operate within it. That is a great mistake. I believe in a libertarian politics. What I'm saying basically is that anarcho-syndicalism can no longer suffice to explain and to mobilize the forces today that will change capitalism and in my opinion hopefully rid us of this system entirely.

What do I mean by politics? I go back first of all to the Greek meaning of politics. I'm not talking of statecraft; statecraft is operating as a party within the state with the view toward having control of the state. When I use the word politics, I go back to the original Hellenic meaning of the word "polis", the Athenian polis. I beg people not to remind me of what I already know; it was patriarchal; it was militaristic; it included a slave society and it was also often very parochial. When I talk of politics in the Athenian sense, I talk of the best features, the fact that citizens participated in a face to face democracy in Athens, made decisions, had a militia system, insofar as they were involved in anything military, brought their own arms and had a system of rotation. These are all libertarian notions. So when I talk of politics, I talk of politics in the sense of polis and community, decentralized, confederal, built around rotation, built around sortition and hopefully approximating consensus as much as possible — in which you have an active citizen body managing its own affairs. That is what politics means to me. When I talk of a libertarian politics, I mean literally that, a politics that is not only democratic but libertarian and structured around a decentralized society without private ownership, in which you have the collectivization and, above all, the municipalization of the economy.

I also believe that there has been a very marked failure to separate politics from statecraft and that, unfortunately, many very well meaning comrades have gotten the two confused; I think it is very important for us to separate the two. I would never have entered into the Peoples Front government as the CNT did in 1936. But, by the same token, I believe that on a local level, one should try and create again, restore and recover community structures, neighborhood structures — citizens councils and citizens assemblies — and try to form a real underpinnings for managing the community. So, I would vote on the local but not on the national level.

I have a disagreement with the German Greens in that they take their activities in the German Bundestag seriously. I find that when they perform theatre out there it's amusing; I can be delighted by it but, if they are out to take over the German Bundestag, I think that



an eclectic hodge-podge, and within the Nazi party this produced splits in which the Schwager, the Black front split from the Nazi party led by Adolph Strauss, who was even more important in the Nazi party than Hitler. He split the Nazi party and attacked it for accommodating itself to the Prussian Yunkers and the capitalists, and demanded that the party follow through on a socialist program. Of course Hitler purged the stormtroopers because the bourgeoisie and the Yunkers were afraid of this strong trip or movement which was committed more to the socialism than the racism and blood and soil mythology of fascism.

So this is pure rubbish. Why don't

guilted all over the place because of their ecological perspective. And I think that this is the crudest kind of, not only reductionism, but vulgarization of the extremely complex history of Germany and of the extremely complex role that communitarian and ecological outlooks have played in the politics of the 20th century.

KIO: In North America the Green movement seems to be a mixed bag. I know that in Canada, and this is true elsewhere, there are a hell of a lot of careerists who get attracted to Green politics like flies to a corpse. And there are a lot of technocratic drifts within it too. What do you see emerging in North

it is naive and I think at the same time it leads to the politics of collaboration with the social democrats and the liberals. That's not my politics at all. There are tendencies in the Greens that are very aware of that danger and really oppose it. Many of them are the more radical and libertarian tendencies among the *fundamentalists* in the Greens; I have great respect for them.

Today we cannot form a syndicalist movement in the factories for the fact the factories are disappearing, if not entirely, at least diminishing to a great extent and the workforce is being replaced enormously by machines; this is the *locus classicus* of socialist and anarchist revolutions. I have to ask myself what is the other sphere in which libertarians participate, and it has always been the communal sphere. Long before syndicalism emerged in the anarchist tradition, there was a communalist tradition which dates back to Proudhon and which appears in Kropotkin and I don't know why that's been so completely neglected. So if I'm to take that seriously and update it up into our own time and explore its logic completely, then I have to ask myself: what can I do to recover the neighborhood and the community? How can I empower the citizens to take control of their community at the base grassroots level, not enter into the houses of Parliament, the *Bundestag* or the American Congress (as though you have a fat chance of doing it anyway and thank God we don't) [and] not to develop the bad habits of parliamentarism, but to try to create neighborhood assemblies such as we have in Burlington — town meeting type forms — councils in neighborhoods — confederate them, and confederate the communities into a dual power against the centralized state on the basis of a libertarian tradition?

The democratic revolutions have been misnamed *bourgeois* revolutions. The French Revolution was **not** fought to establish capitalism. Capitalism fed on the French Revolution; it used it; it opposed the French Revolution like sin. It was for a constitutional monarchy. Their model was England, not America. In the U.S., there was a tremendous conflict between the farmers on the one side and the commercial interests and aristocrats on the Atlantic seaboard, on the other side. Dan Shay's rebellion in 1787 clinched the new constitution and ended the Articles of Confederation but the new constitution still retained its libertarian features.

I'm for democratizing the republic and radicalizing the democracy, and doing that on the grass roots level; that will involve establishing libertarian institutions which are totally consistent with the American tradition. We can't go back to the Russian Revolution or the Spanish Revolution any more. Those revolutions are alien to people in North America. You can't translate Committees of Correspondence into Bolshevik Parties. You can't translate town meetings into Soviets. You can't translate a republican or democratic system or a

republican system permeated by democracy into a centralized state or a constitutional monarchy or a proletarian dictatorship. You can't translate this republican system into a proletarian dictatorship, if you're a Marxist, on the one side, or into a syndicalist society, if you're on the other, especially at a time when the trade unions in America are dying out on just the bread and butter issues. I believe we have to start speaking in the vocabulary of the democratic revolutions. We have to unearth and enlarge their libertarian content. I see no other answer — strategically, tactically,



politically, economically to the problems that we face today. We can't live in the past and simply repeat the traditional slogans of the great workers' movements that are gone, and will not reappear again, in spite of Poland, Hungary or Czechoslovakia. They're not products of the enlightenment in the way the socialist and anarchist movements were in the 19th century. The latter came out of the French Revolution and out of the American Revolution.

Now we live under the shadow of the Bolshevik Revolution. The 20th century is simply living in the darkness of that Bolshevik success which was our greatest failure. It's given us the cold wars, paralyzed all radical movements. You take sides: one side of the cold war or the other. We have to spring that trap and we have to break out of it. Looking largely at where we were wrong, I might venture the opinion that capitalism is not a system that follows the old dialectical cyclical forms of emergence, then growth and then decay. Capitalism is a cancer. It has always been a cancer. It's the greatest disease society ever suffered.

The Luddites were really right, that doesn't mean that I want to go back to the stone age, but they were right all the time when they tried to stop modern machinery because modern machinery, in the hands of capitalism, meant the enslavement of society in the long run.

In their day they [Luddites] showed more insight than we have ever given them credit for. The attempts on the part of the English squirearchy to keep the British farmers on the land and to keep them out of the hands of the capitalists — however self-serving they were — was at least something to put a brake on capitalism.

Capitalism has been permitted to run rampant; it was originally designated as



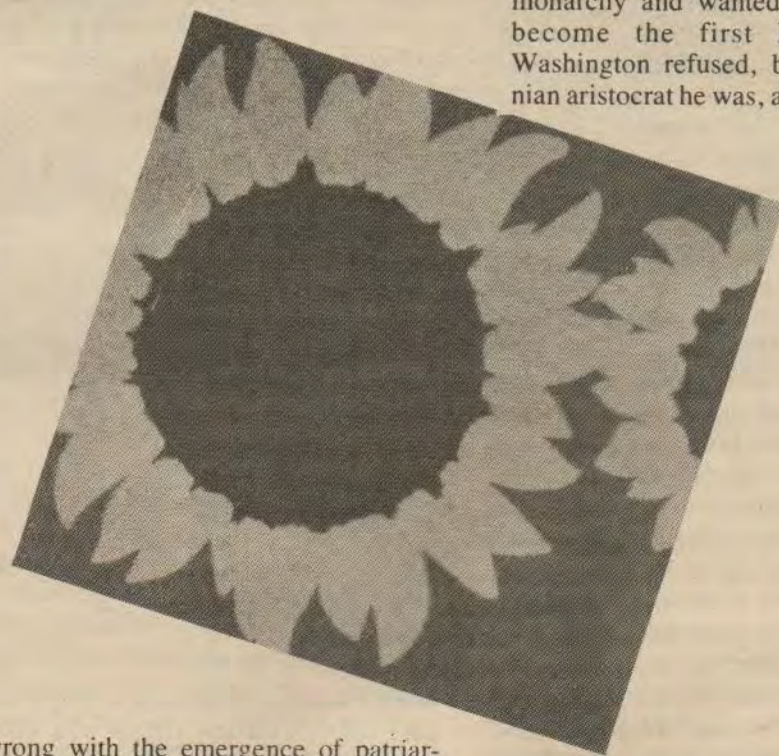
progressive and, in its progressive phase, it was going to build up technology. It was going to create the proletariat which would make the revolution. In contrast to that, a rebellious peasantry is really staging all the revolutions we have today in the third world. Irony of ironies! Bakunin should be alive today to mock the Marxist paradigm.

Capitalism is a social cancer. It has always been a social cancer. It is the disease of society. It is the malignancy of society. And I do not hesitate to say that anything that could have stopped its development — short of something even worse than capitalism — would have been a desideratum. I have reflected upon many positions I have held in the past as a Marxist, and to some extent even as an anarchist, and I have recognized that two centuries of radicals have been misreading the history of the modern world. Just as the women's movement has had to go back thousands of years to recover where we went

capitalist market society which I believe is vicious — a cancer in society from the very word go — that has always broken through where other societies, traditional societies which always tried to stop it, have decayed. It's a saprophytic organism — like a fungus which has only been able to grow and break through where traditional forms have been decaying, which has lived off the rot of traditional societies. It has never

been a wholesome illuminating light in the world today. This has caused me to reflect upon a hundred and fifty years of revolutionary thinking and to ask myself some very far-reaching questions.

[Now] I regard capitalism as destructive **only** in the sense that it will tear everything down (which is not what we [Marxists] meant by self-destructing; we thought that it would create forces in opposition to it and that would hold back technological growth). On the contrary, capitalism has gone mad technologically and it is promoting a technological growth that the world has never seen before; it's going out into outer space. But in addition, I see that the so-called *bourgeois* revolutions were not bourgeois revolutions. The French Revolution was sin to the bourgeoisie; it was a constitutional monarchist bourgeoisie which opposed the *sans coulottes*. In America the American Revolution horrified Hamilton, who tried to establish (and he was the dissenting voice of the American bourgeoisie) a monarchy and wanted Washington to become the first King George. Washington refused, being the Virginian aristocrat he was, and insisted upon



wrong with the emergence of patriarchy, so I realize where we went wrong with the emergence of capitalism. We went wrong hundreds of years ago. But we have been working with Victorian ideologies about the progressive role of capitalism, about the progressive role of technology, and the progressive role of the proletariat. All of these notions have been wrong, which is not to say, again, that I want to go back to the stone age. It is not to say that I am opposed to technology. What I am opposed to is the

a republican system of virtue, and thus arrested this development towards royalism in America. The constitution that was framed was framed, not by a rapacious bourgeoisie, but in great part by agrarian classes. Even if many of them were involved with capitalism, they were still agrarian classes, a yeomanry, as well as Virginia aristocrats who had non-capitalist values, however much they tried to contain the "lower classes".



So now I realize that we have to elicit the libertarian dimension out of these revolutions, because I do not believe that the bourgeoisie existing now could ever make a Spanish revolution possible again. It wouldn't last six hours. Forget about four years. They'll come out with bazookas and missiles; they'll come out with their Green Berets, their radar and their bombers and wipe out everything in just a matter of days, just as they did in Chile, with not even that sophisticated an army. They could have settled the Vietnam war with hydrogen bombs if they had wanted to, if they were not concerned with public opinion or domestic opinion. But what are we saying when we say that? We say that their own republican institutions paralyze their operations, and their own democratic and republican institutions inhibit them from acting freely. Then they'll have to get rid of these republican institutions and democratic institutions; our job is to stop that, and to enlarge them and bring out their libertarian dimension on a municipal level and finally create a counter-force of an empowered citizenry on a local level and a confederal system of relationships. I'm not talking of parochial isolated cities, but of a confederal dual power that will oppose the centralized power in the name of the highest ideals of the revolutionary era, which spans

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from the English revolution up to the Spanish revolution. Are people prepared to think that far ahead and to re-evaluate this whole experience? Or am I going to be ten years behind or ten years ahead so that nobody can accept that? That is a dilemma I'm personally faced with when I voice these opinions.

The Greens in Germany represent a promising development not in terms of their intent to take power or function as a party. What is amazing about the German Greens is the factionalization going on over the various issues I'm discussing implicitly. They're not as conscious, I suspect, of these issues as I am. Rather they're not as conscious of these issues as I think they should be. But they intuitively feel that these are the issues they are debating, and the various factions inside the Greens have turned the Greens into the most radical movement imaginable; I mean, that I have seen in Europe or any place. When one talks of Greens in Canada or the U.S., remember that the Greens in Germany came out of an extraparliamentary movement that had probably reached its limits. How far can an extraparliamentary movement go? It either has to go into some kind of syndicalist movement and stabilize itself as the CNT did in

Spain; or it has to go into insurrection and imagine a Germany in insurrection! So, they have to move somewhere, or else their extraparliamentary movement would dissolve back into social democracy or become demoralized, as so many extraparliamentary movements have in North America. So, if it has to move towards a political sphere, the question is what kind of political sphere will it move toward? Was it going to be authoritarian, liberal or libertarian? They chose a libertarian direction, by and large, and now they're finding out whether or not that libertarian direction is going to be preserved with its rotation of representatives, and with its very close ties to the extraparliamentary movement. Or are they going to move into a strict statecraft parliamentary form? Those are the fights that are being fought out there.

In the U.S. and Canada, all this is coming from the top down. Six people get together and say, "Look, the German Greens are so successful." They don't know why. They don't understand that hundreds and thousands of people were brought into motion fighting nuclear reactors, fighting missiles, fighting citizens' initiative movements, involving many people who are closer to the Christian Democrats than to the Social Democrats, and that the Greens came out of that movement. Here, without any social movement, they organize a party and they make it as authoritarian as possible, and they start dictating to the people what kind of parliamentary movement they're going to create. I think it's terribly important that libertarians initiate such developments on the local level or else this whole thrust will be taken over by authoritarians, or by Marxists who shrewdly take over quite frequently what we often initially start. So, I think it's very important for us to think these things out, and to talk them out, and to weigh them carefully, or else we'll be dreaming the old day-dreams of Spain, and the Paris commune of 1848, or Bakunin on the barricades, or Kropotkin in Petrograd and, in the meantime, history will just pass us by.

toward an ecological society



KIO: I was just wondering briefly what kinds of libertarian trends you have seen in Germany?

MB: Well the most amazing things that I have seen in Germany are some of the people in the Greens and the people that I've encountered or spoken to, and the kinds of discussions that have taken place regarding the attempt to develop a libertarian political movement. I've seen this most notably among the Remer Greens and the city council of Frankfurt. They are "fundis" (as the more radical Greens are called) with a

very strong libertarian proclivity who want to remain independent of the Social Democrats, and who are eager to develop their own libertarian form of organization with close connections with the extraparliamentary movement. A wonderful development has been the transformation of a Leninist/Maoist like Ebermann of the Communist League in Northern Germany and his colleagues who have undergone great transformations. And I've had discussions with them. One of them told me, "Two years ago, what you said would have been anethma, but now I agree with 90% of what you say," and they've largely abandoned all their Leninist principles, and have moved in a highly libertarian direction. These are, by the way, hardline Maoists who were in the workers' movement in Hamburg where you have shipyard workers, you know, real heavy proletarian Red Hamburg — which Hitler only visited once and said, "Damn Hamburg, if I could only get it out of Deutschland, I would be delighted." He would have wanted to surgically excise it. These were strongholds of the socialist and communist parties of the 1930's.

That has been terribly encouraging. There has been an elaborate network established in Germany through this extraparliamentary movement which is very encouraging, which I hope will act as a correction of the Greens. Let me emphasize that if the Greens go with the Social Democrats, they will follow a logic that is very tragic. They will lose their identity. A very important thing that I also learned is that politics is an education; it's not just power. The attempt to develop a libertarian politics means to educate people not to take power but to educate people to empower themselves. That's why I emphasize the local level not the national level. My concern is with the communalist, community oriented level and I'm simply trying to follow out the logic of that as it applies to the 1980's.

KIO: Hasn't city government become really stultified in the last ten years?

MB: Yes, the state has appeared everywhere. The question now is to try to disengage cities and towns from the state by mutually confederating with each other and developing some sort of networks where resources can be moved back and forth. I'm not looking for a stable situation where you have municipal government co-existing with the state government. I'm concerned with developing local institutions — neighborhood assemblies, neighborhood councils that will be thrown into dynamic opposition to the centralized state. My most important concern is to stop the centralization of economic and

political power, just like the Luddites tried to stop industrialization, not because they were against machines, but because they were against wage labour and the factory system, and realized that it was threatening their way of life. By the same token, my concern is not to establish a municipal confederation which exists side by side with the powerful state. My concern is to see that the municipal level act as a brake upon the centralization of the state and ultimately lead to the abolition of the centralized state in a free municipal confederation of towns and cities and villages structured in a libertarian form.

You know this is an ideal that is ages old. It belonged to the early Swiss confederacy, not the present one. It was an ideal that existed in New England. Farmers in New Hampshire and Vermont and the upper valley tried to establish a republic of towns and cities during the American Revolution, and in the aftermath of the American Revolution against the federal centralized state. These are notions that Americans can understand and that have meaning in contrast with the old socialist notions of nationalizing the economy. Remember too that there is an economic program of municipalization, not just collectivization. The township should have control over the land; it should have control over the industries. Collectivization itself can lead many different directions. So, in Spain, the co-ordinating role of the trade unions was not without its centralistic features. Please let's not kid ourselves about the Spanish industrial collectives during the revolution in Spain. You can also have competition between collectivized industries in a market economy. Municipalization means the municipality controls it through neighborhood organizations or through town meetings.

So remember that I'm not only talking about a certain kind of libertarian politics. I'm also talking about municipalist economics. Many people think these ideas are new to me, but they're not. In the last issue of *Anarchos*, published in 1971, I wrote a piece called *Spring Offensives and Summer Vacations*. Those were the days in the 60's when you had spring offensives. And I mocked the idea that they went on offensives in the spring, then vacated for the summer and everything died. But what I advanced in that editorial — and I'm talking of ideas advanced almost 15 years ago — was the commune of communes based upon the American libertarian tradition that emerged out of the revolution. There I wrote that it's necessary for anarchists to intervene in local politics and create new kinds of local structures — municipal structures such as neighborhood assemblies, town meetings, neighborhood councils — to take control of municipal governments and confederate them nationally and counter pose them to the centralized state. That all appeared in 1971 and someone wrote a reply to me stating that anarchists should never participate in any elections of any kind and criticized me for holding that view.

KIO: So, Murray, are you saying that anarchists should run for city government?

MB: No, I'm saying that city government, as you call it, has to be restructured at the grassroots level. These governments will not really be governments in the traditional statist form. Therefore what anarchists should be doing is not hesitating to get involved in local politics to create forms of organization in which they may run once they've established these forms for

Ecology Anarchism

Murray Bookchin

Listen, Marxists! Ecology and Revolutionary Thought, and other essays on the abolition of power.

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From Utopia to Community

a history of Western communitarianism

by Gary Moffatt

The purpose of this article is to survey some of the attempts to create an alternative society that have occurred in western civilization, and to suggest some approaches that we might now take towards this goal. The social change movement, if it is to maintain any degree of relevance, must begin to build an alternative society based on the principles it advocates; it is useless to protest or seek changes from multinational corporations busy raping the environment and enslaving Third World populations, from politicians who require the financial backing of these corporations or from a general public which embraces the stereotypes of the mass media and (to an increasing degree) the prescriptions of fundamentalist religious evangelists. It is difficult to predict just how long it will take our social system to collapse under the weight of greed and guilt imposed by capitalism; the Roman Empire lasted four centuries after the regimes of Nero and Caligula exposed its fundamental corruption, and capitalism has shown an ability to respond to short-term challenges. The protest movement has scored no major victories since the sixties, and endured many setbacks; although protest may slow down the rate of social deterioration and buy us enough time to try other solutions, it is futile to regard it as anything more than a rearguard action.

That gives rise to the question of what will happen when the social system based on capitalism does collapse, presumably at the point when it runs out of natural resources to exploit. Total nuclear or environmental destruction is a real possibility, as is the break-down into small warring units which followed the Roman Empire's collapse. It is also quite conceivable that the collapse might make it possible to establish a society based on the principles of mutual aid, of small autonomous social units practising ethics of personal growth in harmony with the surrounding ecological system and of adjusting matters of common concern through federations. The greater the extent to which we are able to create such a social system before the now dominant one collapses, the greater will be the chances of its becoming the dominant pattern after the collapse.

The concept of a tribal society is by no means untested; of the million or so years the human race has inhabited this planet, tribes constituted virtually the only form of association until problems associated with damming the Nile river resulted in creation of the first larger governing unit some 6000 years ago. From this the modern state has evolved, and the state has been the fundamental enemy of the tribe (which commands allegiance that the state must monopolize in order to pursue its goals). The state's destruction of tribalism is now entering its final stages with the genocide of remaining primitive tribes in such countries as Brazil and Guatemala. For a time the state encouraged perpetuation of the nuclear family, whose patriarchal control provided a form of repression complementary to that of the state, but the corporate state eventually chose to break up family units by requiring the members to disperse around the continent to the various points at which it is most convenient to employ each of them. Loss of contact with parents and siblings placed in an additional strain on marital relationships, resulting in a notable increase of "single parent" families. Now most of us live



singly or in very small units in very small living spaces; we are offered a variety of video and computer amusements, partly to replace other human beings and partly as an incentive to compete for highly paid jobs.

Throughout the history of the state, there have been attempts to devise the ideal community. In ancient and early modern times these attempts were highly theoretical, as the people who wrote about them had little or no prospect of putting them into practice. These imaginary societies, or utopias, could be divided into two groups, the technocratic which envisaged solutions to all our problems based on science and social engineering, and the environmentalist which stressed the importance of trying to live in harmony with nature rather than bludgeoning it into submission. In ancient Greece, the technocratic trend was most notably represented by Plato with his social engineering proposals based on common rule by philosopher kings, the environmentalist by Diogenes, who held that civilization was a mistake and upheld the simple, natural life. By the 17th century, such utopists as Andraea, More and Campanella had elevated science to the domination of society, emphasizing the need for industrial development and an authoritarian state. (This was what we got, though the resulting social system lacks the benevolence these utopists advocated.) The environmental tradition was carried into western thought by paganism (which never entirely disappeared after the Roman Empire destroyed the Druids), and from such Old Testament prophets as Amos through the Essenes (who founded environmentalist communities around the time of Christ) to such medieval thinkers as the Carmelite friar Henry Parker and Robert Crowley, who in his *Vision of Piers Plowman* advocated Christian communism for both this world and the next. In our own century, environmentalist utopias have been envisaged by such science fiction writers as Aldous Huxley (*The Island*), Frank Herbert (*Dune*) and Ursula LeGuin (*The Dispossessed*).

In western civilization, it was Christian dissenters who made the first attempts to turn utopian theory into practical community practise. Since the interests of the state and the established church were to a large extent complementary, both helped suppress and massacre the communities established by the Taborites and Anabaptists (later known as Hutterites) which had directly

challenged many of their more materialistic doctrines. (Many Hutterites escaped to establish communities in America.) At the same time, a church-supported alternative society existed at the monasteries and nunneries, at which the "intellectuals" (those able to read and write) were separated from the "common people" as an additional means of social control. Also suppressed was the attempt of the 17th century Diggers to establish common land on St. George's Hill in Weybridge; they were the first to build a community based on their own reasoning, as opposed to the literal Biblical interpretations of Munzer, Grebel and Hutter, thus bridging the transition from religious radical utopians who daily looked for Jesus' second coming to rationalistic communism, from utopias in the sky to communities on earth.

By the 18th century, a breakdown in dual church-state control of society coupled with availability of vast areas of land in the new world made it possible to launch a variety of experiments in community without the prospect of instant suppression. Plato and More had assumed that each member of their theoretical utopias would consent to live according to the Founder's precepts, and a similar assumption guided attempts to form socialistic communities based on the premises of Robert Owen and Charles Fourier. It was found that people who had come to these communities seeking easier working conditions were not willing to be thus regimented, and none of the communities lasted more than a very few years. In the late 1960s and 1970s there were a number of attempts by anarchistically



oriented young people to start communities with few or no rules where people could "do their own thing;" this didn't work either and the experiments were quite short-lived. Other communities had a longer life span, though they found it hard to transmit their values to younger generations and rarely outlived the founding generation (with exceptions; the Shaker communities lasted from 1774 to 1947). Generally, the longer-lived communities held people united by either common, fundamentalist religious beliefs (Doukhobors, Hutterites, Amish) or by a charismatic leader (i.e. John Humphrey Noyes at Oneida, or currently Stephen Gaskin at The Farm or Charles Dederich at Synanon).

This contrast has created a suspicion that communities need a high degree of regimentation to survive. This seems confirmed by the research of Rosabeth Moss Kanter, whose *Commitment and Community* (Harvard, 1972) contains

one of the few attempts to statistically measure the factors that enable communities to survive a long period of time. She found that long-lived communities are more likely than short-lived ones to follow such practices as signing over one's personal property on joining the community, spending over 2/3 of the day with other members, holding daily group meetings, group singing (with songs about the community), renunciation of the couple or pair bond (in favour of either free love or celibacy), controls on sexual activity, non-reimbursement of those leaving for property or labour they had contributed, public denouncement and collective punishment of deviants, mutual criticism or group confession, internal surveillance, distinguishing of members on moral grounds and wearing of uniforms. This gives rise to the question of whether establishment of communities practising alternative lifestyles is worth the large-scale sacrifice of personal freedom that appears to be necessary to enable them to succeed.

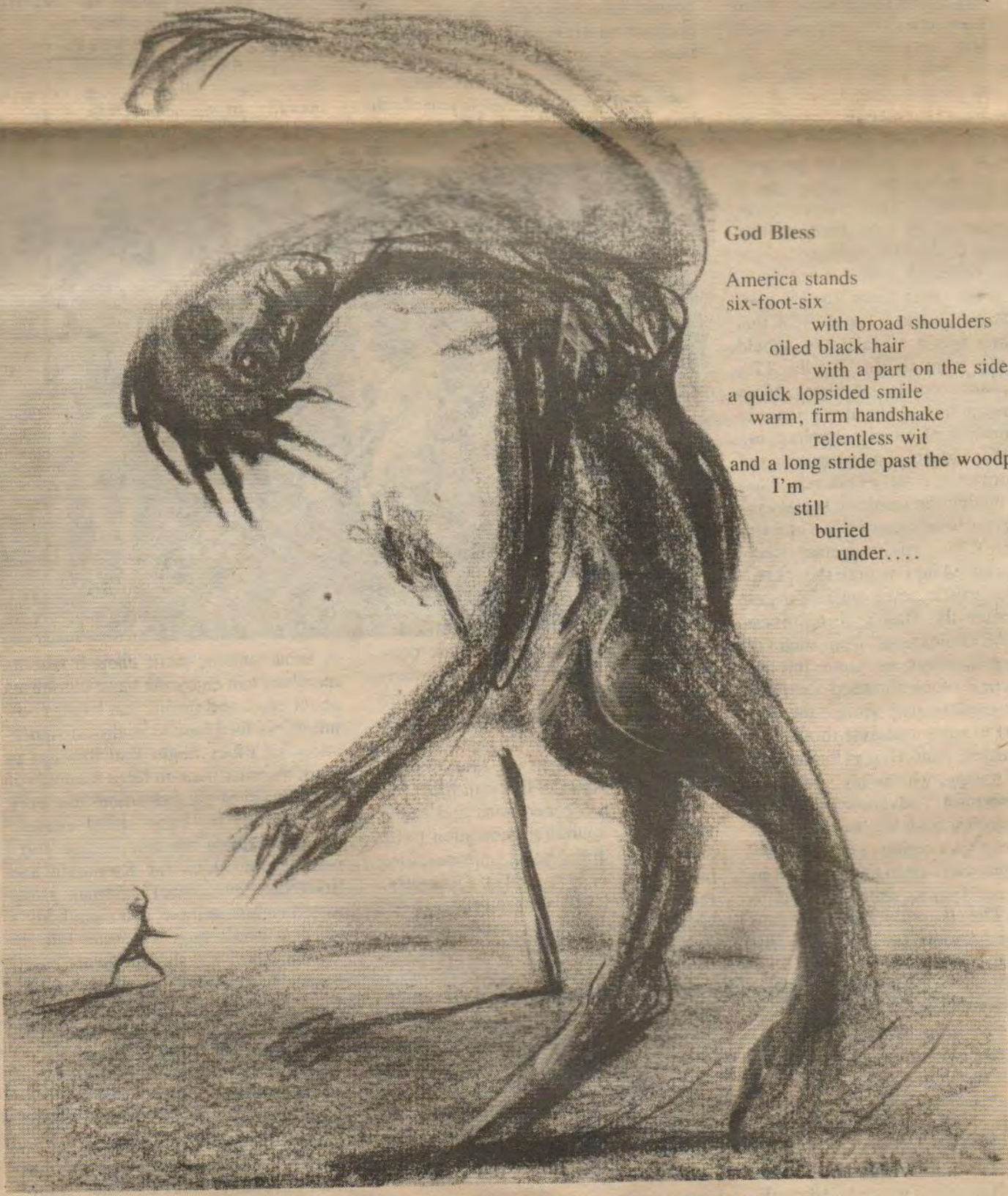
And yet, creation of some pattern of alternative lifestyles is necessary if we are to create a social system based on mutual aid which we hope will eventually prevail. We have seen capitalism co-opt both the social democrats' attempt to institute social change at the political level and the co-operative movement's attempt to improve peoples' economic conditions while leaving political power with the state (it is noteworthy that Franco massacred the anarchists but allowed the growing co-operative movement at Mondragon to survive). Perhaps the time has come to restore the tribe as the basic social unit.

A tribal unit is small enough that its members can enjoy the basic consensus about goals and means that larger communities find it hard to attain, and federations of tribes might find it easier to work together than do large numbers of individuals. Some federations can work in the cities for basic social change, others to create the free village communities in which (as Kropotkin and Bookchin envisage) the small group would be autonomous and everybody's physical needs met. To attain this retribalization, we should create community switchboards in major population centres to plug people of similar interests into one another and begin creation of an alternative economy. □

Kick It Over welcomes other suggestions of how this process might be accomplished and will print some of these in an upcoming "Act Locally" issue.

Show You Hear

Among my people
it is rude
to listen to another
without making noises
of acknowledgement.
A famous anthropologist
now deceased
said the invention
of the boat
started race prejudice.
It is rude
to listen to this silently.
The world says
a "real" woman
has gratefully accepted
some man's vision
of herself.
It is unsafe
to listen to this.
A black woman
loving other women
defies the narrow line
and draws the spiral
of her own
fire dances.
Make a noise
of acknowledgement.



God Bless

America stands
six-foot-six
with broad shoulders
oiled black hair
with a part on the side
a quick lopsided smile
warm, firm handshake
relentless wit
and a long stride past the woodpile
I'm
still
buried
under....

Covenant

We are the
of the stro
tropical
Our hair u
and thighs
force us in
toward Gh
where the
while stor
for the dea
howled in
for the bar
We are da
with sho



A Sister Gives Warning

She stands before the audience —
 her beaded plaits sweeping
 forehead and ears
 like wild winter ivy —
 and peace ahead of time
 past Johannesburg
 through Grenada
 to Nicaragua.

She swallows pink pills
 with water from Montreuil
 to still the twisting noose
 purge the thick venom.

Her tears sprinkle yellow roses
 blessed for Ashanti goddesses
 who trill earthbound reveries
 nor gathered safely
 in the pleats
 of her skirts.

She tells us she's dying
 and we all applaud wildly
 push to seek an autograph
 from the woman stranger
 who stares blankly
 at the wall.

by Terri Jewell



daughters
 ggest daughters —
 birds staged in leaves.
 otrichous
 stretched taut
 mirror reverence
 or banyam and bell,
 ward
 anaian fire
 rue magic lies.
 ve watch a pale people
 ho wish themselves
 ourmets of the exotic
 g away their gold
 h of their children.
 ve know a sad people
 ho lashed our mothers
 o stop the flow of milk,
 oly scripture
 of our blood.
 k women
 illing at the wind
 ounding up the dust
 ulders and teeth bared.

artwork by Grace Channer

an interview with Noam Chomsky

A Libertarian Analysis of Central America

Noam Chomsky is a linguist and a political commentator. He has written extensively on "deep structures" in language, and on international imperialism. He is best known for his works on the Middle East and on U.S. foreign policy. In this brief interview, Chomsky offers his views on the current world situation, particularly in relation to Central America.

K.I.O. In the past you've said that the U.S. has an interest in driving Third World revolutions into the Soviet camp, and precluding the possibility of an independent path of development. Would you like to elaborate on this?

N.C. The primary interest of the US in the Third World is to ensure that there is no threat to the freedom to rob and exploit. In the event of some development, revolutionary or not, that threatens this interest, the USA will seek to abort it. The means selected will vary depending on a wide range of circumstances. An evolution towards capitalist democracy is sometimes regarded as detrimental to the primary interest, as, for example, in Guatemala in 1954, where US subversion overthrew a reformist capitalist democracy and installed — and has since maintained — regimes that resemble Nazi Germany as closely as any in the contemporary world. A still more serious development, naturally, is one that threatens to direct domestic resources towards the needs of the indigenous population, hence impeding the right of robbery by the owners and managers of US society, or its clients. In this case, severe measures must be undertaken, up to savage aggression, as in the case of the US attack against South Vietnam, then the rest of Indochina.

US intervention has been guided by a rational version of the domino theory. The concern is that if some region, however insignificant, undertakes social and economic development in terms that might be meaningful to oppressed and impoverished people elsewhere, then "the rot will spread" — to use the terminology of the planners — and others may seek to do likewise. The demonstration effect of successful development outside of the framework of US domination is the major concern. This explains why tiny and insignificant countries such as Laos or Grenada have been the victims of such extraordinary US hostility; Laos, for example, was subjected to some of the most savage bombing in history in an effort to terminate a mild social revolution in remote northern areas, not because the US had any interest in Laos but out of fear that the rot might spread. In fact, as the documentary record shows, the major motive for the 25-year US war against Vietnam was the fear that the rot of successful development in terms that might be meaningful for the Asian poor might spread, so that the whole US-dominated system in Asia might ultimately unravel.

For the domestic population and the colonies (such as Canada), it is necessary to present aggression as defense. Thus the US is invariably defending the country it attacks, just as the Russians are defending Afghanistan, or as Nazi Germany was defending itself from Poland. For the past generation, we have been defending such countries as Guatemala, South Vietnam, the Philippines, El Salvador, etc., from the Russians (for a time, we could defend them from Communist China, but now that option has been lost). If the ferocity of our attack succeeds in compelling its victims to seek Russian support, so much the better; that provides a justifi-

cation (retrospective and prospective) for the attacks we launch against them in defending them.

Suppose that subversion or aggression do not succeed in returning the potentially rotten apple to the happy state of Haiti or Guatemala. Then the fall-back position is to drive it into the hands of the Russians, again justifying harsh measures that have been and will be taken. A further benefit is that Soviet influence is certain to strengthen the more brutal and repressive elements that will be found in any revolutionary movement or regime, and that come to the fore in the course of violence and aggression — another benefit that follows from our attack in defense of our victims, since the more brutal and oppressive they are, the less likely the demonstration effect. This pattern has been repeated over and over again, most recently in the case of Nicaragua. The US is seeking desperately to compel Nicaragua to seek Soviet aid, to justify the US attack against it. Such propaganda exercises as the 1981 White Paper are typical expressions of this need, this time in the case of El Salvador.

As this process continues in its familiar way, the victim will indeed turn towards the Soviet Union or its clients for support, and the more brutal and repressive elements within will gain greater power under foreign attack. The next step is for the intellectuals in the US and its client states to shed crocodile tears over the betrayal of the revolutionary promise, thus contributing further to the attacks that have exactly this as their intent. Again, Nicaragua is a current example of a process that is familiar and entirely predictable.

In the case of Indochina, the attack against South Vietnam (then all of Indochina) was accompanied by efforts to shore up the US position in the surrounding region. Thus, the US-backed massacre of some 500,000 people, mostly landless peasants, in Indonesia in 1965 was greeted with such pleasure in the West, and was used by American liberals to justify their support for the "defense" of South Vietnam, which provided a "shield" behind which these "dramatic changes" could take place. Canadian industry was a major beneficiary. The same is true in Central America. The Kennedy administration reacted to the "loss of Cuba" by shifting the mission of the Latin American military from "hemispheric defense" to "internal security" — that is, war against the domestic population — thus setting off a plague of repression with no precedent in the bloody history of the continent. Meanwhile the intellectuals laud our commitment to freedom, human rights and democracy. There is nothing surprising in any of this.

K.I.O. Marxists, like their bourgeois precursors, have an ideology which favours nation-state centralization. In Nicaragua, this gets reinforced by the aggressive policies of the U.S. How much is ideology and how much is circumstance, and is there any way out of this dilemma?

N.C. There certainly are elements in the Sandinista revolution that are committed to the Leninist model of to-



Noam Chomsky

talitarianism. The effect of the US attack will, predictably, enhance their power. It is difficult to estimate the effect of the various factors in bringing about this development, and it is, in fact, something of an idle exercise to try to do so. As to whether imperial savagery can be combatted in other ways, that too is hard to say. In Vietnam, for example, the NLF in the south was a considerably more diverse and decentralized structure than the dictatorship in North Vietnam, but it was demolished in the course of the American attack, leading — again predictably — to the North Vietnamese takeover that is now deplored by western hypocrites. It is easy for us to sit back and give advice, but things look different at the wrong end of the guns. I am not convinced that we have much to teach the victims of our violence.

K.I.O. Do indigenous peoples like the Miskito Indians offer a potential alternative model of development in the Third World, one more in keeping with libertarian values?

libertarian values?

N.C. The Miskito Indians have a right to live their own lives as they wish, but I am aware of no indication that their leadership has any commitment to libertarian values. It should be noted that the Miskitos have been treated very badly by the Sandinistas, though they are not simply slaughtered as has been the usual practice under US rule, most recently in Guatemala, to take only one striking example. Their current demands have much justice, but it is again worth noting that similar demands elsewhere in the continent would be dismissed with ridicule, and, if pressed, would be met with a response ranging from harsh repression to outright genocide. A citizen of the US or Canada taken at random is more likely to know of the Miskitos and their travail than of any other Indian group in Latin America (or probably at home), but that simply reflects another triumph of the American propaganda system and the hypocrites who parrot its effusions. □

The Leninists That Wouldn't be

by Ron Hayley

Some people claim that the Leninists in Nicaragua aren't really Leninists at all, are carrying on in a libertarian way, and allowing all sorts of experiments to flourish. And I tell them it's just a matter of time before the clampdown comes. In mid-October, the Nicaraguan government issued a decree suspending civil liberties.

On Monday, October 21, six days after the decree limiting public freedoms was issued, vice-president Sergio Ramirez Mercado called a news conference and sought to minimize its importance.

Mr. Ramirez said that people were still free to move about as they pleased, and that citizens accused of crimes that were not political would still be guaranteed all the rights they had held. He said the decree only affects "those who are involved in conspiratorial activities against the revolution and the country's internal order."

He said that "meetings of a social, political, festive or religious nature" would require prior approval by the authorities, and that "organizations with a

political economic or social character" could be formed only with official permission.

"We say this because in the state of anarchy or extreme liberality that some individuals and groups were trying to create before the state of emergency, they had gone to the extreme of organizing associations and cooperative groups without even consulting or asking legal permission from the state," Mr. Ramirez said.

My, my, the audacity of those people! It seems that the state's attitude towards "anarchy" is the same everywhere. What would the reaction be by the Nicaraguan solidarity groups if the Canadian government tried the same tricks here? You wouldn't hear the end of it! What's good for the Nicaraguan people is obviously not good enough for us Canadians. If any of our readers have any contact with those "anarchists" who are causing Mr. Ramirez sleepless nights, please put them in touch with us and we will do what we can to publicize their situation. □

The True Story of Sandino

by Jay Moore

The visitor to post-revolutionary Nicaragua learns quickly the identity of two strong totemic individuals. The portraits of these two are to be found practically everywhere — painted on walls in the barrios, held aloft in political parades and demonstrations, used as a backdrop for the current leadership during their public-speaking appearances.

One is the namesake of the Revolution, Augusto César Sandino. Physically a rather small man in life, almost dainty, he shows up today in Nicaragua often on the scale of a giant. Still, at full enlargement, he looks most of all like an adolescent playing cowboy in his boots and his spurs, a six-shooter strapped to the hip, bullet-studded bandoleers slung across the chest, and his head dwarfed by a tremendous Stetson.

Nothing could be further from the truth. From 1928 to 1933, this small man and his guerrilla army of peasants and radical adventurers were the scourge of the U.S. Marines who occupied the country. Labeled a "bandit", Sandino proved uncapturable. Finally, his military artistry and his patriotic intransigence on behalf of Nicaragua's sovereignty forced the Marines to pull out. Not only a national hero to many Nicaraguans, the reputation of Sandino has enduring respect throughout Latin America.

The other man is depicted with a head of curly black hair, glasses to match, and a well-tended goatee — a look which betrays the background of a university-trained intellectual. Harder to identify, he is Carlos Fonseca Amador. Fonseca was the founder, along with current Minister of the Interior Tomas Borge and a third man, of the Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional (FSLN). His surviving colleagues in the FSLN are the cadre who presently run Nicaragua.

Belonging to totally different generations in life, Sandino and Carlos Fonseca Amador are linked together as martyrs in death. Both fell victim to the hated Somoza family — the family which ruled Nicaragua like a private

fiefdom with U.S. backing for 45 years through three changes and two generations.

Sandino, his brother, and two guerrilla lieutenants were machine-gunned to death in 1934 on the tarmac of the Managua airport. The orders to kill them were given by Anastasio Somoza Garcia, the strongman head of the Nicaraguan National Guard. Fonseca fell in 1976 during a guerrilla battle with the forces of Somoza's second son, Nicaraguan President Anastasio Somoza Debayle.

In July 1979, as the world knows, an immense mass movement allied with a broad coalition of parties and organizations finally succeeded in toppling the Somoza dynasty. The FSLN, which had grown from a membership of several hundred at Fonseca's death to about 5000 militants at the moment of the "final offensive" against the regime, quickly emerged as the pre-eminent force in the post-revolutionary balance of power. It was the best organized — and the best armed.

In no small measure, one other factor has been responsible for the FSLN's success. Namely, there has been a superior dexterity on the part of the FSLN in garbing itself, and itself alone, with the considerable mantle of the hero, Sandino. In the minds of many, the FSLN and "Sandinismo" have become virtually synonymous. It is the members of the FSLN who are the "Sandinistas" charged with continuing the abortive revolution begun by Sandino 50 years earlier. The existence once again of U.S. pressure on Nicaragua and its financing of the Contra operations makes the parallel with Sandino's resistance movement all the more compelling and reinforces this association.

Nevertheless, the relationship at best is tenuous. Certainly, others in Nicaragua could, with as much or more justice, lay claim to Sandino's mantle. The FSLN has been described variously as a Marxist-Leninist movement patterned after Castro's Cuba (by its enemies, by Marxist-Leninists, and by

some of its own members) or as some new kind of hybrid between the Marxist theory of class struggle and Christian teachings on social justice (by its non-dogmatic friends and by others of its own members).

But Sandino, unfortunately for both, was neither a Marxist-Leninist or a Christian. In religious matters, he was strongly influenced by theosophy, a form of Eastern mysticism. On the political spectrum, he was far closer to the anarchist camp than to the Marxists. In fact, after trying hard to work with the Communists, he got tired of their machinations and rejected them totally. For their part, they called Sandino a sell-out and a traitor.

Sandino's battles against the U.S. invaders were fought under a flag whose colors were red and black. His men, though wearing the variegated clothing common to irregular armies everywhere, placed red and black ribbons for identification in their hatbands. Around their necks, they sometimes sported red and black bandanas. Readers of *Kick It Over* will have no trouble identifying these colors. They are the colors of anarcho-syndicalism, and the relationship is not a coincidence.

Sandino in His Own Words

50 years ago North Americans seem to have been about as much in the dark concerning the real Sandino as North Americans today. The press releases of the U.S. government described what the U.S. Marines were doing in Nicaragua as "bandit-suppression operations." This must have formed the impressions of most North Americans, of a Sandino unlettered and semi-barbaric. The man, much less his ideas, had only a shadowy existence.

One enterprising journalist, however, was able to bring out the true story. Shortly after Sandino had announced his war of national liberation and the first Marine casualties had occurred, the editor of the *Nation*, Oswald Garrison Villard, commissioned Carlton Beals to find, to meet, and to interview Sandino. Beals was a globe-trotting journalist

with nonsectarian leftist sympathies. He knew the terrain from having worked and taught in Mexico during the aftermath of the Mexican Revolution.

To find Sandino was no mean task. In an escapade reminiscent of Edgar Snow's later and more famous penetra-



Sandino

tion through hostile lines to see Mao and Chou Enlai in their North China base area, Beals finally got his scoop. After contacting Sandino's friend, the poet Froylan Turcios, in Honduras, Beals was provided with an escort to take him secretly to a rendezvous with Sandino at his jungle hideout. The trip involved riding for long distance on horseback over rugged mountain trails and slogging on foot through the deep rainforest mud. "Cattle ticks," Beals reported, "boring in our sides, made sleep almost impossible." While en route, he was in constant fear of being shot by either side or of the party being bombed.

Finally, Beals caught up with Sandino at the town of San Rafael del Norte, in Nicaragua's Jinotega province — a town which Sandino's troops had just liberated. The interview was held at 4:00 a.m. while the General of the Defending Army of the National Sovereignty of Nicaragua was having his breakfast. What Sandino said is told in Beal's two books, *Banana Gold* (1932) and *Great Guerrilla Warriors* (1970).

Beals, whatever his preconceptions may have been, found Sandino to have an extraordinary command of world affairs. "He was earnest and amazingly fluent," Beals later testified. "His ideas were organized, his words epigrammatic, precise, sparkling. A born phrasemaker, and his impact consisted of will, purpose, courage, and knowledge." Beals also noticed what was to him a faintly irritating cockiness.

Beals: "Why are you fighting?"

Sandino: "We want the United States pirates to go home. I want a Nicaragua for the Nicaraguans. A free country. Our own country."

Beals: "And for you personally?"

Sandino: "Nothing, I won't ever accept a government position of any sort. The day the gringos go, we arrange to lay down our arms."

Beals: "Will your men obey you?"

Sandino: "They will obey me. I have

The Psychology of Leadership

While not on the same plane as Leninism, authoritarian ideas and practices can and do infiltrate other social movements. When I was a Leninist, I got a first-hand look at what I call "the psychology of leadership". Here are some of its characteristics:

***Wanting to control other people's labour power:** You can never accomplish everything you want to by yourself, so you try to find a way to influence others to your bidding.

***Clubbing together in a clique:** To enhance your power, it's helpful to form a "mutual admiration society", where heavies pat each other on the back and legitimate one another. This helps you impress those you wish to control and means you can maneuver more easily, isolating individuals who don't want to accept your plans.

***Responding to criticism like a cat responds to water:** Avoid it at all costs. Have a ready-made rationalization for every action. Promote the myth that you and your buddies are infallible.

***Promoting the notion that "all animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others":** Monopolize decision-making (see point no. 2) and keep a tight lid on information (authoritarians have an inordinate

fear of sharing).

***Putting a patent on your ideas:** Authoritarians believe in the private property of ideas. **You** must get all the credit, and no one else has a right to use or embellish them.

***Attracting the light from other stars:** As an authoritarian, you can't stand other people being in the limelight, so what to do? Steal their thunder. Scratch their back, and see if they'll scratch yours; flatter them and by so doing co-opt them. By rubbing shoulders with them, see if you can steal a little of their lustre.

***Disempowering people:** If you want to stay on top, it's important that people feel helpless, not capable of doing anything without you.

Why do people do these things? Penetrating to the inner circle of a clique gives a sense of validation denied to you as a child. If you lack interpersonal skills and have a fear of emotional honesty, you can turn all emotional conflicts into questions of political "principle" and hence into a struggle for power.

As you'll continue to attract adherents as long as people on the left (anti-authoritarians included) continue to think of social change in almost religi-

by Ron Hayley

ous terms — ever seeking the "avant-garde", the "leading edge", the newest wave. After all, they've been conditioned to do this by the capitalist media which needs to sell the same old shit as "revolutionary", "new", and "improved". They need to keep us perpetually restless, perpetually bored, ever ready to keep consuming commodities. Political and intellectual trendiness works the same way.

Most people's perception of politics is as a struggle for power, or to bolster one's ego. Hence its useage as in "office politics" or "it's all just politics". One tendency has been for people to seek to trade on their oppression, using the "hierarchy of oppressions" (being gay entitles you to one point, being black gives you two, and so on) as bargaining chips. This often results in "confrontation politics" where each group tries to out-guilt and force its leadership on the other. This has the effect of alienating people even further. Hopefully, by being more sensitive to one another's experiences and criticisms, and also strict in not putting up with manipulatory game-playing, we can build a movement based on trust and concern, and short-circuit the "psychology of leadership". □

some plans for them. I am going to ask the government to set up a new Department along the Coco River, at present mostly uninhabited, to be called 'Peace and Liberty!'. My boys will get the land there and work. The country is rich. Until they get fields cleared and crops in, they can live easily on wild fruits, wild plants, the roots they know. They can make money right away selling wild cacao, bananas, cutting lumber, panning out the gold. We'll build a dam and

century liberator of South America from the Spanish — a man whom Sandino greatly admired.

Beals: "You mentioned the proposed canal."

Sandino: "Yes, I have ideas about that, too. This upsets the gringos more than anything else, for I demand that the Bryan-Chamorro Treaty be abrogated, that the canal be built by all the countries of the world, which wish to participate, but with predominantly Latin American

withdrawal of the invading forces and a non-political provisional President to be followed by Latin American-supervised elections. He would never, he said, give up the struggle until the last gringo had left Nicaragua for good.

Sandino was true to his statement. He lived long enough to see the final departure of the U.S. Marines. As promised, he began his co-operative experiment on the Coco River, which other sources show he envisaged as a model

Sandino: The Making of a Revolutionary

Augusto Calderon Sandino (later he renamed himself with the more heroic César) was born in 1895, the natural son of an Indian woman and a Ladino man. Despite his illegitimate status, Augusto was taken into the household when his father married another woman and raised as the first-born.

Don Gregorio was something of a rural intellectual with broad interests and a well-stocked library. The father's early influence probably accounts for Sandino's own enduring intellectual curiosity. From his father, he also imbibed a diet of the egalitarian views which were supposed to be the philosophical basis of the Liberal Party of which Don Gregorio was an ardent supporter.

Since independence from Spain in 1821, the political struggles in Nicaragua, and in the other Central American nations, had found rancorous expression in the fundamental division between Conservatives and Liberals. The Conservatives represented the more traditional power-structures, minus the Spanish, of Central American society — large landholders and the Catholic Church (itself a large landholder). The Liberals, on the other hand, were an umbrella for broader array of class interests and Enlightenment theories.

Direct U.S. intervention in Nicaraguan affairs began in 1909-10, in order to lend support to a Conservative-led uprising against the Liberal dictator, Zelaya. Zelaya had angered the Church by asserting state independence and guaranteeing the freedom of religious practice — a cornerstone of Liberal doctrine. What upset the United States policy-makers were his overtures to Great Britain and Japan for their aid in building the Canal. This proved to be Zelaya's undoing. He was pushed aside and a more tractable Conservative government was installed with U.S. backing.

In 1912, the Liberals revolted against what they correctly considered a puppet regime. Again, Marines were landed "to restore order". In August 1914, the humiliating Bryan-Chamorro Treaty was signed. A contingent of Marines remained on Nicaraguan soil until 1925, when the moderate Conservative Solorzano was elected President in a coalition with a Liberal, Dr. Juan B. Sacasa as vice-president. However, the Marines were shortly to return.

These facts are important because Sandino later would describe his actions, at least initially, as coming in defense of the thwarted Liberal Revolution.

For a part of this period Sandino was not present at all in Nicaragua. Either motivated by the wanderlust characteristic of a young man with horizons larger than the confines of his home village or, as the story goes, in order to escape legal prosecution for a fight, Sandino left Nicaragua in 1921. After brief stints of employment in Honduras and Guatemala, Sandino came to Mexico. Here, in 1923, at the oil-producing center of Tampico, Sandino took work as a mechanic with a U.S.-owned petroleum company.

Tampico, on Mexico's Gulf Coast, was an excellent place for the young, open-eyed Nicaraguan to acquire a higher-level education into the economic workings of U.S. imperialism. Having one-quarter of the world's then production, Mexico's major oil center was dominated by U.S. capitalist interests, chiefly of the Rockefeller family. Indeed, the city at that time was the second busiest port in the



Daniel Ortega

a power station and make the river navigable for good-sized vessels. We'll work it through co-operatives, I think."

Beals: "That is in the future."

Sandino: "Yes, a man who does not have a handspan of earth, as I don't on which to die, deserves to be dead unless he fights. I am a Nicaraguan and am proud that in my veins there circulates, more than any other, Indian blood, which contains the mystery of my being a loyal and sincere patriot."

Beals: "Do you want land reform?"

Sandino: "There are not so many big plantations in Nicaragua. What the country needs is co-operatives, so the farmers can get machines, good seeds, fertilizer, electricity, more schools, doctors. It would be so easy if the government and the army would quit stealing from them. This is a rich country."

Beals: "But will Nicaragua be free if the Americans leave behind their own dictator and their armed National Guard?"

Sandino: "Diaz [the U.S.-supported Conservative President] will soon be out. Moncada is slated to succeed him. He, too, will have to go. Still, if he agrees to celebrate no more Shylock loans and gets back the national bank and railroad, if he lets us breathe, we'll live with it. What we need is a real election, with Latin American, not gringo supervision. I've written to most of the Latin American governments about it."

A proposed canal through Nicaraguan territory connecting the Atlantic and the Pacific had long been the prime reasons for the quickness of U.S. interest in the region. Sandino had ideas about this, too, patterned after the proposals of Simon Bolivar, the great 19th

capital. [The Bryan-Chamorro Treaty gave the U.S. perpetual and exclusive rights to build any Nicaraguan canal.] That was Bolivar's idea, which the United States destroyed when it built the Panama Canal. As soon as the Marines go, we'll call a continental conference in Buenos Aires to arrange for building it. It will be the sort of canal that Bolivar wanted in 1826, one that will symbolize the co-operation and friendship of the peoples of the world. The Panama Canal was a chantage, the word 'Panama' means 'a big steal'. It violated the law of nations and the spirit of the continent. It is a raw red wound across the throat of America."

Sandino, Beals observed, took an enormous pride in describing himself as a plebian. Actually, Sandino was the son of a small land-owner; his family was fairly well-off by Nicaraguan village standards, and a higher than usual status is indicated by his father's use of the title, Don Gregorio Sandino. But Augusto César Sandino felt strongly his connection with the working classes — a relationship established during his long sojourn in the Mexican oil fields. His trade, he told Beals, was that of a mechanic. After putting down the rifle, he could go back to being a mechanic.

Beals and Sandino watched an overflight of the village by U.S. warplanes. Shortly before, the U.S. commander Admiral Sellers had issued a surrender ultimatum to Sandino dropped from an airplane. Before bidding Beals goodbye, Sandino handed Beals a reply to the ultimatum to carry back on his return. It was very curt. Sandino demanded the cessation of bombing raids by U.S. planes on civilian targets, the immediate

for the rest of Nicaragua — even as the prototype of a new capital district for a unified Hispanic America. Only a subsequent act of treachery by Somoza was able to defeat him. The next day after his death, the co-operatives were attacked by the National Guard and destroyed.

Sandino's ideas for social reconstruction were never taken seriously by those forming the FSLN who adopted for themselves the old name with the mass-appeal — Sandinistas! Sandino was a "utopian". To them, he had never made the leap to true, scientific socialism. Often his ideas were ignored completely, as in the recent headlines of an article in the FSLN's official newspaper, *Barricada*: "Expulsion of U.S. Invaders: His Single Goal" (February 21, 1985).

Carlos Fonseca Amador, it is true, had urged in the early 1960's that the other members of his circle of student revolutionaries study Sandino's writings. Underground, he gave priority to work on a book, *Long Live Sandino*. This criticized what Fonseca said were the sectarian mistakes of the old-style Communists in their former dealings with Sandino, while making clear at the same time Fonseca's admiration for the Soviet Union. Yet, for all his promotion of Sandino's militant anti-imperialism, Fonseca could say nothing, pro or con, about the Coco River co-operatives or Sandino's other projects.

The FSLN also adopted Sandino's colors. Sandino's red and black flag, Fonseca says, came "from the social struggles he knew in Mexico". What these were exactly, he nevertheless neglects to mention.

World (next to New York) for American commercial shipping. It also boasted all the more sordid accoutrements of an industrial boomtown, with "one of the largest red-light districts in the world" and an abundance of bars and opium dens.

In 1921, flotilla of U.S. naval vessels had appeared in Tampico harbor, when the U.S.-owned oil producers had ceased operation in a "strike" to protest a Mexican tax on oil exports. The workers had threatened to seize the oil wells and run them themselves if work was not promptly resumed. Then, in 1923, at the time of Sandino's arrival, Tampico's electricians' union took over the city light-plant and the street car system, both U.S.-owned, and for a few weeks ran them as worker self-managed.

One labor writer has described the oil region around Tampico as "the scene of a long-drawn-out struggle between owners and workers. No sooner was one strike settled than another one began, despite the fact that wages were higher in the oilfields than in any other part of Mexico."

Many members of the Tampico working-class were sympathizers of the anarcho-syndicalist Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). Organizers of the IWW, had frequently crossed the nearly wide-open border from the United States to Mexico in order to secure work in the oilfields. They had brought with them and propagated a commitment to decentralist forms of organization and a burning belief in direct action as a means for conducting the struggle of workers against bosses. The giant and influential Mexican trade-union apparatus, the Confederacion Regional Obrera Mexicana (CROM), was founded in Tampico in 1917. It included IWW leadership, along with more traditional trade unionists, and manifested definite anarcho-syndicalist leanings in its early programs. These said production should be placed in the hands of the workers.

Mexico, in 1923, was still in many ways a revolutionary country. By now, both of the two main folkloric heroes of the Revolution were dead, the victims of double-cross. Nevertheless, the spirit was still very much alive of Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata, the guerrilla chieftains whose forces had not so very long before moved freely throughout Mexico scattering expropriated landlords and the compromising bourgeoisie in their wake. Accompanying the Revolution had been a newly-awakened pride in Indian or Mestizo origins and a greater sense of Latin American identity.

Sandino recalled later that, as a Nicaraguan among Mexicans, he felt humiliated by their barbed insinuations that he and his countrymen had capitulated to the North Americans. "Not being a statesman, I didn't think I deserved such names, and at first I answered back; then I thought about it and saw they were right, because as a Nicaraguan I had the right to protest."

Always possessed of an inquisitive mind, Sandino experimented in Tampico with a wide variety of belief-systems. One biographer says: "In Tampico, Sandino became a freemason and associated with theosophical and spiritualist groups. He also studied ancient history, yoga, and Seventh Day Adventism. But in the end it was Latin American nationalism that became Sandino's creed."

While in Tampico, Sandino may have first come into contact with the ideas of Victor Raul Haya de la Torre, although the evidence is admittedly speculative. It was in Mexico, in 1924, that Haya de



la Torre and other exiled Peruvian students formed the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (APRA). While willing to assimilate certain Marxist concepts of the class struggle, the APRA was generally suspicious of European ideologies. The APRAistas were determined to develop an indigenous Latin American revolutionary theory and placed a special importance on concepts of the traditional Indian community. (The APRA candidate was recently elected the Peruvian president.)

Whether Sandino encountered any of the members of the APRA during his first Mexican sojourn, he was certainly to adopt aspects of their terminology. His substitution of "Indo-Hispanic", with its emphasis on the dual origins of the people for Latin American in many manifestos and public utterances is a clear indication of APRA influence. Later, the APRAista, Estaban Pavletich, became one of Sandino's most trusted advisors, until he was expelled from the guerrilla camp along with Sandino's secretary, the El Salvadorean Communist, Augustin Farabundo Marti.

Whether Sandino participated directly in any of the numerous labor battles in Tampico is a matter of debate for his biographers. Macaulay in *The Sandino Affair* says it is unlikely, quoting an American employer's description of Sandino as a conscientious employee. Beals maintains, however, that Sandino "did participate in several oil workers' strikes under the Regional Conderation of Labor's red-black banner."

Where the career of this oil-field mechanic might have taken him on its own internal trajectory from this point is unknowable. However, it was the rapid development of events in Nicaragua which as to thrust Sandino now as "the soul of the race" onto the center stage of world history. As we have seen, this soul had a mind of its own which carried with it an assortment of eclectic ideas but ones possessing a definite social character.

In May, 1926, Sandino received an urgent message from his father calling on him to return home. The ultra-Conservative Chamorro signatory, as Foreign Minister, to the infamous treaty, had overthrown the duly-elected

constitutional government a few months after the 1925 election. Both Solorzano, the President, and Vice-President, Sacasa, fled the country. A Liberal revolt began pledging loyalty to the deposed Vice-President, a Liberal, who was now

claimed as the Constitutional President. U.S. Marines again were landed in Nicaragua, on the side of the Conservatives, and the scene was set for Sandino's entrance.

While every other figure on the side of the Liberals, including the presidential pretender, Dr. Sacasa, eventually was bribed or intimidated by the presence of the Marines into laying down the Liberal arms, Sandino alone refused to compromise. Gathering a few men by his side, using his savings as an oil-worker to buy guns, he began to fight. His battle flag came from the red and black colors of the anarcho-syndicalistic Mexican CROM, of which he had been a member. At the beginning of the resistance, Sandino joined forces with those of Francisco Parajon, field organizer for the Nicaraguan Federation of Labor. "His troops, like those of Sandino, wore the black and red colors of syndicalism in their hatbands." Shortly, he found himself fighting not only with the gringos but also against the power-plays of the agents of the Comintern who wanted at first to co-opt him and failing that, to destroy him. □

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Some Relevant Books

- The Sandino Affair* by Neill Macaulay (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1967).
- Sandino* by Gregorio Selser (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1981).
- Great Guerrilla Warriors* by Carlton Beals (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970).
- The Looting of Nicaragua* by Rafael De Nogales (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1970).

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continued from page 10

once, even in running, they're running on the platform to establish these forms. There are two ways in which you can participate in the electoral process on a grassroots municipal level. One way is to help create these forms, as we've tried to do in Burlington. We were the ones in Burlington who established the neighborhood planning assemblies and proposed the idea that led the enabling legislation to establish them in the five wards in Burlington. We now have five neighborhood assemblies. It was not the socialists who proposed them. They took the credit for it, but they didn't propose them. So I'm saying there are two ways in which you can function. One is to work to create these assemblies; the other is to run, or have people run, or support people who will run with a view towards establishing these forms or organizations on a municipal level. But

we have to libertarianize our communities, to create and institutionalize grassroots democracy that can counteract the centralization of power, cooperatively and politically. □

Writings by Murray Bookchin

- The Concept of Social Ecology* — 50¢.
- Workers and the Peace Movement* — \$1.25.
- Beyond Neo-Marxism* — 75¢.
- A Return to First Principles* — 75¢.
- Last Chance: An Appeal for Social and Ecological Sanity* — \$2.50.

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The Macho Revolutionary Syndrome

Jerk-off Politics, Part 1

by Lynna Landstreet

After re-reading this article, I realize that I have been guilty of one of the main things I was criticizing: the "Us/Them" division. Please be aware that the "Macho Revolutionary Syndrome" is not a particular category of people, as it sounds here, but a mindset present to some extent in all of us, including — obviously — myself.

I began to see a disturbing resemblance between the cocky stance of my radical brother and the brutal policeman who aimed his club at our heads ... (The Left) had come up against an old blindness that (it) could not acknowledge: a prejudice against women, and against those qualities in human nature which women have come to symbolize. The aesthetic of the Left required hardness, "guts", rigour. And to argue against acts of violence or for reform had become soft, "feminine", sentimental. The image of the radical was an image of machismo.

— Susan Griffin

(Made From This Earth, pp. 9-10)

She was writing about the 60's, but macho radicals are alive and well and with us today, not only in the obvious guise of sexist males whose politics are just great as far as war, the state, racism, etc., are concerned, but who can't see past the ends of their cocks when it comes to feminism or gay liberation, but in many less blatant forms as well: we all know people who seem to be more concerned with playing the role of the big tough revolutionary than with creating real change. They're convinced they've got the ultimate correct line, and that anyone who doesn't agree with them is worthy of nothing but contempt. Because they're so sure of their political correctness, they can advocate violence with no qualms; after all, they're the "good guys", so everything they do is right, and everyone else becomes the "bad guys", so that their lives don't have any value. After all, "There are no innocent bystanders in a revolution", right? If someone's not with us, they're against us. Blow 'em away! Political ethics are a remarkably simple, black-and-white matter for these John Waynes of the anarchist movement. The revolution, in their view, will be brought about, any day now, by them and their friends getting enough guns and explosives (somehow) to knock off the government, police, and corporations. Exactly what will happen to the other 98% of the population is never made clear. It's just one of those minor details that can wait until after the revolution. And of course their revolution will be, not an ongoing process that may take our whole lifetimes and more (that's for pacifists and wimps), but a grand, glorious spectacle of guns, guts, and guerilla heroes. They're disgusted by tactics they see as martyr-like or self-sacrificing, such as civil disobedience or hunger strikes (although the latter is sometimes acceptable if engaged in by prisoners with adequate revolutionary credentials), but are eager (at least in theory) to sacrifice themselves by putting all their energy into one big-bang type action that lands them in jail for the rest of their lives. They're fond of proclaiming that "I'm sure I'll be either dead or underground by the time I'm 25". As Valerie Solanas put it, they "would rather go out in a blaze of glory than plod grimly on for another 50 years." (SCUM Manifesto) Apparently being a hero is different from being a martyr; it's O.K. to throw away your life as long as you do it with sufficient flair. They thrive on repression and state retaliation

because it makes them feel dangerous, and helps them to justify cutting off their emotions and not caring about anyone else. Drastic situations call for drastic measures, right? "A revolution is not a tea party!" But, as Marge Piercy puts it, "there is also a point beyond which cutting off sensitivity to others and honesty to what one is doing does not produce a more efficient revolutionary, but only a more efficient son of a bitch. We are growing some dandy men of steel nowadays." (Sisterhood is Powerful, 422). And anyone who questions their dogma had better watch out. If you appear to have any interest in short-term solutions, in compromising the ideal slightly in order to help relieve an immediate problem, you're a "liberal". If you suggest they might be well advised to start considering the implications of their supposed anti-authoritarianism in their own lives (i.e. to stop being hypocrites), you're nothing but a "lifestyle anarchist". And if you dare to suggest that maybe violence isn't a good idea, then you are (horror of horrors) a pacifist! (which they often like to spell "passivist", although the two words are not related).

What's wrong with being a pacifist? Plenty, they'll tell you. Apparently, it means being totally passive, doing nothing, and accepting whatever shit the system decides to pelt you with (which I'm sure comes as news to most pacifists). This equation of pacifism with passivity, however, is not simply wordgames of political ignorance. It makes sense within a certain type of twisted logic. We live in a culture which is very big on dualism, or dividing everything up into two categories which, in a patriarchal society, come to be symbolized by maleness and femaleness. Thus, you are either masculine or feminine, violent or nonviolent, active or passive, S or M, ruler or ruled. So within that context it makes perfect sense; the dualist system does contain its own internal logic. What doesn't make sense is how anyone could attempt to combine it with anarchism, which by definition is about ending those categories, about being neither the ruler nor the ruled.

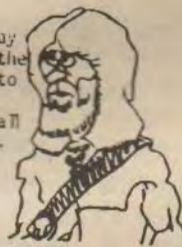
Now, one might notice that most of those espousing cowboy-type solutions (what I call "Jerk-Off Politics") tend to be men. I'm not suggesting that males have any sort of inherent predisposition to this particular type of stupidity, but they have been brought up in a culture that teaches little boys to play war, that holds up John Wayne, Sylvester Stallone, and Ronald Reagan as heroes, that defines a "real man" as an aggressive, violent, macho jerk. So it's really no surprise that so many of those who want to change the world opt for aggressive, violent, macho methods. They're simply relying on the ways they've been taught to solve problems, not realizing that these methods are a prime cause of the nightmarish world situation that we live in. And it's not only men who fall into this trap, either. Just as women who want power within the system learn to emulate the male stereotype (Margaret Thatcher is a good example of this), so many radical women come to adopt a female equivalent of the macho revolutionary image, since our culture doesn't appear to offer any other way of being a revolutionary, and it's not too hard to remove the "male" and "female" tags from the dualist categories while leaving them otherwise intact.

Actually, to use the term "macho revolutionary" is misleading. "Macho pseudo-revolutionary" might be better, since there's really nothing all that revolutionary about this approach. In fact, it maintains so many of the values of the dominant system that it's often hard to tell the difference between the resistance and what it's resisting. The State, contrary to the opinions of many, is not opposed to violence. If it was, we wouldn't have armies and police. In fact, violence is the very basis of its power. It makes a (fairly unconvincing) pretense of being against violence merely because it doesn't want anyone else to use violence; it wants a monopoly on violence. Refusing to use violence when it wants you to can also get you into deep trouble. For example, conscientious objectors in war often end up doing years in military prisons. The same can be said for the pseudo-revolutionaries, who loudly condemn any violence on the part of the State or right-wing groups as immoral, inhuman, and "terrorist", while reserving for themselves and their friends the right to use as much violence as they please. This stems in both cases from the "good guys/bad guys" mentality. The cowboys can shoot anyone they want, but when the Indians do it they're savages. Everything the good guys do is good, simply because they are the good guys, and likewise everything the bad guys do is bad. This in turn stems from the tendency of our culture to define certain groups as "Other", to dehumanize them and see them not as individuals like ourselves but as an amorphous "enemy". This type of thinking is at the root of sexism, racism, homophobia, and militarism. Speaking of which, the words "militant" and "militaristic" are related. I heard someone say once, "This issue of Open Road (#17) seems pretty militaristic — I mean militant." He might as well not have bothered to correct himself, because the two words do amount to pretty much the same thing. I've also heard it said that "It doesn't matter if people get killed in bombings. There's casualties in every

war." As Crass put it, "The truth of what you're saying / as you sit there sipping beer / Is pain and death and suffering / ..." The only difference is that "we" are "militant" while "they" are "militaristic".

Another interesting aspect of the "Revolution NOW" idea is how much sense it makes in the context of the consumer society we live in. Everyone wants instant gratification; we've grown up with the concept that all our problems will be over and we'll find immediate, eternal happiness as soon as we buy the right product, elect the right leader, or find the right mate. We have instant food, instant coffee, instant cameras, instant beauty via cosmetics, instant entertainment on TV — why not instant revolution? Those who want it often dodge responsibility for their ideas and actions by saying "We haven't got any choice". Now, granted the world situation is pretty dire and nothing we do seems to have much effect, and it is frustrating not to have the world change overnight when you're burning yourself out trying to do it, but there is always a choice. I always thought anarchism was about taking responsibility for your actions and creating choices when the system doesn't offer you any. Someone once said "when faced with two choices, an anarchist will always take the third." I don't think anarchists "always" do anything, but we should keep in mind that it's possible to reject all the directions that are pointed out to us and choose our own. We hear so many people claiming that they "haven't got a choice" whether or not to follow the rules society sets out: you have to go to school, you have to get a job, you have to get married, you have to go to war, have to obey the law ... and if you don't like it, then you have to blow things up, kill people, play the big hero, and in general carry on just like your rulers do when something pisses them off. The truth is, that when somebody says they have "no choice" other than to do what they're doing, very often it means they don't want to consider other choices

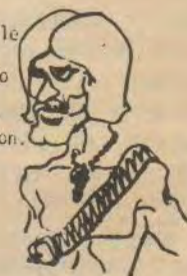
The only way to purify the system is to destroy it and start all over again.



We must unify all radical people for the accomplishment of our objectives.



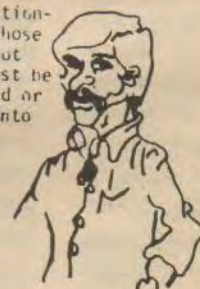
All people must be helped to see the need for revolution.



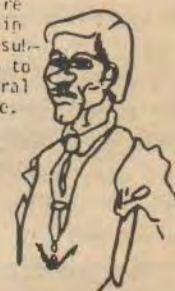
Ideological differences must be submerged and individual personalities merged into the revolutionary forces.



We must rid our ranks of all reactionaries. Those who do not agree must be persuaded or forced into line.



The entire membership must be subordinate to the Central Committee.



As Chairman of the Central Committee, it is my duty to enforce Party discipline on the masses.



Kick It Over

— they've found their niche, and it's easier to go with the flow than to really think about what you're doing and come up with something new and original.

Violence, hero-ism, cutting off sensitivity to others, seeing people as either "allies" or "enemies" with no in between, ignoring other choices, instant gratification, the ends justify the means... this is revolutionary??! It's just little boys playing war games (only this time they're letting some of the girls play too). I don't see the difference between a good revolutionary and a good soldier (but maybe it's just me that's weird...).

One point: I don't want to sound like I'm totally condemning anyone who ever uses violence. There are other reasons why people turn to violence. Fear, anger, and frustration are big ones. But we've got to acknowledge and work through those feelings, and find other ways to express them — something we can't do if we're all busy playing the big tough revolutionary who hasn't got any feelings. We've also got to accept other feelings — such as caring

about others, grief when anyone — including strangers and maybe even "enemies" — is hurt or killed, and even, rare as it may be, happiness (really, it does happen sometimes!). If we can open up and laugh sometimes and enjoy life a little bit, we're less likely to become "just weapons for the revolution." Also, even most pacifists would admit that violence is sometimes the only option there is — such as in direct self-defense (I would be the first to admit that, if someone tried to rape me, I would be quite willing to hurt him or kill him. If I had to. But I sure as hell wouldn't feel good about it afterwards). It comes down, partially, to a definition of what violence is: Starhawk writes: "We confuse conflict with violence, yet the two are not synonymous. Violence is not anger; not shouting; not a mood, or any specific action. I define violence as the imposition of power over. The manager who imposes a speed-up on the line may be inflicting violence, even though she/he is softspoken

and smiling. The Hopi woman who points her rifle at the government official who is trying to force her off her land is resisting violence." (Dreaming the Dark, p. 98)

However, it's not quite that black and white. There's a very thin line sometimes between violence and resisting violence. If the woman in Starhawk's example fired her rifle, would that be violence? Would it depend on whether she hit the man? Whether he died? What was in her mind at the time? Whether there was another way? There aren't any easy answers.

The one thing I am fairly sure of is that violence — even in the simple sense of killing people — cannot be our major tool for change. Aside from everything I've already pointed out on the topic, **violent revolution doesn't even work!** This idea might seem bizarre since violent revolutions do in fact have a history of succeeding in "smashing the state" — but, to me at least, smashing the state isn't the point. If the problems of re-

sources and support are somehow overcome, the macho revolutionaries may well "win", in the sense of killing off everyone that they don't like and (seemingly) getting rid of the current social order — but so what? We'll have traded in one set of violent goons for another. What's the difference? We won't have changed our ways of living, of fighting, of hating, of killing, and to that extent we won't have changed anything, and the system will recreate itself because everything it's based on will be there — in us.

"And when the government is overthrown / a new evil will arise to take its place / same old shit starts over again / the human race / hide your shameful faces." (Polkaholics, "Another Dirge"). It's not individuals that are the problem — it's a way of thinking. And violent revolutions are great for getting rid of individuals — including "us" — but they do precisely fuck-all to get rid of ways of thinking. So if that's the only type of change we can come up with, we've had it. □

continued from pag 5

VS: Wanted nothing more to do with us.

RF: They were manufacturing and distributing our records at the time, and they put everything into a taxi and sent it to our house. Didn't talk to us about it, didn't say anything. Because of that track.

VS: We had to pay for the taxi, too.

RF: And it was dumped on our doorstep when we were on tour. I think that, in terms of the imagery that was used, the fact that it's misunderstood is because people don't want to read it properly. We keep getting told that it says "All men are butchers," which it doesn't say, it says "All butchers are men," which is a completely different statement. And O.K., all men might be butchers. We didn't actually say that, but maybe it would have been better to have said it out loud, and included ourselves.

VS: Basically, it's an equivalent statement to rape. It doesn't even say that this woman who might rise up will kill a man, just that she will de-masculinize him. Or terminally humiliate him. It's an image of reaction to rape.

RF: Active reaction, rather than passive reaction.

KIO: Back when you were still working with Crass, you released a single with them to raise money for an anarchist centre you were trying to start. What happened with that?

RF: We weren't trying to start it. What happened was that some people came to us and said that they were trying to. Some of the people we knew were implicated in the "Persons Unknown" trial, which was some people who got arrested for having sugar and weedkiller in their house (allegedly to make bombs with). It was all tied up with "The Irish Problem, blah blah blah," and it was a big test case about Persons Unknown, because they weren't named. If the establishment had won that case, it would have meant that they would have been able to arrest and try people without even naming them, so these people were held without anyone being told who they were. They were wanting to start an anarchy centre, and it was the time of the Persons Unknown trial, so we brought the record out with us and Crass, "Persons Unknown" and "Bloody Revolution", and the money from that went to fund the Anarchy Centre. We didn't actually have anything to do with the running of it. What happened was that it lasted for about six months, and then it ran into difficulties of energy, because the old-style anarchists, or the "political" anarchists

as they like to think of themselves, couldn't come to terms with the anarcho-punks, who were a new phenomenon at the time, and they just couldn't deal with the level of energy that the punks were trying to put in. It was before punks actually became acceptable as some kind of political force, or had some political identity. The establishment politics couldn't handle them, didn't know how to handle them at all.

VS: Personally, I was quite skeptical about the likelihood of success, but I think that it was fortunate that the record created enough interest in the idea, I mean, it raised some money, and some people got some experience at taking responsibility for initiative.

RF: It raised about £5000. It was a lot of money then — more than it is now.

KIO: Are those kind of conflicts still going on now?

RF: In London, there isn't a lot of cohesion at all within the anarchist movement in general, and I think there'll always be a conflict between the mainstream, or the old guard, and the new energy. But I think it's more connected now than it ever has been.

VS: I think it's got something to do with the generation gap. I discovered, when I first started working with the band, that we were up against sexism, that myself as a woman, at that time, playing guitar and singing about the sort of things that I was doing at the time, was quite unusual. And we introduced ideas of sexism, and feminism, into a whole kind of a youth movement, but since then, it's become clearer and clearer to me that there is just as much wastage in terms of the divide-and-rule division between the generations, as there is between the sexes. A whole lot of experience that the older people do have is lost while there's that fear, from both sides, and a whole lot of energy that the younger people have is lost to the older people. And the trouble is that it's quite fun, in a way, to talk about sexism, because it has "sex" in the word! But you talk about ageism and that's no fun, because who wants to own that there's such a thing as age, and eventually death? These are much heavier taboos.

RF: So we were going to call it "youthism"...

VS: Youthism, yeah, but that's not right either. It's an issue of well, the old phrase, the generation gap, but that's boring. What we need is a sexy way of talking about that.

KIO: Do you run into a lot of problems with ageism?

VS: I guess so... We have been told, I mean just very recently in New York, by some people in the business who were wanting to work with us that, well, the phrase was "Majors (major record labels) won't touch you with a barge pole," and that's very much because an older woman isn't considered to be — well, we're up against a stereotype.

RF: But who wants to be touched by a barge pole, anyway?

VS: Especially with a major on the other end of it! Maybe we should chop their barge poles off.

RF: They'd only get it grafted on again.

KIO: Only if you do it in Australia. (This refers to a newspaper article we had been talking about earlier about a man in Australia who had his penis chopped off and then grafted on again.)

RF: Well, I certainly wouldn't want to be touched by an Australian barge pole! (Much laughter from everyone.)

KIO: But you don't really run into that problem with young punks?

VS: No, no, because —

RF: This relates to what happened on your 50th birthday, which was that the whole thing got blown as a sham. Before that, everyone —

VS: — in the press —

RF: was very cagey about "middle-aged singer Vi Subversa, blah blah blah," and then she came out and said, "Look, it's my 50th birthday, and we're going to have a party!" And we had a fucking great party! One of the best gigs I've ever been to. And suddenly it's all changed, it's like coming out of the closet.

VS: So now instead of saying "middle-aged", "49-year-old", or "50-year-old Vi Subversa," they just say "Vi Subversa". It's a great achievement, fantastic. But you see, the whole thing about the young punk movement is that, what's partly behind it, the "no future" idea, is that, over the age of 20, 21, 25 or 30 — death! And especially young women are saying to me, "Look, it's great, you give me the feeling that when I'm as old as you I could be doing something as well."

KIO: In one civil disobedience action I was involved in — we have this tradition here in CD actions of giving names of people you admire, so you get women giving their names as Susan B. Anthony, Emma Goldman, and so on — but in this one action, against nuclear power, this one woman, about 16 years old, gave her name as Vi Subversa.

VS: Really? Oh, that's wonderful!

KIO: And then we found out that the name you give goes in your permanent

RCMP file as an "alias", so she's got that as an "alias", and I've got "Ann Hansen" for mine — you know, from the Vancouver Five. We had the names of all the Five at that action.

VS: When I do see a woman of my sort of age, though, at home in London, who isn't hiding, it takes quite a bit of courage between us to look at each other and say "hi". But the more of us there are who do come out like that, the easier it's going to get. What I was saying before, about some experience, you know, I can be stupid just like anyone else, but women of my sort of age have done some things, we've raised some children, we know that some things are ongoing, that problems to do with sexuality don't stop when you're 20, 30, 40 even, they go on, and it's still important, and we have to talk to each other about these things, and the feeling that maybe in the States or in Canada, I don't know, is that there are more women who are prepared not to hide under a grey costume any more.

KIO: Yeah, the woman who gave her name as Doug Stewart of the Vancouver Five, she always non-co-operates totally in CD actions, more than anyone else, goes on hunger strikes in jail and everything, and she's 56, I believe. And my mother is 44, and says that she's the "den mother of the anarchist community", she's still kind of a hippy.

VS: Well, there's a whole lot of hippies that kind of disappeared in the face of the "punk onslaught," cause it appeared a bit like that at the time, but it seems to me that things are softening a bit between those divisions now, and a lot of punks who used to talk down about hippies, like "hippies are a bunch of shit" or whatever, are coming to realize that there were a whole lot of things in common. There are some things that have changed, but I think the paranoia between the two is lessening. There's a lot in common really, between what was happening in the sixties and now, except that I think that hippie women hadn't had a lot of the benefit of the women's movement.

KIO: Yeah, my mother's told me a bit about what happened to women in the Sixties — making coffee and typing leaflets.

VS: That's right, and a lot of women were left after the hippie period of peace and love with loads of kids that they were left on their own to bring up... There are a lot of people I've lost touch with from the Sixties, old friends of mine and I'm finding them again — because their children are coming to our gigs. □

Enlightened Anarchist

Dear Sir,

Adorations. I found your address from Ayer Directory of Publications.

Frankly speaking, I consider myself as an anarchist, but an enlightened anarchist. Also I do not consider myself as a follower of a particular religion, but as a free human being. I also feel that Christ was not a Christian, as Buddha was not a Buddhist. While most people cautiously creep behind, they had the courage to venture and explore.

I am sending you a copy of our article on Buddha in which you will find something new for your readers, and also our poem for publication in your journal.

How many members or subscribers do you have all over Canada and the U.S.? If you know other anarchist journals published in the U.S. or in any part of the world, please let me know. Above all, I would like to have a copy of your journal. Whenever you come to India, please visit me and spend some days, a week or so, here in our hermitage as our guest. It is because I want to live as the way I want to live, I am here for 21 years. I never go anywhere beyond our hermitage compound.

We remember you all in our prayers.

With love and Divine Grace,

Thy own Light:
Swami Nirmalanada
Karnataka, India

Fan Mail

Dear Dumb Pricks and Twats,

Your "anonymous donor" that you fuck-for-brains referred to in the liner notes (KIO, Fall edition) is none other than our state police, the C.S.I.S. — Canadian Security and Intelligence Service (God bless 'em!).

They always fund (secretly) "enemies of the state" so that they can go down to the nearest post office and scrutinize your (lethal) mailing lists.

This way, anal-brains, they can keep tabs on all you snivelling, cry-baby radicals. Don't you leper-cocks 'n' gangrene pussies know that Canada is the best thing poor Mother Earth's got? You fucking Nicaragua groupies! Suck my cock!

But bet your petty egos didn't let you think of this, you hot-to-trot AIDS candidates! You worm-heads think your shit don't stink? You make me sick. One sniff of M.D.M.A. and you'd drop your trendy anarchism so fast your air-heads would spin! You give responsible anarchists a bad name, bung-hole breaths!

You're all just pissed that you weren't born with a silver spoon shoved in your half-truth-spewing yaps!

Get with it! Change your ways! The Young Conservative Party needs you! (Their M.D.M.A. is free!)

— a true Anarchist,
Gordon R. Dumont

p.s. Reserve the rite to print this, you knob-gobbling, hobble-brained twats!

Dear Gordon,

Contrary to your expectations, we did print your letter. The accusation, which is not very lucid, appears to be that the members of the KIO collective are in some sense "pampered" anarchists. True, most of us do have jobs, and true, there is a multitude of people out there, both anarchists and others, who are a whole lot worse off than we are, and true, none of us is presently in prison (although some of us have been). By the same token, however, I'm pretty certain that Emma Goldman had it a whole lot better than some anarchists in her own time. But does that make her "pampered"? Does that mean that she was any less an anarchist for it? And even though most of us do have jobs, some of us are barely scraping by with minimum wage, and none of us has very much money. What little money we do have is not spent on VCRs or the latest fashions, either, but goes toward paying for

the production of KIO, for which we are seriously in debt. Furthermore, there is no reason in the world why the CSIS would donate money to us. Theirs is the power of the establishment and the state, and they are more than capable of seizing the mailing lists of KIO or any other radical group any time they want to (and making it look perfectly legitimate, too). By the way, (except for the misogynist and homophobic garbage, which I find rather odd in so authentic an anarchist) I love to have men talk dirty to me and I am willing to suck your cock anytime!

— Robyn of the KIO collective
(a practicing homosexual
who thinks that practice makes perfect)

Anarchism Questionnaire

We, the Peaceful Coexistence Collective, are compiling a booklet on anarchism to inform the non-initiated and the active members of the anarchist community as well. We appreciate your cooperation in filling out the questionnaire, and will send you a copy of the finished product. Thanx.

1) Define anarchism (i.e. movement, ideology, way of life, etc...)

2) Give a sketch of an anarchist society (utopia) in your view:

— structures — how and what would people organize and do?

— modern technology — would it be involved? to what degree?

— crime — would there be any? how would it be dealt with if so?

— would there be money, bartering, or other? why or why not?

— what sort of diet would be eaten? how would food be acquired/produced?

— what would motivate people to participate?

3) Would an anarchist society as described in #2 ever be possible? Why or why not?

4) Practical personal anarchism:

— as an anarchist, what do you do differently from Joe or Jane Smith?

— what things can we do in our everyday lives to move us closer to an anarchist society?

5) How did you find out about anarchism? How and why did you become an anarchist?

6) Any additional comments?

P.C.C.
46 Louisa Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1R 6Y8

*Your name/group/publication and address will be printed with your reply. If you wish to remain anonymous, please tell us!

Once bitten...

To Kick It Over:

I will say, truthfully, that I am appalled by the maliciousness and unreasoning fanaticism of both Miller and (to a lesser extent) Barbarash in their response to my 'politically incorrect' letter on animal rights.

I expected opposition and debate when I wrote, but I expected rational argument, not repeated libel and innuendo. I expected responses more like Putnam's letter — though I am sure he disagrees with me as fully as Miller and Barbarash, he presents his case reasonably and respectfully, and I can in turn address him with respect.

On many points, I agree with the Animal Rights movement — around factory farming (including monocultural vegetable farming), animal experimentation, and self-identification as an animal, we have no quarrel. Now that I've been assured that primate sanctuaries exist so that the injuries inflicted in the labs are not compounded by incompetent handling, my tactical differences with A.L.F. have been removed so I can wholeheartedly cheer on these sisters and brothers as well.

Many of the differences I have still with these people may come from lifestyle — I live on a rural commune where we choose to keep animals. We eat free-range eggs, milk from a cow who roams a four hectare pasture along with the horses, and this year I raised and slaughtered a pig so that my meat is not a

product of animal torture. I simply am closer to the farming life and closer to nature than most of the animal rights activists.

I see no reason, finally, why I should treat animals as though they were human beings or treat all species of animals the same. I respect their differences and apply human ethics to my relations with other humans. I would prevent one human from killing another, but I would not stand aside from frogs being killed by snakes. I treat animals decently, but I see nothing wrong in killing to eat.

Sam Wagar,
Dragonfly Farm

Consistently mediocre

To Kick It Over:

In a recent letter to *Fifth Estate* I described your magazine as "consistently mediocre" and Ron Hayley's article "Organizing for the 90's" as stupid. Here's why.

To begin with, the cover of your recent issue was dreadful. Two people posing with previous issues of *KIO* in their hands — I can hardly imagine a more uninspiring display of self-promotion. But then those given to continually invoking the "imagination" are usually sadly lacking in it.

More importantly, "anarchy" for you seems to be largely a matter of acting ethically — why else were you so impressed by the German judges who protested (to no avail, as is always the case with these protests from responsible professionals) the installation of Cruise and Pershing missiles? I could — maybe — praise a judge without choking if s/he refused to sentence, say, shoplifters, but ritual, impotent displays of conscience are contemptible, with or without judges present.

More importantly still, for a magazine that purports to be "revolutionary" you sure sound afraid of what happens when people revolt. The Ignorant, er, Gentle Anarchist is so unfamiliar with radical history that s/he writes: "A revolution would result in dozens of political groups trying to force everyone to adopt their point of view," etc. Moments when political groups have been deprived of the force behind their points of view are not so rare as you suppose, however.

What pissed me off the most, though, was Hayley's worrying about how to get the "majority of people on our side..." This anxiety reeks of Christian evangelical zeal and least-common-denominator-coalition politics. In fact resistance to the tedium and emptiness of work/consumption is pervasive, though anti-authoritarians who still think they have to win over the ignorant, pathetic masses are too obtuse to notice. I'm continually delighted by accounts of everyday insubordination from people who wouldn't think of calling themselves "anarchists" or "revolutionaries."

This documented rebelliousness ought to be taken for granted. The real (pleasurable) task should be exposing the recuperation of these anti-capital currents, as well as contesting alienation at its most advanced points.

One looks in vain through *KIO* for a subversive ferocity equal to the banality that are all subjected to in our daily lives.

Dan Todd
Eugene OR

p.s. I don't expect to see this letter in print, as I am aware that, like other anarchist institutions, you somehow "lose" letters with unfavorable criticism.

Transvesti-phobia?

Dear Sirs,
Referring to the cover of *KIO* No. 13, don't you think you'd boost your sales if those two people switched clothes?

I think Nicole is perplexed about the anarchism of the pygmies because of her European world-view, namely, the liberal world-view. She assumes that Colin Turnbull's account of the women is inadequate because he wouldn't talk to them. This projects assumptions of female incapacity onto another culture. Maybe they

wouldn't talk to him about matters in their sphere which they wouldn't discuss with pygmy men either, perhaps. Or maybe, as often happens to anthropologists, they find that a society is so stratified that they can talk to one group or category but not others, and so they pick one (as happened to John Beattie in Bunyoro). Like Nicole, I'd like more facts, but there is no reason to posit parochialism as the only possible reason for their absence.

I share Courage Pandora's "Disillusionment With Ideology." I hope she communicates it to Ron Hayley before he writes another call to organize the masses. His inability to tell "mediation" from "meditation" (p. 25) must be a source of much confusion to him. His evolution-plus-revolution blueprint has been tried before, it's what the German Social-Democrats called their "minimalist" and "maximalist" programs. I guess you all know how that turned out.

Just talking,
Anthropos

RON HAYLEY RESPONDS:

While it's true that the German social-democrats had a maximalist and a minimalist program, what they were fighting for was essentially a variant of state capitalism; hence their goals in both instances were reformist. In working for revolution and reform simultaneously, the danger certainly exists (exemplified by Greens in different parts of the world) that reform will get the upper hand. But the danger also exists, in clinging to revolutionary purism, that irrelevance will get the upper hand. As for the much-vaunted rebellion of everyday life, I tend to concur with Jim Campbell who wrote in an issue of *Up From the Ashes* several years ago in relationship to one aspect of this rebellion:

"I used to be a strong advocate of the so-called 'struggle against work' which takes as significant the sabotage, the drinking, the little ways in which workers try to reclaim control over their part in production. I've got nothing against these practices and certainly have my own means of looking after my own interests. But it is difficult for me to see that someone who 'slowsdown' simply because they're too drunk to walk is at the cutting edge of struggle in the work place."

I believe the kind of rebellion you describe will never come to anything unless people consciously develop new values and new conceptions of reality, and act on these values by reviving community, including in the political arena. Nothing is easier to recuperate than privatized acts of rebellion, which become a safety-valve like the Animal House antics of university fraternity brats. It sounds to me like you have digested Situationist dogma — superficially at that. I know it's threatening for people to think new thoughts. Some would have us continue to live in the swamp where anarchists remain comfortably smug and everything goes on as before. But some of us aren't content with that. We want to get out of that swamp, even if it means making a few mistakes along the way. At least wish us luck, eh?

PRISONERS' RIGHTS

Mary Hill, a Black woman prisoner in the Mabel Bassett Correctional Centre for Women (Oklahoma City, OK, USA, 73136) has been kept in handcuffs and leg irons since May 21, 1985. The heavy cuffs are apparently causing injury to her wrist and ankle nerves making it very difficult for her to sleep or eat. The big organizations that are supposed to deal with these things, like the ACLU, aren't doing anything. Letters of protest can be sent to Warden Larry Fields at the above address.

(Thanks to Linda Parks of *Woman To Woman* for bringing this to our attention.)

Reviewer Reviewed

Ladies and Gentlemen:

George Woodcock's strangely negative article on the film "1984" (*Kick It Over*, June, 1985) is too biased and smug to have any value as a film review. At the same time that it fails to illuminate the film, however, it reveals a good deal about George Woodcock.

Right from the start, Woodcock tips his ignoble hand by setting up a straw man to knock down. John Hurt's Winston Smith looks like Orwell from behind, he declares, and this is a "cheap and elementary device for incorporating the author rather inappropriately into his own novel." It's doubtful that even Woodcock really believes this, since only a handful of people alive today know what Orwell looked like from behind, and neither the film's maker nor its typical audiences are among them. More likely Woodcock makes this glib, stupid accusation not for its overt content but for its indirect effects. It one-ups the reader and enables Woodcock to replace the challenging, legitimate question "Is this a good movie?" with the safe pseudo-question "What would Orwell think of it?" (to which nobody, including Woodcock, knows the answer). Most importantly, it gives Woodcock a pretext to pretend to speak for Orwell.

Having thus cloaked himself and his opinions in specious authority, Woodcock goes on to display a curious hostility toward the film's most central feature, John Hurt's portrayal of the protagonist, Winston Smith. Woodcock willfully understates this role's importance. He denies Hurt any credit for the film's good points and even begrudges him the back-handed respect implied by sustained negative attention. Woodcock feebly concedes that Hurt "acts well" but at the same time insists that his performance is bad enough to make whole chunks of the film "meaningless." Woodcock expresses these opinions only in passing, however; he

saves his really serious criticism for the film's settings.

Now, as a matter of fact, Woodcock's complaints about the settings are ill-founded too, because the settings are good. Far from compromising the story's "cautionary" intent, their drab, generically 20th century institutional look has a timeless familiarity that underscores the story's universal modern relevance. (By contrast, the alternative settings Woodcock suggests would have seemed dated and parochial.) What's remarkable here, however, is not so much Woodcock's literal-minded approach to the scenery itself, but rather his skewed priorities. Evidently something about Hurt's performance so repelled him that he can hardly bring himself to discuss it. What could it be?

Judging from the few remarks he does make about Hurt's Winston, the central issue for Woodcock seems to be virility. He calls Hurt's Winston "weak," "cringing," and "wretched," and considers him too wimpy to be credible as a rebel or lover. Hurt's gentle, soft-spoken, unhappy Winston simply isn't macho enough for Woodcock to comfortably identify with. But that kind of talk is unfashionable these days, so rather than own up to some fossilized ideas Woodcock impugns Hurt's performance and then, lest anyone think him sexist, calls the film "anti-feminist."

Of course, the film isn't anti-feminist, and the full disingenuousness of Woodcock's claim that it is will be obvious to anyone familiar with the novel and novelist he is defending. Whatever else he may have been, Orwell was a pretty sexist guy, whose writings ridicule feminism and endorse patriarchy. (Relevant passages are painstakingly inventoried in Daphne Patai's *The Orwell Mystique*.) The novel *1984* is no exception, presupposing a male-oriented view of sex, detailing Winston's rape fantasies, and presenting Julia as a hedonistic airhead who speaks an annoyingly stilted "feminese" and loathes other women.

Paradoxically, the film's very diminution of Julia's role, which Woodcock decries, leaves her much more real and likeable by mercifully sparing us all this. (It also tightens the film's focus on its protagonist, thus serving the interests of aesthetic economy.) Far from being sexist, the film's treatment of Julia and Winston's relationship with her is so politically correct that Woodcock's insistence on strick organ-for-organ parity in the nude scenes seem ridiculously petty.

But again, the "sexism" motif seems mostly a smokescreen; it's unfair, but not half as unfair as Woodcock's attack on Hurt's performance. The fact is that John Hurt is an exceptionally gifted artist whose abilities as an actor far exceed Orwell's as a novelist. This enables Hurt to transcend the notorious hollowiness of Orwell's original Winston and invest the character with an intensely visceral, sympathetic presence and, more remarkably still, a palpable subjectivity. In the film, the agonizing clarity of Winston's inner life, and the stoical dignity with which he cherishes it, contrast startlingly with the servile orthodoxy of his peers. Far from suggesting weakness, these things in context express great strength and courage. (The more swashbuckling kind of heroism Woodcock seems to want is, after all, ruled out by the story's premise of absolute totalitarianism.)

The same inner life that makes up Hurt/Winston's rebellion also gives needed plausibility to his attractiveness to Julia. Sexuality and "own-life" are practically the same thing and, because Hurt/Winston's haggard face so perfectly reflects his alienation, his very homeliness assumes an elegant, existential kind of beauty. The film exploits this heavily in extreme close-ups and further eroticizes him by the use of closely-miked voice-overs that create an atmosphere of physical and spiritual intimacy with him. By the time Julia declares her love, her feelings are perfectly intelligible to the viewer. There is no need for her to explain, as she does in the book, that she

was attracted by "something in [his] face": nothing could be more obvious. That Woodcock could look at Hurt's exquisitely nuanced interpretation of Winston and fail to see its nobility or its sexiness shows appalling insensitivity to the way film communities.

Woodcock has one more major criticism of the film. He thinks the inherent limitations of film as a medium prevent the movie from giving much attention to the debasement of language, which was a major theme in the novel and in Orwell's later writings generally. This is true. The film makes no effort to reproduce Orwell's appendix on Newspeak. Nor, for that matter, does it seriously try to convey the intellectual meat of Goldstein's book or of Winston's introspections. However, this doesn't necessarily weaken the film. It helps the film sustain narrative flow and aesthetic unity in a way that the novel, because of its theoretical digressions, does not, and could therefore be viewed as an advantage.

What, then, does all of this add up to? The film is more focused and economical, more visceral, and more beautifully crafted than the novel, then that makes it a superior work of art. And Woodcock's inability to see this seems to result from a mixture of critical naivete and inappropriate motives. He doesn't really understand or respect the film medium, and judges the film not on its own merits but in comparison to the book. (This violates a basic critical principle and undermines his own case, since the book suffers by the comparison.) And he allows his judgment to be prejudiced by personal factors, such as his friendship with Orwell and his hang-ups about masculinity. The crowning irony is that all of this is done in the name of an author who has come to stand for exemplary critical acuity and unswerving fairness.

Sincerely,

Diana Blackwell
Columbia, MO.



A Call to Link Arms

grass-roots peace movements in the Soviet bloc

by Sergei Batovrin
and Bob McGlynn

Over the last few years autonomous anti-war groups/movements have appeared in the Soviet Union and its satellites. Three of the basic premises of these movements are: being for world disarmament and not taking sides with either the U.S. or U.S.S.R., the necessity of linking up the question of human rights with the question of peace, and a call for joint initiatives and a true internationalism among the rank and file of the East/West divide. For their efforts (mainly an occasional meeting here or there, petitioning, wearing peace badges, etc.) they've suffered the normal "peaceful Soviet" repression.

Support for these movements is increasingly on the agenda of the European disarmament scene. North America (especially the U.S.) is another story. It would seem to be simple common sense to want to build bridges between peoples who have no reason to hate each other. Militarism becomes increasingly irrelevant as people from both sides join in mutually co-operative relations. The rejection by these movements of Western Cold warriorism by their own initiative and not because they're 'dupes of Moscow' creates a pole of intelligent integrity that totally undermines the Right.

But to put it bluntly — these movements are getting their asses kicked literally and are we going to do anything about it or not? It should be and is no problem to get up a demo about what the U.S. is doing in Central America. But what about what's going on in Prague or the Soviet's Vietnam in Afghanistan?

Hopefully the following notes will stir some hearts.

One of the most prominent of the Eastern groups is the Moscow based **Group for Establishing Trust Between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. (Trust Group)**. They've survived since June of '82 holding seminars, an occasional picket, etc., and constant meetings with Western activists (in which joint projects sometimes emerge) and citizens from all over the Soviet Union. Originally a group of mostly professionals, the base of the group has grown to be of the Soviet youth and counter-cultural scene. They have many chapters across the U.S.S.R. and thousands of supporters. Below we'll present highlights of the past half year of the Group. Missing will be details on the incessant daily 'shadowing' of Trust members, apartment ransackings, phone lines cut, house arrests, short

term arrests, beatings, threats, detentions, etc.

At the end of April Ukrainian Trust activist Andrea Shvachko was murdered by the Soviets when they threw him under a train. Andrea provided a link to his friend Alexander Shatravka, another Trust activist imprisoned in a labor camp. (Alexander is a long time human rights and anti-war activist who's spent a good part of his life in prisons and mental hospitals. In February '85 he was given 4 more years on a trumped up charge of being involved with drugs.)

On May 14, 1985, 40 people in Moscow were detained and dozens beaten en route to a Trust Group disarmament seminar. 40 managed to get in anyway despite 40 K.G.B. agents guarding the apartment where the meeting was being held. On May 15 Trust members Olga Kabanova, 18, and Natalya Okulyonok, 16, were arrested and dumped in a mental hospital where they were forcibly drugged. Previously on April 12 they had taken part in an action to deliver a petition to the Soviet Academy of Sciences asking that the problem of nuclear winter be given attention. All were beaten as was a Finnish woman taking part in the action. Pickets were held at Soviet consulates around the world for the release of these women. They were freed as of the end of June.

On May 16, 40 Trust members plus 4 Dutch activists attempted a joint peace action but were detained instead by 100 K.G.B. A typical protest sign by the Trust Group will read "Peace, Love, Freedom". Official peace placards that the Trust Group formerly used and which were sold by the millions are now no longer available.

Hundreds of people have attended (or tried to attend) seminars over the months with detentions and interrogations going down. These seminars are held in an apartment called the Peace Centre which has a library of western disarmament materials, peace exhibits, and where English is taught. A favored tactic of the K.G.B. is to surround the Centre, put everyone on a bus, drive them miles outside of Moscow, beat them, and leave them. Anti-war draft activist Nikolai Khramov has been singled out for special attention and has gotten numerous beatings, once by 7 K.G.B. for an hour.

Reports come from Leningrad and Gorky of peace actions.

Long time human rights activist and Trust member Kirill Popov was busted June 19 and charged with "Anti-Soviet Propaganda" (12 years). He's currently in a Moscow prison where they have threatened to give him a life sentence in a mental hospital. On July 3rd, the K.G.B. broke up a rehearsal of a peace play by Debra Lubar, a member of the U.S. Fellowship of Reconciliation. During the K.G.B.'s rampage they kicked Trust member Olga Medvedkova's baby in the head. The play had to be cancelled. On July 10th the British U.K. Trustbuilders and the Moscow Trust Group began a joint hunger strike to protest repression. One person in England and one in the U.S.S.R. would each fast for 5 days and then switch to other people. As of early fall this was continuing.

On July 13, 1985, the Trust Group attempted to plant a 'peace garden' on the wasteland in front of the new Soviet Ministry of Defense Building. The K.G.B. arrested everyone and then brought in a steamroller to destroy the garden. At the end of July, Nikolai Khramov was hauled off to a V.D. prison hospital(!) just before the farcical Soviet "12th World Festival of Youth and Students" was to begin in Moscow. The next day Trust activist Olga Medvedkova and Dira Brodsky went to try to visit Nikolai. A doctor admitted to them Nikolai didn't have V.D. and was just being harassed. Outside the jail/hospital Dira was beaten up (she's 6 months pregnant — she had a cassette recorder on her so now we've got the whole scene available on tape). Many other Soviet activist youth were arrested for the duration of the 'youth festival', and then released, including Nikolai. Moscow became a closed city during the 'festival' and Soviet youth not allowed to participate were sent outside of the city to summer camps and to work. The 'festival' was a top-down affair controlled by adults in the Soviet State. European disarmament activists who attempted a demonstration in support of the Trust Group were violently set upon by some pro-Soviet festival goers.

Still missing is Gennady Volganov. Gennady is a Soviet Inuit ("Eskimo Indian") who started his own Trust Group. He was put in a mental hospital and released around February of '85. While travelling to Moscow to meet with other peace activists he was picked up by the K.G.B. There is still no word as to his whereabouts or condition.

The Case of Trust Member Vladimir Brodsky

On May 16, Vladimir was charged with "Severe Hooliganism" (5-7 years). On April 16 they told him if he didn't stop his activism they'd arrest him. In an unprecedented move the Soviets released him after he was on a 30-hour hunger strike. (The Soviets are sensitive to the protests of Western activists as they've unendingly tried to court the latter. We have many examples of the Soviets backing off of the Trust Group because of such protests.) Vladimir was married the next day in the company of 12 K.G.B. agents. Specifically he's being charged with having an anti-war exhibit in his apartment (photos of a U.S. disarmament action sent by Daniel Ellsberg) and for participating in the April 12th and May 16th actions. As he was hauled off they also accused him of beating them up! The K.G.B. told him and his wife Dina's baby would not be born alive. He was jailed again July 17th and was on a hunger strike. As a reprisal for the hunger strike the Soviets dumped him into the Soviet version of the American "hole" — solitary confinement in a cold and tiny cell. Although Soviet law stipulates a maximum stay of 2 weeks in such a cell Vladimir was held until early September. His lawyer was kept from seeing him and also from viewing court documents on the case.

The trial was postponed twice, and both times moved to more inaccessible locations. During this time a mass campaign was launched by Western activists, the largest for any Soviet Trust



Members of the Moscow Trust Group

member. Pickets were held the world over (a NYC friend of ours while in Europe said when he placed a telegram to the Soviets on Vladimir's behalf the operators said, "Oh no, another telegram for Brodsky!"). But this time pressure on the Kremlin didn't work. In mid August, Vladimir was sentenced to 3 years. He developed a leg infection due to constant immersion in several inches of water in his cell and at some point they began to force feed him. Force-feeding is a well known painful Soviet torture technique. They shove a rubber hose in your nose which can produce hemorrhaging and often induces heart attacks. In early September things became critical and the Soviets were forced to admit him to a prison hospital where he had a 10-day stay. His hunger strike ended then, and he now appears to be "okay". In an "Open Letter to Peace Activists" Brodsky stated "any statements made by me in places of imprisonment I would like to be ignored and considered as made from inability to stand physical sufferings, if the statements would contradict my present convictions."

Initiative for a Bloc-Free Europe

On 6 May, several peace activists in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) made an appeal for a Europe free of foreign military blocs and troops to the American Ambassador in the GDR. The following is their statement, which is directed to the Congress of the United States.

"Forty years ago, American soldiers, together with other armies of the anti-Hitler coalition, liberated the German people from fascism. Today, we Germans from the German Democratic Republic, commemorate this deed which took a heavy toll. Forty years ago the occupation of Germany by the allied troops had the aim of preventing a revival of fascism and militarism and of attaining a sturdy peace order in Europe. Since then the increasing polarisation of the superpowers, the extension of their spheres of influence and out of that the formation of military blocs, has led to a Europe bristling with arms. To overcome this situation, proposals such as nuclear-free zones, first-strike renunciation and withdrawal of American and Soviet troops from Europe were made.

"The new dangers are forcing us to ask you to enter negotiations with the Soviet Union and other



Nikolai Khramov between arrests

countries involved in the conflict, in order to leave the present frame and end the bloc confrontation. According to the spirit of political reorientation, the following aims should be a subject of these negotiations:

1. Deployed foreign troops in both German states, including conventional and nuclear arms, should be returned to their country of origin. This withdrawal, which also could begin unilaterally, will be affected by several steps. At the same time, both German states should simultaneously reduce their offensive weapons.

2. In the same way, both superpowers should reduce their deployed troops and armaments in other European bloc countries.

3. With the aim of a complete removal of all weapons of mass destruction, nuclear-free zones, first in Scandinavia, then in the Balkans and in Central Europe, should be established.

4. All European states should join bilateral and multilateral negotiations aimed at developing an all-European treaty system which determines the conditions for a durable peace and settles the restoration of the ecological balance, economic relations and cultural cooperation. Militarily, this means a transition to strategies of territorial defence and the dissolution of the bloc system. Politically, this treaty system could facilitate a European confederation in which different social and economic systems exist with and beside one another. A Europe as a third superpower in this case would be impossible.

5. These new relations among European states should facilitate steps which end the application of boundless growth-oriented economic and social structures of the northern industrialised states to the countries of the Third World. The shift of the bloc confrontation by arms exports, threats of intervention and economic blackmail must stop. The means made available by disarmament steps have to be used to help the hungry of the world.

"Negotiation around these suggested points will only be successful if they are made public. We demand the participation of all affected European countries, including independent representatives of peace movements and international organizations like the UN and the World Council of Churches, in the preset and ongoing negotiations in Geneva, Vienna and Stockholm.

"Freedom and dignity of citizens is the key to freedom and self-determination of all peoples. Therefore, new ways toward peaceful solution of conflicts in Europe are only possible with the participation of democratic, peace, ecology and emancipation movements in East and West. The independent, bloc-encroaching actions of these movements go along with the complete establishment of political rights for all citizens."

Berlin (GDR), May 1985

This statement was signed by forty first signatories, including Günter Krusche, Rainer Eppelmann, Katja Havemann, Barbel Bohley, Gerd and Ulrike Poppe and others.

Members of the Moscow counter-culture: Hundreds of young people are joining peace groups such as Independent Initiative.



Reprinted from Disarmament Campaigns, June, 1985.

Poland

A new group, the Freedom and Peace movement has been formed. They were invited to participate in the European Nuclear Disarmament (END) Conference held this July in Holland. Because they lack freedom of movement they couldn't attend but thanked END. Here is an excerpt from their founding declaration — "The word (peace — ed.) is nowadays most often used by those who utter slogans about peace, co-operation and disarmament while trying to deprive free people all over the world of the means and the will to defend their liberties... If peace is to be established in the political life of states and peoples, the necessary condition is the guarantee of personal freedom for all individuals." — Adam Michnik is a Solidarity activist jailed for his activism. Following is an excerpt from an appeal he wrote to the West before his trial:

"I wish to appeal strongly to all those who are involved in peace movements and who want to contribute to the dialogue among nations and states. There are two important arguments to support this appeal. Firstly, our generals respect your opinion because they are trying to show the world that they do observe the law; then, perhaps your presence might be decisive to our fate. There is also the other reason: in case the generals interpret your intentions to observe the trial as a detriment to their honor and call it interference in Polish internal affairs and a breach of Polish sovereignty, take it as an informative lesson concerning the true face of those who keep despatching to the world declarations of, and appeals for peace. You can then share your knowledge with your nations, and from me, you can pass on expressions of solidarity and admiration for the freedom-fighters in Chile."

Extracts of this appeal appeared on the editorial page of the New York Times, but the above quote was conveniently left out. Adam asked Western activists to please attend his trial. The U.S. Campaign for Peace and Democracy/East and West and Across Frontiers magazine responded by sending a representative to the trial with

a protest statement signed by a wide spectrum of U.S. activists and which was read outside the courtroom.

* * *

Many Trust activists have been expelled from the U.S.S.R. and are now living in the U.S. Lev Dudkin and family arrived in the late spring. Vitaly Barbash was allowed to emigrate and arrived in August. These activists remain active disarmament organizers and are building increasing ties to the Western anti-nuclear movement.

So what can people do? If the logic and humanity of joint East/West activism makes sense to those reading this then there are many things that can be done. One can simply spread info. regarding the Eastern movements, or on your anti-nuclear leaflet also call on the U.S.S.R. to disarm and to stop repression of peace activists. Exiles can be invited to speak at forums and rallies, etc. The point is that we should become one. It's also very important to send protest letters to the Kremlin and to stage pickets at Soviet/Eastern bloc consulates to protest repression. Moscow has listened to the voices of Western activists in the past. □

For more info write: Friendship Committee with the Independent Soviet Bloc Peace Movements, 528 5th Street, Brooklyn, New York 11215, U.S.A., or call (718) 499-7720.

CONNEXIONS, a national information-sharing project, is looking for volunteer regional contact people to join us in our work of locating, bringing together, and summarizing the information, ideas, strategies, analyses, experiences, and visions of grassroots social change groups across Canada. We need more people 'on the spot' to help make CONNEXIONS as complete, comprehensive, up-to-date, and valuable, as possible. We produce a quarterly CONNEXIONS Digest of Resources and Groups for Social Change, and are working on a national Directory, an Index of Alternative Periodicals, and computerized information services. If you think you might be able to help, or for more information, contact us at 427 Bloor St. West, Toronto M5S 1X7, (416) 960-3903.

FORCED PREGNANCY INCREASES CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

NEVER AGAIN SAFE & LEGAL ABORTION for ALL WOMEN

LEGALIZE FREE-STANDING ABORTION CLINICS CHOICE

IT'S MY BODY BY ROBYN TURNEY

A Page from the KIO Songbook!...

It's My Body by Robyn Turney

Dedicated (as my contribution) to the Feminist Movement (To the tune of "It's My Party")

CHORUS: It's my body, and I'll abort if I want to, abort if I want to, abort if I want to, You'd abort, too, if it happened to you.

Where can the rights on my body have gone? (Background Chorus: body have gone)

Downed by anti-choice whines. Why are they taking that stand When it's supposed to be mine?

CHORUS: It's my body, and I'll abort if I want to, abort if I want to, abort if I want to, You'd abort, too, if it happened to you.

Sexists and rapists keep wimmin in chains. (Background Chorus: wimmin in chains)

They've done that quite awhile. Until abortions are free We've got no reason to smile.

CHORUS: It's my body, and I'll abort if I want to, abort if I want to, abort if I want to, You'd abort, too, if it happened to you.

Come all ye Sisters, let's fight for our rights! (Background Chorus: fight for our rights)

Unity is the thing. Won't those assholes be surprised When as one Woman we sing

CHORUS: It's my body, and I'll abort if I want to, abort if I want to, abort if I want to, You'd abort, too, if it happened to you.

NEVER AGAIN SAFE & LEGAL ABORTION for ALL WOMEN

I'M PRO CHOICE

LEGALIZE FREE-STANDING ABORTION CLINICS CHOICE

LEGALIZE FREE-STANDING ABORTION CLINICS CHOICE

END VIOLENCE in the lives of WOMEN

IF MEN BECAME PREGNANT ABORTION WOULD BE A SACRAMENT

SEX IS NOT OBSCENE!

The real obscenity is the marketing of women as products —
The dehumanization and glorification of violence.

WE ARE IN FAVOR OF NUDITY & SENSUALITY

We strive toward a more sexually liberated society.

We advocate diverse, consenting sexual experiences including: masturbation, cunnilingus, fellatio, sodomy, monogamy, nonmonogamy, celibacy, homosexuality and heterosexuality.

We believe that explicit sexual materials have a place in literature, art, science and education, and most of all in the public domain.

We defend sex education, abortion, and access to safe and reliable birth control for men and women.

We seek an end to the body hatred and guilt concerning normal functions that this woman-hating society fosters.

There is a difference between a genuine love, acceptance and empowerment of the body, and the marketing of women and exploitation of nudity that is the trademark of pornography.

WE ARE ANTI-CENSORSHIP

We support unlimited freedom of the press.

We contend that no government is capable of deciding what information individuals should have access to.

We do not want pornography hidden. We want it displayed, discussed and rejected as bigotry.

We do not want censorship. We want a citizens mandate against violent pornography. We call on liberals, civil libertarians, and all people who say they believe in freedom, to take public responsibility for pornography and work towards an end to this trafficking in women.

WE ARE OPPOSED TO OBJECTIFICATION AND VIOLENT PORNOGRAPHY

We are opposed to the display of women's bodies to sell products in advertising.

We object to women being judged in beauty pageants, clothed or unclothed.

We reject the boring, fetishized pornography that perverts sexuality in our society.

We refuse to tolerate the stripping, binding, rape, torture and humiliation of women for entertainment and men's profit.

We demand corporate and individual responsibility for publishing, printing, distribution and selling of violent pornography.

WE PRACTICE CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

Women are tired of being represented by smiling, babbling idiots selling products, or by porn stars flat on their backs and silent. We want real representation (legal, economic and social). We demand equal rights. In the meantime we will break laws in the same spirit which founded this nation.

When the multibillion-dollar pornography industry disseminates hateful propaganda that results in real harm to real women, we will not collaborate in our own victimization by remaining silent.

We advocate and commit civil disobedience as retaliation against sexually violent images in the media.

It is not just a matter of our personal distaste for this material. Women's safety and our very lives depend on challenging these women-hating, slanderous lies that pornographers are marketing about us.

TO:

Citizens for Media Responsibility Without Law
(Outlaws for Social Responsibility)
P.O. Box 671 • Oshkosh, WI 54902

Donation enclosed:

\$15 \$25
\$50 \$100

NEW MEMBER NAME: _____

Address: _____

Other: \$ _____