

issue
number
eleven
may
flowers
1998

this issue includes an hour of new hardcore punk music on compact disc.

Deprogramming and Reeducating the Hardcore Punk Community
[inside front]

Inside

Front

All Quiet On The Western Front

An all-out assault on capitalism, hierarchy,
political and moral law, western "civilization"
and culture, hardcore punk, and you.

introduction (begin experiment): Manifesto for Inside Front #11

Punk Rockers, One More Effort To Become Revolutionaries

Hardcore punk must not be a merely self-referential "youth culture" if it is to make any real difference in our lives, let alone our world. Over the past forty years, subculture after subculture has come and gone, over and over and over, and not one has been able to create permanent change in the lives we lead. If hardcore is to be just another subculture, in which young people participate for a few years, it will be powerless to do anything for us. These so-called youth "movements" never move anyone anywhere at all; there's nothing like a youth culture to quarantine you with your peers, give you a prefabricated identity as an answer to the insecurities of growing up in a hostile world, waste your outrage and passion in ritualized (and very safe) gestures of rebellion, and send you back out into the world dazed, disillusioned, and neutralized... ready to begin your adult life as a cog in the wheel of mainstream society.

We come to hardcore in the first place because we can see early in life that mainstream society has little of value to offer us. But if hardcore is to offer us something genuinely better, it must be about more than itself: it must be a part of a wider, more long-standing struggle for freedom and happiness. Just talking about hardcore bands, hardcore magazines, and hardcore labels will get us nowhere... especially if those bands, magazines, and labels are only talking about "hardcore" themselves! The more our community refers only to itself, the less it refers to anything real at all; in the mouths of those who speak only of "hardcore music," "hardcore unity," and "the hardcore scene," "hardcore" eventually becomes a mere nonsense word that means nothing at all. We must look beyond the very narrow limits of our community to see what it is we want, what it is we are working towards-assuming we want anything at all.

If we know what we want, if we decide what our lives and our world are lacking and use the hardcore community as a means of pursuing these things, it will no longer be just another powerless subculture; it will become a very powerful tool for the transformation of our lives. All of the energy and creativity within the hardcore community, all of the rebellious passion and social/political consciousness, all the vast personal networks, autonomous musical and artistic movements, and independent information distribution systems we have created could be used to really change our lives and our world. The means are in our hands; it is just a question of recognizing this and becoming focused enough to take full advantage of them!

REMEMBER: The word 'revolution', as we use it, is not a word for an armed uprising that is supposed to take place in some far-off future. We use the word to describe the moment when an individual succeeds in taking a life that was boring and meaningless to him or her, and making it fulfilling and worthwhile. It is a moment that could happen for any of us, at any time. Because we are mortal and will not live forever, rather than waiting for some promised 'day of liberation', we must strive to be able to make life worthwhile for ourselves and each other in the present tense.

AND: Exactly thirty years before this issue of Inside Front was published, a general strike swept across France and the rest of Europe in which thousands and thousands of workers, students, and others of all backgrounds revolted against the established order. They came close to overthrowing the French government and replacing it with something entirely new and different, a new society free from the domination of power and tradition. This near-revolution was sparked by the efforts of a few young people, people not unlike ourselves... our history books and history teachers do not tell us about this, of course, because they don't want us to know just how possible something like that is. If world revolution might not be entirely out of our reach, how much closer then must personal revolution be for each of us?

I desire to live in a society different than the one around me. Like most people, I can live in this one and adapt myself to it-I am, anyway, existing in it. No matter how critically I look at myself, my ability to adapt does not seem to me to be below average. I don't ask for immortality or omniscience. I don't ask that society give me happiness. I know that happiness isn't something that could be dished out at the local Social Security office, or by the local Workers Council. If such a thing exists, I alone can create it for myself, as has happened before and may happen again. But in everyday life, I find myself up against a mass of things I can't accept. I believe that these things are not inevitable, and that they depend upon the way society is organized.

Firstly, I want my work to have some meaning. I want to approve of its purpose and of how it is done. I want to genuinely be involved in it, to make use of my capabilities, to become a more complete person. I think that this would be possible, for me and for others, if society were organized differently. It would already be a big change in that direction if I were allowed to decide (along with everyone else) what I will do and (together with those I work with) how to do it.

I—all of us—want to know what is going on in society, to control the depth and quality of the information we are given. I want to take part, directly, in all social decisions which will affect my existence, or which help shape the world in which I live. I don't accept that my fate should be decided, day after day, by people whose plans are hostile (or simply unknown) to me, and for whom I and everyone else are but figures in a plan or pawns on a chessboard. I reject the idea that my life and my death should be in the hands of people I never see, let alone people who never see me.

I know that bringing about a new kind of social organization and making it work won't be easy. But I would rather get to work on real problems than accept the cynicism, double-talk, and manipulations of our leaders. Should we fail, I would prefer failure in a meaningful attempt to this state of inaction, of passive acceptance of a status quo which we all know holds nothing for us.

I want to meet other people as their equal, but not as a numbered object, not as a non-entity perched on another rung (whether higher or lower, it doesn't matter) in the hierarchy of status, income, and power. I want to see others, and for them to see me, as another human being; that our relationship not be a battleground of aggressions, that our rivalry remain friendly, that our conflicts (if they can't be resolved or surmounted) be about real problems and real stakes. I wish that others may be free, for my freedom begins where that of others begins. [For too long we have been taught that "our rights end where others' rights begin"!]. Without other free individuals around me, I cannot learn or gain anything meaningful from my interactions with others. I don't count on people becoming angels, I don't expect their souls to be as pure as mountain lakes—which have always bored me stiff, anyway. But I know how much our system aggravates people's problems of existence—and of interacting with others—and how much it increases the obstacles to our freedom.

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I know for certain that this can't be fully realized today. But I will not, under that pretext, spend all my time glued to a TV set or playing video games. My task is not to start an instantaneous world revolution, but to make life worthwhile and exciting for myself and the ones around me. The rest will follow. I'm not interested in living my whole life in the service of some far-off day of universal transformation any more than I am in accepting the world as it is today. My undertaking must be, first and foremost, to liberate myself and my companions from whatever constraints we have been convinced to willingly accept: meaningless work, meaningless "leisure," empty relationships. After we have thrown those off, we can move on to fighting against external restraints such as policemen and urban sprawl. But we must first create our "better society" among ourselves.

Do my desires constitute a refusal of reality? But who defines "reality," anyway? *Must* one work? *Must* work necessarily be deprived of meaning and embody exploitation? *Must* we look at each other as objects, in terms of our market value, rather than as human beings? Is that the reality for everyone in this world? It certainly is not, if you look at other societies and other cultures. Up to what point does our conception of reality reflect nature and where does it begin to reflect our society? Why should we accept the "reality" that this society has created, if it does not satisfy us and others are clearly possible?

Is it childish to wish to change society rather than adapting myself to it? No, it is childish to accept what is given without questioning it. In the infantile state, everything in life is given to you,

Last Thursday I stayed up all night writing the "editor's corner" for this issue. I wrote about what has happened in my life since the last issue (a lot), what will be happening soon in my life (a lot more), and how important it is to have the courage to follow your dreams, no matter what the risk. I was really excited that I'd finished the piece, what with the deadline for this issue coming up and all. Today I went back to look at it again and I just threw the whole fucking thing away, because I realized it wasn't honest. I wasn't writing about anything really important in my life right now.

The most important thing in my life right now is fear: the fear that I will slow down, that I will come to accept things, that I will soften up. No matter that the heater here is broken and it's freezing at night, no matter that we got evicted only a month ago from the last place we were staying (after a full-scale war with the landlady that lasted almost all of the three months I was staying there), no matter that I still depend on theft for my daily bread. I have something to lose now, for the first time in years, and I am terrified that it will cripple me.

I managed to accomplish what everyone told me was impossible: I built for myself a life in which I don't sell my labor to anybody, I spend all my time working on whatever creative projects I choose, and I live with the woman I love. I have minimized my participation in the system I oppose (a system almost inescapable in its omnipotence and omnipresence), and at the same time I am still able to survive and even have a place in a community where people care about me and understand what I'm doing with my life. For the first time, I have a sustainable existence that does not betray my dreams and desires... and I've never been in greater danger.

For what happens from here? Do I decide that all is right with the world, now that I too have a place within it? Do I now comfortably pursue my career as an opponent of the status quo, just as others pursue their careers as components of it? How many heroes and heroines have we seen neutralized, women and men who pushed so hard against the order around them, until, taken unaware, they were integrated into the very system they opposed? The punks, troublemakers, and revolutionaries of the last generation have become the pop singers, popular writers, and movie stars of this generation, taking the places of the celebrities that once symbolized the artificiality and oppression they sought to fight. From where they stand, it seems like they won the war ("fifteen years ago I was singing for Black Flag, starving, sleeping on dirty floors, and getting beat up; now I'm a popular speaker, writer, and movie actor!"); but from where we stand, everything is the fucking same, and only the faces that look down on us from the movie screens and political platforms have changed. How do I make sure that even though my existence is no longer completely unstable and unbearably difficult, I will never abandon my struggle against the system for a more symbolic, less genuine challenge, one that will not endanger the things I hold dear?

It is suffering that keeps you sharp, that keeps you hungry. When I was building this life for myself, I had to be able to abandon every comfort, every

security that the ones around me clasp so tightly. When they refused to sleep in certain circumstances, to eat (or not eat) certain foods, or to go without certain amenities, I had to be willing to do all these things in order to not pay the price of mental and physical freedom that they paid for their convenience and safety. I almost made a religion out of going without things; for the less I needed, the more capable I knew I was of going to any lengths in the pursuit of the things I really wanted. In those days I wasn't afraid of any risk or difficulty; I would push myself mercilessly forward because I knew I had nothing to lose.

I have a few of those things I wanted now—love, a few creative outlets, some freedom, and even a modicum of security. I don't want to be satisfied with them alone, for I have only realized a fraction of my dreams, and I'm not willing to live and die without demanding the very most from life that I can. But I'm frightened that the little I do have will make it harder for me to fight for the things I still want. I sometimes think that the future can only belong to those who have nothing today—they are the ones who have nothing to lose,

who could risk everything to change their lives, if they only realized that it was possible. The rest of us have very little ourselves, it's true, living as we do in this sterile world at the mercy of a thousand varieties of disinterested, inhuman power; but it is precisely because we have so little that we are afraid to risk any of it. This is why everything proceeds as usual in our society, why every day is the same even though no one believes we are living in the "best of all possible worlds." No one who thinks at all about their lives is satisfied with the way things are, with the ways people interact, with what our species is doing to itself and to the planet. But, terrified to endanger the little consolations this system permits us, we all go on and on and on with our lives... and when we do that, we are saying "this is good enough, everything's just fine, there's nothing else I could possibly want for myself or anyone else."

I want to have the courage to take any risk in my pursuit of happiness, to act without fear, to know that I cannot be intimidated into accepting anything I haven't chosen for myself. I don't want to ever give up my ambitions, to be compromised or pacified or silenced. I want to always push harder at the world around me, to never be satisfied with less than my wildest dreams; I want to be brave enough to follow my desires wherever they may lead. I'd like to claim for myself the honor of living for the highest stakes, to achieve everything or fail in the attempt; I'd much rather live and die that way than slouch unsatisfied through the world, paralyzed by fear and inertia! I know

that life isn't something that you can hoard up like wealth, I learned that long ago from watching the lives of my parents; it is something you must give away, something you must burn like fuel if you are to enjoy it to the fullest. Happiness belongs to those who dare to act without regard for risk or regret, who value their actions themselves over their results; for in the end, joy is to be found not in *having* things, but in *doing* things.



EDITOR'S

the law is prescribed for you from above. In the infantile situation you question nothing and accept everything, and if you refuse you are punished. No discussion is possible. What I want is the very opposite. It is to make my own life, and to give life if I can. I don't want laws handed down to me. I want to create them and to give them to myself. It is not the revolutionary who is childish. It is the conformist, the non-political person. It is those who accept the law without discussing it, without wishing to take part in its creation. Those who live in society with no thoughts about how it functions, with no political will, have only replaced their personal father with an anonymous social one.

What is infantile is the state of affairs where one receives without giving. It is the state where one does things, where one exists, just in order to receive. I want to do things for myself and for others, not merely be acted upon by higher powers than myself. It is today's society which is constantly infantilizing everyone. I want, instead, that society be a network of relationships between autonomous adults.

Is this desire to overthrow the existing order a lust for power on my part? But what I want is to abolish power in the current sense of the word: I want power for everybody. Power in its present sense means hierarchy; it means thinking of other people as things higher or lower than oneself, it means treating other people as things. Everything I want runs contrary to this. I don't want to be a thing, either to myself or to others. I don't want to interact with others as if they were things: one doesn't gain anything from the companionship of things. I want power, yes, but power over myself, power for each of us over ourselves.

Am I pursuing an illusion, the illusion that it is possible to eliminate the tragic side of human existence? It seems to me, on the contrary, that I am seeking to eliminate the melodrama from life, the *false tragedy*—where unnecessary catastrophes occur, where all would have been different if only the actors had known this, or done that. It is a macabre farce that people should be dying of hunger in Africa, while in the U.S. the government pays farmers not to produce "too much." This is not tragedy: there is nothing inescapable about it. If one day humanity perishes under atomic bombs, I will refuse to call it tragedy; I will call it a monstrous mistake. I want to stop people being turned into nonentities by other nonentities who "govern" them. When a neurotic man treads for the hundredth time the same path of failure, recreating for himself and for those around him the same kind of misfortune, to help him get out of it is to eliminate the grotesque farce, not the tragedy, from his life. It should help him discern the *real* problems of his life (and any tragic element they may contain) which the neurosis may partly have expressed, but more massively served to mask. -plagiarized by CrimethInc. winter commando

OTHER POPULAR CRIMETHINC. PRODUCTS:

TIMEBOMB "The Full Wrath of the Slave" CD/LP: Anti-Capitalist, Anti-Corporate, Anti-Authoritarian. Pro-Animal, Pro-Environment, Pro-Human. Straight Edge. Black Metal. Hardcore from Italy. Some of the fiercest, most powerful music we've ever encountered. Mercilessly focused on overthrowing the class system, the political system, and the oppressive social system. \$8 USA/\$10 world (wholesale \$5 USA/\$7 world) postpaid

CrimethInc. "In Our Time" 12" compilation: Music by Congress, Damad, Final Exit, Gehenna, Jesuit, Systral, and Timebomb. Two inserts: one with lyrics and extensive information about each band, the other an in-depth analysis of the ways in which our world is being standardized... and how we can fight against the forces that would destroy our creativity and individuality.

\$8 USA/\$10 world (wholesale \$5 USA/\$7 world) postpaid

CATHARSIS "Samsara" CD: Blood and tears, starving desperation, bitter hatred, and, like hope at the bottom of Pandora's Box, a few precious instants of threadbare beauty, of broken, ragged glory.

\$10 USA/\$12 world (wholesale \$6 USA/\$8 world) postpaid

GEHENNA early discography CD: Terrifying. The world has never seen or heard anything more vicious than this music. This includes their demo, 7", split 7", and a very secret track...

\$10 USA/\$12 world (wholesale \$6 USA/\$8 world) postpaid

TRIAL "Through the Darkest Days" 7": The first record from what we consider today's most sincere straight edge hardcore band.

\$3 USA/\$5 world (wholesale \$2 USA/\$3 world) postpaid

TRIAL "Through the Darkest Days" CD: Inspiring, impassioned, socially and politically conscious old-fashioned straight edge hardcore. This CD includes the four 7" songs (remixed and remastered) plus a new recording of the five song demo... and, another song.

\$10 USA/\$12 world (wholesale \$6 USA/\$8 world) postpaid

CATHARSIS early discography CD: This CD brings together the music from the first bloody year and a half of Catharsis' existence: the 7", demo, and compilation tracks.

\$8 USA/\$10 world (wholesale \$5 USA/\$7 world) postpaid

INSIDE FRONT #10: Includes a 7" featuring Sweden's Outlast. Also, interviews with Stalingrad, Systral, and Culture, articles on subjects such as economics in hardcore and the Unabomber, and the usual reviews and columns.

\$4 USA/\$5 world (wholesale \$2 USA/\$3 world) postpaid

INSIDE FRONT #9: Includes a 7" featuring Congress, Liar, Regression, and Shortsight. Also, interviews with Congress and Timebomb, articles on subjects such as the work/leisure system and D.I.Y. touring, and the usual reviews and columns.

\$2 USA/\$4 world (wholesale \$1 USA/\$2 world) postpaid

Any profits (!) from these releases go to finance projects like these:

HARBINGER: FREE "propaganda tabloid" including discussions about television, love, death, plagiarism, hypocrisy, and the shortcomings of modern life in general. Lots of fun, actually!

THE ABOLITION OF WORK: A detailed, fairly academic discussion of alternatives to the work/leisure system we live under right now.

THE UNABOMBER MANIFESTO: An in-depth analysis of our technological/industrial society, its effects on the human race, and what to do about it, composed and forced into the public eye by one of the most courageous radicals of our time.

All of the above pamphlets are free in any quantity, though donations for postage are always appreciated. Better yet, send us a gift of some kind in return for them!

NEXT: At the end of 1998, we will release Inside Front #12 (with a 6" record by Finland's Ümlaut) and a second Harbinger. In 1999, we hope to release the first CrimethInc. book, as well as Inside Front #13, a third Harbinger, and perhaps some more records (another Catharsis record? another compilation?)

Never make checks out to "CrimethInc."—you can make them out to "Brian D." if necessary.

CrimethInc. Chamber of Commerce
2695 Rangewood Drive
Atlanta, GA 30345 U.S.A.

Please do not buy our products because this advertisement looks exciting (ha) or because all your friends have them. For your sake, don't waste your money on them unless you know what it is you're purchasing and think that they really might be useful or meaningful to you. Please do not think that merely purchasing these products is going to do anything to change the world, or to improve your life or anyone else's. Right now, we can't effectively distribute these ideas and music without selling them, but just selling them is not our goal; it is only a means to an end. We try to sell these records in a way that does not compromise the power of their content—we want to sell them like we would sell any other kind of weapon against the status quo, with the emphasis upon their usefulness in making people feel alive and aware, making people dangerous.

You should buy a CrimethInc. product like you would buy a bomb—to use it, dangerously!



Letters

notes from the underground

capital: wealth (money, property, or labor) ...which can be used to create more wealth. example: factory owners who profit from selling goods created by the labor of workers in their factories are able to purchase more factories.

capitalism: the "free exchange of goods and services" ...in which those who have capital are able to collect more, at the expense of those who do not.



Dear Inside Front,

I am on the D train right now, on my way to school, and I have been reading #10. The article concerning "selling things" in punk is what has compelled me to write to you. I haven't finished the article yet, but I wanted to jot down some points while they were fresh in my head. I stopped right before the "How Buying Things Affects the Buyer" section, and I apologize in advance if any points I bring up are addressed in the remainder of the article.

Firstly, about the article's thesis — I agree. There is no circumventing the fact that D.I.Y. is capitalism. But the difference, in my eyes at least, is that since the people who produce the DIY products we consume are at the shows we see, or the zines we read, or even since they print their contact addresses, we can keep them accountable to the community they affect by calling their ethics into question, publicly and privately. In this manner we can ensure — an optimistic choice of words — that we DON'T become like the multinational who sells a product no one needs in a fashion that degrades the consumer and treats their workers unfairly and uses their profits to conduct odious practices which have a direct relationship with the problems of the day that the consumer tries to forget about when buying the product. Community-oriented markets are in my opinion, a step in the right direction, and they are a STEP to be taken. We should not stop there. While I also agree that you are right when you say the raw materials that DIY robber-barons use are under the thumb of big business, I see people inside HC who are organizing collectives to provide some of those services themselves, like Nova Screenprinting for t-shirts. By doing this, they are providing an ethical alternative for a product that a consumer would otherwise have to turn to a corporation (whose ethics they might take exception to) for. This is another step for DIY.

Whether they NEED those services is to be decided on a case-by-case level by the individual, but there is no denial that regardless of necessity, they might otherwise have to compromise their beliefs (potentially) and do business with the corporation. In a world where I believe the end result of capitalism in the current form is corporate nation-states, any outlet that is alternative to this is one I will embrace.

Secondly, as a rich record label exec, I think you place a lot of the advertising blame on the labels. And a lot of it is deservedly placed. But the thing is, while I agree that labels should describe the band/ zine, and the topics addressed in their ads, that can't always be done for practical purposes. I'll explain: I don't have all the money I'd like to press records with. As such I must budget what I do have very tightly — and I'm one of the lucky few that still has a place to live with their parent (I haven't graduated high school yet — I don't advocate living with your parents forever). So to advertise in the greatest number of zines, which I want to support with my advertising bucks, I can only buy small 1/6 or 1/4 page ads. And I don't always have the space, physically, to give such a description. Plus factor in the way the ads are printed. Look at the Edison ad in #10. I can't read that. Small type becomes incomprehensible. So in order to get the message out, maaaaa, I can't do this all the time. I am a strictly small time label whose releases are sporadic. If I gave a zine a text-heavy ad that no one could read, I couldn't get the records out to anyone, and that would be selling the bands short. Since I also have neither the right nor the desire to tell a zine to lower their ad rates or get their printing done elsewhere, I must compromise and try to make memorable ads until such a time as I don't have anymore, meaning I'll be able to afford larger ads.

Thank you for reading. All I ask of you and your readers is to

keep in mind that smaller labels are sometimes in positions where such ads that you find ethically lacking are the only way to sell records, get the message out and do right by the bands, ultimately. I think the article is important since we are dealing with the capitalist enemy here, and should watch out for its insidious incursions upon the way we do our business. Thank you for writing it, it is very timely. Now it's time for another mind numbing day in high school. At least I can finish reading Inside Front...

Spencer Ackerman
678 E 24th 1st floor
Brooklyn, NY 11210

Dear Spencer,

Thanks for writing, you are a gentleman and a scholar and it is nice to get mail from people like you. By the way, you might have done well to have waited to write me until you had finished the article, since that might have given you a broader perspective on the positions taken in it. But I'm happy to have another chance to address the issue, regardless, since it is one of the most important ones facing our community right now.

The main point of the article is not to merely critique the way we do business in the hardcore community, or outside of it, for that matter. It is not intended to be a criticism of individuals who, like yourself, run small D.I.Y. record labels. It is, rather, to examine what the negative effects are of "doing business" AT ALL, and to make some suggestions based on that examination as to what we should be doing with ourselves in hardcore.

When things are bought and sold, the buyers and sellers themselves are affected by the buying and selling. The sellers have to concentrate on selling effectively in order to sell at all (that's how the competitive market economy works), and inevitably the most successful ones are the ones who care the most about selling things—at the expense of caring about anything else. That's what the article was pointing out about advertising: that often the most senseless and irresponsible advertising is the most effective, and so it is an embarrassment to us in the hardcore community that we get so caught up in advertising in the first place. The fact that so much of what we do in our community depends on advertising means that, inevitably, there's going to be a lot of bullshit in what we do... and that the individuals and groups who are guilty of the most bullshit (Victory records, Lookout records, and other profit-hungry labels that we used to think cared about the same things we do) will become the most successful and gain the most control. Besides the ill effects of advertising, there are a thousand other inevitable results of selling things in a market economy that plague us in the hardcore community—many of which

and energy coming up with that money. In today's corporate-controlled world, this usually means working, directly or indirectly, for one of the businesses against which we are supposed to be struggling in hardcore punk. At the same time, the sellers must almost always purchase all of their raw materials from one of these companies—the funds that some of us "keep inside the community" by printing our own t-shirts are insignificant compared to all the money that still goes to the enormous companies that manufacture ink, fabric, vinyl for records, etc. And eventually, almost all of our money ends up back in their hands—when record labels pay rent on their warehouses, for example, if not before—and almost none of these companies are genuinely sympathetic to our interests. Thus, buying and selling products which are supposed to incite revolt against the economic system often just constitutes participation in and support of that system. If we had a real chance of creating an entirely self-sufficient punk economy, with punk farmers, punk papermills, and punk landlords(!?), the "accountability"-oriented D.I.Y. capitalism that you recommend would be at least worth considering (though I still see some built-in drawbacks to it); but that is not possible anyway, so it would make more sense for us to try to participate as little as possible in the market economy in the first place.

For these reasons and others, the article argues that we should try to shift the focus away from buying and selling things in our community. For buying and selling is, incontestably, one of the primary and most fundamental ways we interact with each other—we buy and sell zines, records, shirts, show admission, etc. etc. etc., and we spend more energy and time thinking about how to buy and sell things than we do actually working towards the goals we claim for ourselves. Right now our counterculture, like all youth subcultures, is just another **consumer** subculture, not much different from the pseudo-rebellious youth subcultures invented by corporations to sell kids "rebellious" products like clothes and heavy metal records. [As the Situationists said, "culture" is the commodity they want us to buy into most of all: it is the product that makes us buy all the other products. The image of the "rebellious metalhead" or Rage Against the Machine listener is created by the very companies that make up the system young people think they are rebelling against, so that these companies can even make a profit off of the attempts of young people to take a stand against them.] We should avoid participating in the same pernicious rituals of buying and selling that other "subcultures" do, so we will not reap the same harvest of futility and co-option that they have.

At the end, to make the theoretical concrete, the article suggests some non-"business" projects we could spend more time on in hardcore: projects like Food Not Bombs, open art festivals, and labor union organizing that do not involve the exchange of goods and services but are

The fundamental problem with capitalism is that under this system, the individuals and groups that are willing to go to the furthest lengths of exploitation and destruction in their "exchange of goods and services" with others are the ones that are able to attain the greatest control over human beings and the environment...

are addressed in the article you're responding to. So the question of how to advertise more or less ethically, for example, is not nearly as important as the more radical question of what we could be doing instead; since as long as we spend our energy doing things that involve advertising, we will be vulnerable to the same negative effects that advertising and capitalism in general have wrought in the mainstream. See how that works?

Similarly, buying things has negative effects upon the buyer, some of which were also discussed in that article. One of them is that in order to have money to spend upon products, the buyer has to spend time

at least as productive and "revolutionary" as selling any 'zine could be. That, I think, is the direction we should take in the future: away from punk rock, the "alternative youth market" that we have built in imitation of the mainstream economy of our parents, and towards **hardcore** punk, an environment in which we create entirely new ways of interacting.

[Towards this end, the staff of Inside Front have sworn to stop publishing magazines or pressing CrimethInc. records... instead, from now on, we will spend all our time as street musicians, playing acoustic guitars on streetcorners and begging for beer money. Of course I'm jok-

ing! It is true, unfortunately, that in a capitalist system there are some worthwhile things that are impossible to do without money (since few resources or services can be obtained legally without money in this kind of exchange economy); and in order to do them, we must either steal money or sell things to earn it. We steal as much (from corporations, not individuals!) as we possibly can here at CrimethInc.—our colleagues will attest to this; but we can't steal enough to pay for everything we do. If we tried, we would certainly get caught, and that would be the end of our little attempt at revolution. In circumstances like this, it seems better to sell things rather than just giving up on doing them at all. That's why there still is a place in hardcore for D.I.Y. "businesses" like yours and mine, right now. But as I said, we should be focused on working towards a day when human interaction doesn't revolve around buying and selling, and even now in the meantime we can try to focus less on it in the hardcore community. Above all, when we do sell and buy things because we must, let us remain focused on our goal: to do this only because it is necessary in working towards the end of the system which requires it! And when record labels and others show us that they have forgotten their greater goals and no longer care about anything besides buying and selling, let us remember that this means they are no longer a part of our counterculture: they have joined the forces of faceless capitalism against which our community is fighting for the very destiny of our world.]

-your loving and longwinded editor.



Dear Inside Front,

In the Culture interview (#10) you argue that *all* cultures are enemies of human happiness, and I can't agree with you. Culture is not the enemy of happiness, *non-culture* is!!

In France I believe we're lucky to have a very deep and interesting history of art and philosophy (and I know you'll agree with me) which is our culture. All this culture started with "les lumières" in the 18th century and led to the French revolution and our tradition of human rights, but both this political and philosophical tradition are nowadays really endangered and will be lost if we don't react. Because most of us (even me sometimes...) waste our time watchin' TV and are playing video games instead of READING... reading is the key you must know... but back to our problem: This culture makes us able to think by ourselves and at least gives us Freedom! Without culture no freedom can exist. Let's take an example in 1984 by Orwell, like in any other dictatorship, books are not allowed or are just cleaned of any real content, and became just silly stories. so how can you argue that culture is the enemy of freedom when the first thing a fascist government does is to destroy real culture.

It's sad, but to my mind if you think that culture is the (one of the) enemy it's because you confuse true culture, which is a history of art, philosophy, literature... and *non-culture*, which unfortunately is now everywhere in the media. This, mostly American, *non-culture* must be destroyed, but not culture.

Jeremie Cauchois

P.S. Sorry for my English I hope I make this able to be understood...

P.S.II: If anyone's interested, I run a zine (in French) called Aramcheck (look in P.K. Dick's Radio Free Albemuth) which will be out late '97 so write me at:

Aramcheck c/o J. Cauchois / 7, rue Jean Guerin / 33520 Bruges / France

Dear Jeremie,

What's going on here is a question of semantics. You are using the older, more aristocratic definition of "culture," which used to be almost synonymous with "breeding": what you mean by culture is education, intellectual sophistication, the history of art and literature and phi-

losophy, the human search for truth. This meaning of "culture" describes one of the many ways people interact with each other that would not be possible without customs and traditions. But when I spoke about "culture" in the Culture interview, I was using the more modern definition of "culture," the one sociologists use to describe *every* kind of human interaction that is based upon custom and tradition, not just intellectual university culture, prepackaged corporate product culture, or hardcore "youth culture." To make my point clearer, I'll offer this quote from *Icarus Was Right* #3:

"Culture: a) the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group. b) the set of shared attitudes, values, goals and practices that characterizes a defined group."

"Hopefully it is obvious after reading the above definition that a culture, any culture, is inherently evil and problematic. The fundamental error in defining one's actions and thoughts as part of a culture is that one ceases to be an individual and must instead conform, and force others to conform, to the predefined beliefs and values of a so-called "racial, religious, or social group"—eliminating the power of the individual."

What my friend was working on in this article is a critique of the way traditions shape our lives. "Culture" of any kind is made up of traditions, of patterns of action and interaction passed along from one person to the next. That is to say: culture itself consists of prescribed limitations upon the actions, interactions, and even thoughts of human beings. These limitations can be beneficial—for example, when they contain useful information for accomplishing practical tasks such as cooking—but they can also be dangerous when they limit human beings in the wrong ways. Culture may be as benign as traditional Italian cuisine and as loathsome as the sexism and racism that is a fundamental part of many cultures. So it's easy to see how "culture," by this definition, could be hostile to human happiness.

But culture is always a dangerous phenomenon, not just when it teaches people sexism and racism. Because any given culture teaches certain values and ways of doing things, prescribing them as if they are right for everyone, but human beings are all different and have different needs. What is right for one person may not be right for the next, but each culture prescribes a certain set way of doing things. Any given culture may be right for some people at some point in their lives, but no culture is right for everyone, and, since people change, there is no guarantee that a particular culture will be right for a particular person for his or her entire life. Thus, any culture has the capability to interfere with human happiness by prescribing things for a person which are not right for them.

Of course it is impossible to eradicate culture from our lives. The idea itself is ridiculous—everything we are is a result of culture: without it, we wouldn't even have language, wouldn't be able to think about the world in the ways that we do. Besides, there are plenty of good things besides language and advanced tool-use that we could not have without the existence of culture: art movements, good cooking, literature, to name a few. The solution, instead, is to be wary of culture and tradition, to never accept them as given but to always choose what is right for you at the time and reject the rest. Keep a clear awareness of how your behavior, attitudes, and ideas are shaped by the culture or cultures around you. Perhaps you enjoy the more laid-back and romantic approach to life that is a part of Spanish culture, but you find their treatment of women despicable; or perhaps you appreciate the passionate music and social criticism of the punk "culture" but find that the dancing and funny clothing styles do nothing for you. Take what works for you and leave the rest—then there will be no danger that you will be led astray by any culture. To quote the Situationists: "The supermarket of ideas, like any supermarket, is fit only for looting."

Today, when the United States, given world domination by its economic power, bulldozes over other cultures and replaces them with its own, there are many groups who oppose this angrily. They demand the freedom to choose their own culture and fight to protect their culture in the face of the encroachment of others. In doing this, they are fighting for the right to be restrained by their own traditions and customs; but what they should fight for is the right to be restrained by *no* traditions and

customs, to invent their ways of living and thinking according to their own needs and desires, and only take ideas and customs from any culture when those ideas and customs happen to be right for them. Culture has the capacity to play a positive, useful role in our lives, but first we must escape from its tyranny over us, which we have granted it with our blind acceptance of its constraints.

This is a really complicated topic, and deserves a great deal more discussion than this, but I appreciate you bringing it up, Jeremie. A more detailed analysis of this subject will appear in the second installment of Harbinger, the free CrimethInc. propaganda tabloid, this summer.

-the editor



My Friends at Inside Front—

I received a copy of I.F. #10 (August 1997) from a friend. It is an excellent publication. A few comments regarding your columns:

I noticed that none of the columnists who wrote about prisons said anything about what has been called "the prison-industrial complex." By this is meant the drastic increase of prison construction, the privatization of prisons (more and more are built, managed, and maintained by private corporations with a private staff), the contracting out of prison labor to

matter what one's mystical beliefs in yin-yang might say. Mussolini—as a good student of Machiavelli (and probably the Bolsheviks)—understood that a state must stand on the shoulders of the people ruled—and so must convince the people to do this. His method was to promote an ideology of a mystical dynamism of national imperialism—and a practice of precise mechanical control which made "the trains run on time." So we see that fascism is essentially: Statism, nationalism, imperialism, and efficient social control. The rhetorics of dynamism and naturism were devices to win people over—propaganda to convince people that fascism would make their lives more exciting. Anarchists have always opposed the state and imperialism, and have only occasionally slipped into the foolishness of nationalism. And, of course, efficient social control is the very opposite of the anarchist ideal. Nazism (national socialism) is a perfect example of the marriage of left-wing and right-wing authoritarianism. Claiming to be a workers' movement to abolish capitalism, it ingested all of Mussolini's fascism and added anti-Semitism and racism to the recipe. In this state only one strong man was permitted and he was "alone" only because he stood on the shoulders of the masses. And he was, in no sense, an individual—he was a role: the Fuhrer—the living incarnation of the German state... Again nature mysticism and an ideology of dynamism were used to win popular support—as was an ideology of the German people as victims of oppression (a very leftist, victimist ideology).

The practical history of fascism—the Italian fascists' devastation of North Africa and the Nazis' genocidal policies—are well known. The cliché about needing both wings to fly (which did not originate with an authoritarian cult leader, Manson) is all well and good, but you ain't

...And culture is the commodity they want us to buy into most of all—it is the product that makes us think we need all the other products...

private corporations, and the consequent increase in the length of prison sentences, in the number of acts considered criminal, and in the number of acts considered felonious. By contracting prison labor out to private corporations, the government is providing another "third world" labor pool to corporate capitalism, one which allows the corporations to find cheap labor without leaving the first world. Of course, in the U.S., these corporations are supposed to pay the prisoners working for them minimum wage, but in practice this is paid to the prison institution and the prisoner usually only sees between seven cents and thirty five cents an hour of this. As more and more prisons are privatized, this becomes corporations paying themselves to maintain a cheap labor source... and it fits this trend to force prisoners to pay for their own prison stay because this would force them to work. Although the U.S. leads the way in this trend, it is to be found throughout Europe as well—Adidas, for example, has a contract with Hungary to use prisoners there to make sports equipment. I could go on to explain how this trend fits in with capitalism as it is developing in the cybernetic revolution, but that would take pages. Suffice it to say that I want the end of prisons, work, capitalism, and the technological system that created cybernetics—and that requires a different sort of revolution.

On another matter altogether, Adel 156 is unquestionably intelligent and well-read, but his understanding of fascism is limited and smacks of artistic and mystical pretensions. What is utterly lacking in Adel's understanding is any historical understanding of fascism—including fascism's philosophical history. Most of the proto-fascist ideologies of the 19th century were reactionary monarchist movements. By the end of World War I such dreams no longer seemed possible, so it is no surprise that a left-wing revolutionary syndicalist would have to found the 20th century fascist movement. Mussolini—a socialist and syndicalist in the 1910's—moved to the right in an embrace of nationalism and Hegelian mysticism. His goal was to realize Hegel's ideal State in the Italian state—thus, statism is the central factor in fascist philosophy—and, sorry Adel, there is no joining statism and total opposition to the state in a single praxis—no

gonna get off the ground when one wing is from a B-52 bomber and the other is from a raven...

There is a current of ideas, though, that opposes liberalism without embracing the disgusting authoritarianism of fascist ideology. This current runs through Sade, Stirner, Nietzsche, the Dadaists and Surrealists when they forgot to be leftists and artists, and the Situationists when they forgot to be Marxists. It begins with individuals and their desires and capabilities and, thus, opposes all states, all laws, and all leaders of the masses. It recognizes in every state—fascist or democratic or socialist—its enemy. It has neither right-wing nor left-wing because it is explicitly anti-political.

Fascism is not simply an artistic mystical, or philosophical idea—it is a real political movement aimed at creating the absolute State, and, as such, is always opposed to the individual freely creating his or her life in terms of his or her desires.

For free-spirited rebellion,

Wolfi Landstreicher

Wolfi—

Great letter. I can't add anything to that. Thanks!

-the editor



Dear Inside Front,

I like your magazine OK, you say some interesting stuff, but why don't you ever talk about veganism? I know you hate Earth Crisis, but don't you think that veganism has to be part of any revolution? Please tell me what you think about this.

-Scott, 1191 W. Oaks St., St. Louis, MO 63110

Dear Scott,

In *Inside Front* we talk much less about veganism *per se* than some other "hardcore" zines" do because we see it as being neither a starting nor an ending point in any real critique of our society. Veganism is only one of many methods that an individual can choose to try to avoid participating in the violence of our capitalist economy; and frankly, it's not the most important one either.

What I find sorely lacking in most of the discussions of veganism I encounter in hardcore is any sense of economic context. Usually, the question of animal oppression is approached only in terms of compassion and prejudice: animals are exploited and destroyed, bands like Earth Crisis would have us believe, simply because we see them as sub-human and are willing to abuse them in order to satisfy our greed. I suspect that the problem runs much deeper than mere cruelty and avarice. Under capitalism, it's not just animals that are exploited—it's everyone and everything from farmlands and forests to farmhands and grocery clerks. The oppression of animals is just a little more obvious to us because it involves the murder of living things; but it's not just animals that have been enslaved and transformed by our society, it's everything, ourselves included. Without an understanding of how and why our social/economic system drives us to seek to dominate and exploit everything, we will not be able to alter the way animals are treated in any significant or long-lasting way.

Capitalism forces us to evaluate our environment and each other according to market value. Under the capitalist system, every man is encouraged to ask the question of how useful the animals and people around him might be as economic resources in his competition with others. Everything becomes fair game for exploitation—because if you don't exploit something in the rush to gain the upper hand in the free market's "exchange of goods and services," someone else will exploit it, and quite possibly use it to exploit you. Those who have realized this are not afraid to exploit animals or humans, to treat them as objects, because they believe that the alternative is to be treated as objects and exploited by others themselves. In this way, capitalism divides us against each other and spurs on our destruction of the environment.

When I walk through the aisles at the supermarket, looking at all the products for sale around me, perhaps I can tell which ones are manufactured from the exploitation of animals, but I can't tell which ones—if any—are manufactured without exploiting anyone or anything. That is

the conditions that have resulted in the widespread destruction and exploitation that characterize our world, we must work towards a complete overhauling of our economy—we must somehow escape from the vicious cycle of capitalism. The only way to fight capitalism is to undermine its assumptions: that happiness is **having things** ("the one who dies with the most toys wins"), that there is no realistic way to work with each other rather than competing against each other, that any other economic system means some kind of slavery (like the former communist U.S.S.R.). If these assumptions are untrue, which isn't hard to imagine; then it should be possible for us to create a different kind of economy and a different kind of world. If people start to conceive of happiness as the freedom to **do things** rather than **have things**, if they decide that they enjoy being generous more than being selfish, if they can imagine that it might be possible to create a society in which we work together for the good of everybody rather than against each other and the environment for (what advertisements claim is) our own good, then capitalism will ultimately fall.

In the meantime, rather than practising veganism, I practise "freeganism." I know that as long as I participate in the mainstream economy, whether I am buying vegan or non-vegan products, I am supporting the corporations which represent world capitalism. So rather than just buying animal-friendly products, I try to purchase as few products as possible. I've written about this in earlier issues of *Inside Front*: it is possible, through thrifty living, creative "urban hunting and gathering," and projects like Food Not Bombs, to survive without contributing more than a minimal amount of money or labor to the mainstream economy. Anything I can get for free at the expense of the exploiting, oppressing capitalist system is a strike against that system, while purchasing vegan food from Taco Bell (which is owned by Pepsi Co.) is still putting money into the hands of an oppressive, exploiting corporation. I live off of whatever resources I can scrounge or steal from our society, trying to avoid animal products when I can, but concentrating above all on keeping my money and labor out of their hands. **A willingness to pump money into the mainstream economy, which is responsible for the oppression of animals and humans and the destruction of the environment, through consumer spending (on fashionable athletic clothes, for example), is not compatible with the professed goal of most people who follow a vegan diet, which is to end the exploitation of animals.** That's why it strikes me as ridiculous that so many vegan activist bands like Earth

...So do we really want to be a "youth culture?"

one of the biggest drawbacks about our modern mass-production/distribution/consumption economy: by the time the product has reached you, it is virtually impossible to tell who made it, how it was made, what it was made from, or where it has been. Toilet paper, canned kidney beans, and athletic shoes all sit on the shelves next to each other, as if they appeared out of the air, and it would be a long hard struggle to track down any real, sound information about the origins of any of them. But there are some things I do know, though, even if I can't research the life story of each individual packet of ramen noodles: there are migrant workers in this country who are underpaid and mistreated, there are corporations (like Pepsi) known for supporting totalitarian governments that mercilessly destroy human life, there are shoe manufacturers (like Nike) that underpay and mistreat foreign workers, there are companies (like Exxon) whose policies result in permanent damage to the environment. So the idea that you can be sure that your dollars are not financing anything inhumane or destructive just by examining the ingredients of a product and ascertaining that it includes no animal products strikes me as absurd. There are a thousand other kinds of oppression, just as outrageous as animal oppression, that keep the wheels of our economy turning, and there is no reason to be less concerned about any of them than about animal oppression.

It seems to me that the long term solution to this problem is not just to buy vegan food and animal-friendly products. If we want to change

Crisis are willing to perpetuate fashion consciousness in hardcore by selling so much merchandise—and by speaking only about human cruelty rather than criticizing consumerism in general, they ignore the real causes of animal oppression.

There are some great things about veganism, by the way. First of all, if you can't bear to put anything into your body that was actually made from the corpse of another living being, veganism is a way to avoid that (although it **DOES NOT** magically confer the "innocence" of animal exploitation that hardline morons claim for themselves, as my discussion of capitalism and other forms of oppression should make clear). Also, it gives you a different relationship to the food you eat than most of us have: it makes you consider where it came from and what's in it, rather than just taking it for granted, and it also will probably make you a better cook! And finally, it brings up the issue for everybody. When you won't eat food unless you know what is in it, it forces the people around you to think for themselves about what is in the food and how it got there. In that way, veganism does more to change the world than writing lengthy political responses to letters ever could: it brings up important questions in everyday life and forces people think about questions that they wouldn't otherwise encounter.

-the editor

This last letter was not addressed to Inside Front. It is a personal letter from my friend Axel, describing a trip to Mexico that I nearly took with him. I'm including it here because it embodies the spirit that Inside Front exists to promote: the desire to explore the world and experience everything it has to offer, the willingness to take risks and undergo hardship for a purpose, and the ability to learn about how our society works and think critically about it.

Brian—

It's the very end of my trip to Mejico. I crashed back into the first world yesterday. The part of me that was utterly confused with the chaos, litter, overflowing sewers, the language I only understood in fragments and the feeling of being an alien just by appearance, skin color, and lack of communication ability longed for the return while my conscience felt strangely sad. As if I was passing from a simpler working world into a mechanical robot world.

Hardcore punk. I missed it at times there but came to the conclusion that the Mejico I saw doesn't need it. I see it as a means for Western First World people to become culturally involved, beneath the shiny clean-brushed concrete advertising space. Most Mexican people seem to struggle with problems less abstract but more grave. You're thankful that your Spanish is quite bad if you can shrug your shoulders, saying "No comprendre" to the malnourished, dirty six-year-old who's apparently begging for a Peso (about half a quarter).

Ironically, I only spent one day in San Cristobal de las Casas (the unofficial capital city of Chiapas). It's beautiful—ridden with tourists—and like most Mexican cities I've seen, located in a valley. Colorful houses and narrow cobblestone streets which are patrolled by heavily armed military in armored vehicles. EZLN graffiti is widespread. From the not-so-pompous churches there which are built atop hills, the valley slopes are better visible, with shacks and hovels for the poor... mostly indigent people who suffer from the feudalistic system of unfair property and landownership regulations. I'm sure you have heard about the massacre of the 22nd of December. Newspapers there barely reported it. Chiapas is the poorest state of Mejico, yet it has some of the richest assets (mainly good soils). Oh well.

Of course it has been insane. I spent about eight days traveling on some coaches—of a total of fourteen days... at least I managed to meet my friends. They praised the Cuban system in comparison with the widespread lumpen proletariat of Mejico, but [when they visited Cuba they] kind of escaped after spending about two months on the island without being able to buy stuff or travel around much.

So right now the culture shock is still freezing me. No more families with fifteen-year-old mothers with three kids, Indian traits, pre-Hispanic ruins (and by the way, fuck the Spaniards—par un estúpido ambicion), extreme Catholicism (I was appalled by the view of a cathedral in Oaxaca which was draped with a 2 mm. layer of gold inside—gringos filming the church with video cameras)—I was about to yell more than once at the people to bow down and seek refuge at the feet of a god who caused their misery, in whose name deeds were done that make you long for a Lucifer as an opposite—and the obsession of the urban youth with Western trademarks (but why Tommy Hilfiger?? The true American patriot wear?) and heavy metal t-shirts. Oh, I got rid of the fever and the flu which got me in the south, pretty much spoiling my New Year's Eve (I lay in bed shivering and sweating in all my clothes feeling like I was having a bad trip). Anyway, I'm sitting here at Houston airport, stinking like somebody who didn't shower for six days, let alone having worn my clothes day and night for the last week. Think I'm going to return to see some more Latino American countries and probably Cuba, too.

Sorry this is a little chopped up and confused, but it's been a while since I saw (and lay in) a bed and had a decent meal. Just thought you'd like to hear what's on my mind about the trip. Greetings to Andrea and the Catharsis guys, too. There is no god!!*

Axel Orange

*Yeah, and fuck Abraxas, too.

CLASSIFIED ADS



HERE AT CRIMETHINC. WE'RE STILL LOOKING FOR: the Diamanda Galas video or any other rare D. Galas recordings, old Amebix stuff or live tapes, the Trial 12" on Hipster (disappearing act) records, decent videos of Gehenna/Catharsis/Stalingrad/Systrál/Final Exit, information about or music (besides their 12"s) by Kriticka Situace or Headsman, Iron Horse root beer (or other obscure brands of independent soda), artwork/lyrics from G.I.S.M. records (I only have the discography bootleg) and the original Zygote record, and

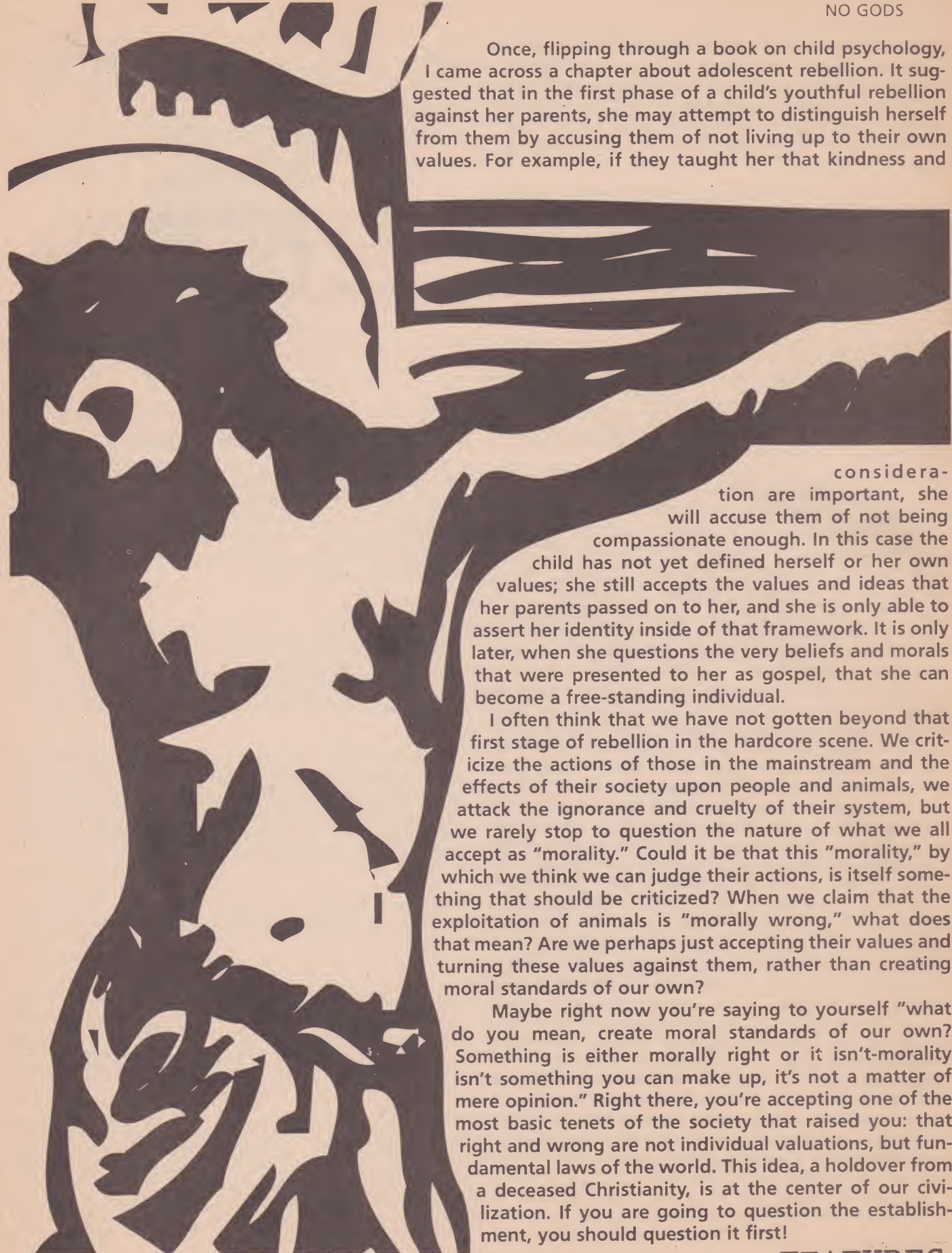
FOR THAT MATTER—come to think of it, CrimethInc. always needs volunteers... if you're interested in contributing material or doing artwork, graphics, layout, production, etc., or you're willing to distribute any of our stuff/put up fliers/hand out pamphlets/hijack airplanes/etc., please get in touch with us and we'll share this undertaking with you.

"MAKE YOUR OWN" d.i.y. DISTRO—We're always looking for more stuff to distribute through our distro. Bands, zinemakers, distros, and labels are encouraged to communicate. Send us your wholesale rates and if possible a sample. We can pay upfront if your price is affordable for 3rd world punks and hardcore. Contact: M.Y.O. Zine & distro: c/o Gani & Adie, 146 A. Dela Cruz St., Tayabas 4327 Quezon, Philippines

NON-PROFIT T-SHIRTS: Septic Death, Spazz, Misfits, Circle Jerks. Six dollars post paid. Specify size. Sabrina, 1103 14th St. 31A, Tuscaloosa, AL 35401.

The DiVisionaries "Breaking the Chains of Unity" demo, Monobrow Jones In The Spring "Flowers of Emo (a tribute to Charles Baudelaire)" 7", The Üm-Louts "Punk in Finland" cassette, The Food Eaters "Bum Rush the Krishnas" picture disc 7" and "Subdued by Food" Lp, all available from E-vic-T Distribution, 101 W. Longview St., Chapel Hill, NC 27516, U\$A.

FOR TRADE: Only the Strong 7", Breakdown 7", NFAA 7", Side by Side 7", Cro-Mags demo 10", Cro-Mags Euro tour shirts, Judge hooded sweat, Killing Time hooded sweat. Wants: Integrity "Those Who" CD (Overkill), Integ/Mayday 7", Bloodbook color wax 7"s, Cro-Mags US tour shirts and loads more! Rich Camm, 36 Eden Vale, Sunderland, SR2 7NJ, ENGLAND.



Once, flipping through a book on child psychology, I came across a chapter about adolescent rebellion. It suggested that in the first phase of a child's youthful rebellion against her parents, she may attempt to distinguish herself from them by accusing them of not living up to their own values. For example, if they taught her that kindness and

consideration are important, she will accuse them of not being compassionate enough. In this case the child has not yet defined herself or her own values; she still accepts the values and ideas that her parents passed on to her, and she is only able to assert her identity inside of that framework. It is only later, when she questions the very beliefs and morals that were presented to her as gospel, that she can become a free-standing individual.

I often think that we have not gotten beyond that first stage of rebellion in the hardcore scene. We criticize the actions of those in the mainstream and the effects of their society upon people and animals, we attack the ignorance and cruelty of their system, but we rarely stop to question the nature of what we all accept as "morality." Could it be that this "morality," by which we think we can judge their actions, is itself something that should be criticized? When we claim that the exploitation of animals is "morally wrong," what does that mean? Are we perhaps just accepting their values and turning these values against them, rather than creating moral standards of our own?

Maybe right now you're saying to yourself "what do you mean, create moral standards of our own? Something is either morally right or it isn't-morality isn't something you can make up, it's not a matter of mere opinion." Right there, you're accepting one of the most basic tenets of the society that raised you: that right and wrong are not individual valuations, but fundamental laws of the world. This idea, a holdover from a deceased Christianity, is at the center of our civilization. If you are going to question the establishment, you should question it first!

FEATURES

NO GODS

WHERE DOES THE IDEA OF "MORAL LAW" COME FROM?

Once upon a time, almost everyone believed in the existence of God. This God ruled over the world, He had absolute power over everything in it; and He had set down laws which all human beings had to obey. If they did not, they would suffer the most terrible of punishments at His hands. Naturally, most people obeyed the laws as well as

GOD IS DEAD-AND WITH HIM, MORAL LAW.

Without God, there is no longer any objective standard by which to judge good and evil. This realization was very troubling to philosophers a few decades ago, but it hasn't really had much of an effect in other circles. Most people still seem to think that a universal morality can be grounded in something other than God's laws: in what is good for people, in what is good for society, in what we feel called upon to do. But explanations of why these standards necessarily con-

s t i -

there is no such thing as good or evil
there is no universal right or wrong
there is only you...
and the values you choose for yourself

they could, their fear of eternal suffering being stronger than their desire for anything forbidden. Because everyone lived according to the same laws, they could agree upon what "morality" was: it was the set of values decreed by God's laws. Thus, good and evil, right and wrong, were decided by the authority of God, which everyone accepted out of fear.

One day, people began to wake up and realize that there was no such thing as God after all. There was no scientific evidence to demonstrate his existence, and few people could see any point in having faith in the irrational any longer. God pretty much disappeared from the world; nobody feared him or his punishments anymore.

But a strange thing happened. Though these people had the courage to question God's existence, and even deny it to the ones who still believed in it, they didn't dare to question the morality that His laws had mandated. Perhaps it just didn't occur to them; everyone had been raised to hold the same beliefs about what was moral, and had come to speak about right and wrong in the same way, so maybe they just assumed it was obvious what was good and what was evil whether God was there to enforce it or not. Or perhaps people had become so used to living under these laws that they were afraid to even consider the possibility that the laws didn't exist any more than God did.

This left humanity in an unusual position: though there was no longer an authority to decree certain things absolutely right or wrong, they still accepted the idea that some things were right or wrong by nature. Though they no longer had faith in a deity, they still had faith in a universal moral code that everyone had to follow. Though they no longer believed in God, they were not yet courageous enough to stop obeying His orders; they had abolished the idea of a divine ruler, but not the divinity of His code of ethics. This unquestioning submission to the laws of a long-departed heavenly master has been a long nightmare from which the human race is only just now beginning to awaken.

tute "universal moral law" are hard to come by. Usually, the arguments for the existence of moral law are emotional rather than rational: "But don't you think rape is wrong?" moralists ask, as if a shared opinion were a proof of universal truth. "But don't you think people need to believe in something greater than themselves?" they appeal, as if needing to believe in something can make it true. Occasionally, they even resort to threats: "but what would happen if everyone decided that there is no good or evil? Wouldn't we all kill each other?"

The real problem with the idea of universal moral law is that it asserts the existence of something that we have no way to know anything about. Believers in good and evil would have us believe that there are "moral truths"-that is, there are things that are morally true of this world, in the same way that it is true that the sky is blue. They claim that it is true of this world that murder is morally wrong just as it is true that water freezes at thirty two degrees. But we can investigate the freezing temperature of water scientifically: we can measure it and agree together that we have arrived at some kind of objective truth.* On the other hand, what do we observe if we want to investigate whether it is true that murder is evil? There is no tablet of moral law on a mountaintop for us to consult, there are no commandments carved into the sky above us; all we have to go on are our own instincts and the words of a bunch of priests and other self-appointed moral experts, many of whom don't even agree. As for the words of the priests and moralists, if they can't offer any hard evidence from this world, why should we believe their claims? And regarding our instincts-if we feel that something is right or wrong, that may make it right or wrong for us, but that's not proof that it is *universally* good or evil. Thus, the idea that there are universal moral laws is mere superstition: it is a claim that things exist in this world which we can never actually experience or learn anything about. And we would do well not to waste our time wondering about things we can never know anything about. When two people fundamentally disagree over what is right or wrong, there is no way to resolve the debate. There is nothing in this world to which they can refer to see which one is correct-because there really are no universal moral laws, just personal evaluations. So the only important question is where your val

*That is, insofar as it is possible to speak of objective truth, for you postmodernist motherfuckers!

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ues come from: do you create them yourself, according to your own desires, or do you accept them from someone else...someone else who has disguised their opinions as "universal truths"?

Haven't you always been a little suspicious of the idea of universal moral truths, anyway? This world is filled with groups and individuals who want to convert you to their religions, their dogmas, their political agendas, their opinions. Of course they will tell you that one set of values is true for everybody, and of course they will tell you that their values are the correct ones. Once you're convinced that there is only one standard of right and wrong, they're only a step away from convincing you that their standard is the right one. How carefully we should approach those who would sell us the idea of "universal moral law," then! Their claim that morality is a matter of universal law is probably just a sneaky way to get us to accept their values rather than forging our own, which might conflict with theirs.

So, to protect ourselves from the superstitions of the moralists and the trickery of the evangelists, let us be done with the idea of moral law. Let us step forward

into a new era, in which we will make values of our own rather than accepting moral laws out of fear and obedience. Let this be our new creed:

There is no universal moral code that should dictate human behavior. There is no such thing as good or evil, there is no universal standard of right and wrong. Our values and morals come from us and belong to us, whether we like it or not; so we should claim them proudly for ourselves, as our own creations, rather than seeking some external justification for them.

BUT IF THERE'S NO GOOD OR EVIL, IF NOTHING HAS ANY INTRINSIC MORAL VALUE, HOW DO WE KNOW WHAT TO DO?

Make your own good and evil. If there is no moral law standing over us, that means we're free-free to do whatever we want, free to be whatever we want, free to pursue our desires without feeling any guilt or shame about them. Figure out what it is you want in your life, and go for it; create whatever values are right for you, and live by them. It won't be easy, by any means; desires pull in different directions, they come and go without warning, so keeping up with them and choosing among them is a difficult task-of course obeying instructions is easier, less complicated. But if we just live our lives as we have been instructed to, the chances are very slim that we will get what we want out of life: each of us is different and has different needs, so how could one set of "moral truths" work for each of us? If we take responsibility for ourselves and each carve our own table of values, then we will have a fighting chance of attaining some measure of happiness. The old moral laws are left over from days when we lived in fearful submission to a nonexistent God, anyway; with their departure, we can rid ourselves of all the cowardice, submission, and superstition that has characterized our past.

Some misunderstand the claim that we should pursue our own desires to be mere hedonism. But it is not the fleeting, insubstantial desires of the typical libertine that we are speaking about here. It is the strongest, deepest, most lasting desires and inclinations of the individual: it is her most fundamental loves and hates that should shape her values. And the fact that there is no God to demand that we love one another or act virtuously does not mean that we should not do these things for our own sake, if we find them rewarding, which almost all of us do. But let us do what we do for our own sake, not out of obedience to some deity or moral code!

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BUT HOW CAN WE JUSTIFY ACTING ON OUR ETHICS, IF WE CAN'T BASE THEM ON UNIVERSAL MORAL TRUTHS?

Morality has been something justified externally for so long that today we hardly know how to conceive of it in any other way. We have always had to claim that our values proceeded from something external to us, because basing values on our own desires was (not surprisingly!) branded evil by the preachers of moral law. Today we still feel instinctively that our actions must be justified by something outside of ourselves, something "greater" than ourselves-if not by God, then by moral law, state law, public opinion, justice, "love of man," etc. We have been so conditioned by centuries of asking permission to feel things and do things, of being forbidden to base any decisions on our own needs, that we still want to think we are obeying some higher power even when we act on our own desires and beliefs; somehow, it seems more defensible to act out of submission to some kind of authority than in the service of our own inclinations. We feel so ashamed of our own aspirations and desires that we would rather attribute our actions to something "higher" than them. But what could be greater than our own desires, what could possibly provide better justification for our actions? Should we be serving something external without consulting our desires, perhaps even *against* our desires?

This question of justification is where so many hardcore bands have gone wrong. They attack what they see as injustice not on the grounds that they don't want to see such things happen, but on the grounds that it is "morally wrong." By doing so, they seek the support of everyone who still believes in the fable of moral law, and they get to see themselves as servants of the Truth. These hardcore bands should not be taking advantage of popular delusions to make their points, but should be challenging assumptions and questioning traditions in everything they do. An improvement in, for example, animal rights, which is achieved in the name of justice and morality, is a step forward at the cost of two steps back: it solves one problem while reproducing and reinforcing another. Certainly such improvements could be fought for and attained on the grounds that they are *desirable* (nobody who truly considered it would really *want* to needlessly slaughter and mistreat animals, would they?), rather than with tactics leftover from Christian superstition. Unfortunately, because of centuries of conditioning, it feels so good to feel justified by some "higher force," to be obeying "moral law," to be enforcing "justice" and fighting "evil" that these bands get caught up in their role as moral enforcers and forget to question whether the idea of moral law makes sense in the first place. There is a sensation of power that comes from believing that one is serving a higher authority, the same one that attracts people to fascism. It's always tempting to paint any struggle as good against evil, right against wrong; but that is not just an oversimplification, it is a falsification: for no such things exist. We can act compassionately towards each other because we *want* to, not just because "morality dictates," you know! We don't need any justification from above to care about animals and humans, or to act to protect them. We need only to feel in our hearts that it is right, that it is right for *us*, to have all the reason we need. Thus we can justify acting on our ethics without basing them on moral truths simply by not being ashamed of our desires: by

being proud enough of them to accept them for what they are, as the forces that drive us as individuals. And our own values might not be right for everyone, it's true; but they are all each of us has to go on, so we should dare to act on them rather than wishing for some impossible greater justification.

BUT WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF EVERYONE DECIDED THAT THERE IS NO GOOD OR EVIL? WOULDN'T WE ALL KILL EACH OTHER?

This question presupposes that people refrain from killing each other only because they have been taught that it is evil to do so. Is humanity really so absolutely bloodthirsty and vicious that we would all rape and kill each other if we weren't restrained by superstition? It seems more likely to me that we desire to get along with each other at least as much as we desire to be destructive-don't you usually enjoy helping others more than you enjoy hurting them? Today, most people claim to believe that compassion and fairness are morally right, but this has done little to make the world into a compassionate and fair place. Might it not be true that we would act upon our natural inclinations to human decency more, rather than less, if we did not feel that charity and justice were obligatory? What would it really be worth, anyway, if we did all fulfill our "duty" to be good to each other, if it was only because we were obeying moral imperatives? Wouldn't it mean a lot more for us to treat each other with consideration because we *want* to, rather than because we feel required to?

And if the abolition of the myth of moral law somehow causes more strife between human beings, won't that still be better than living as slaves to superstitions? If we make our own minds up about what our values are and how we will live according to them, we at least will have the chance to pursue our desires and perhaps enjoy life, even if we have to struggle against each other. But if we choose to live according to rules set for us by others, we sacrifice the chance to choose our destinies and pursue our dreams. No matter how smoothly we might get along in the shackles of moral law, is it worth the abdication of our self determination? I wouldn't have the heart to lie to a fellow human being and tell him he had to conform to some ethical mandate whether it was in his best interest or not, even if that lie would prevent a conflict between us. Because I care about human beings, I want them to be free to do what is right for them. Isn't that more important than mere peace on earth? Isn't freedom, even dangerous freedom, preferable to the safest slavery, to peace bought with ignorance, cowardice, and submission?

Besides, look back at our history. So much bloodshed, deception, and oppression has already been perpetrated in the name of right and wrong. The bloodiest wars have been fought between opponents who each thought they were fighting on the side of moral truth. The idea of moral law doesn't help us get along, it turns us against each other, to contend over whose moral law is the "true" one. There can be no real progress in human relations until everyone's perspectives on ethics and values are acknowledged; then we can finally begin to work out our differences and learn to live together, without fighting over the absolutely stupid question of whose values and desires are "right." For your own sake, for the sake of humanity, cast away the antiquated notions of good and evil and create your values for yourself!

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If you liked school, you'll love work. The cruel, absurd abuses of power, the self-satisfied authority that the teachers and principals lorded over you, the intimidation and ridicule of your classmates don't end at graduation. Those things are all present in the adult world, only more so. If you thought you lacked freedom before, wait until you have to answer to shift leaders, managers, owners, landlords, creditors, tax collectors, city councils, draft boards, law courts, and police. When you get out of school you may escape the jurisdiction of some authorities, but you enter the control of even more domineering ones. Do you enjoy being controlled by others who don't understand or care about your wants and needs? Do you get anything out of obeying the instructions of employers, the restrictions of landlords, the laws of magistrates, people who have powers over you that you would never have given them willingly? And how is it that they get all this power? The answer is hierarchy.

Hierarchy is a value system in which your worth measured by the number of people and things you control, and how well you obey those above you. Weight is exerted downward through the power structure: everyone is forced to accept and conform to this system by everyone else. You're afraid to disobey those above you because they can bring to bear against you the power of everyone and everything under them. You're afraid to abdicate your power over those below you because they might end up above you. In our hierarchal system, we're all so busy trying to protect ourselves from each other that we never have a chance to stop and think if this is really the best way our society could be organized. If we could think about it, we'd

probably agree that it isn't; for we all know happiness comes from control over our own lives, not other people's lives. And as long as we're busy competing for control over others, we're bound to be the victims of control ourselves. Even the ones at the very top of the ladder are controlled by their position: they have to work around the clock to maintain it. One false move, and they could end up at the bottom.

It is our hierarchal system that teaches us from childhood to accept the power of any authority figure, regardless of whether it is in our best interest or not. We learn to bow instinctively before anyone who claims to be more important than we are. It is hierarchy that makes homophobia common among poor people in the U.S.A.-they're desperate to feel more valuable, more significant than somebody. It is hierarchy at work when two hundred hardcore kids go to a rock club (already a mistake, but that's a subject for another article) to see a band, and for some stupid reason the clubowner won't let them perform: there are two hundred and six people at the club, two hundred and five of whom want the band to play, but they all accept the decision of the clubowner just because he is older and owns the place (i.e. has more financial clout, and thus more legal clout). It is hierarchal values that are responsible for racism ("white people are better than black people"), classism ("rich people are better than poor people"), sexism ("men are better than women"), and a thousand other prejudices that are deeply ingrained in our society. It is hierarchy that makes rich people look at poor people as if they aren't even human, and vice versa. It pits employer against employee, manager against worker, teacher against student, making people struggle against each other rather than work together to help each other; separated this way, they can't benefit from each other's skills and ideas and abilities, but must live in jealousy and fear of them. It is hierarchy at work when your boss insults you or makes sexual advances at you and



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you can't do anything about it, just as it is when police flaunt their power over you. For power does make people cruel and heartless, and submission does make people cowardly and stupid: and most people in a hierarchal system partake in both. Hierarchal values are responsible for our destruction of the natural environment and the exploitation of animals: led by the capitalist West, our species seeks control over anything we can get our claws on, at any cost to ourself or others. And it is hierarchal values that send us to war, fighting for power over each other, inventing more and more powerful weapons until finally the whole world teeters on the edge of nuclear annihilation.

But what can we do about hierarchy? Isn't that just the way the world works? Or are there other ways that people could interact, other values we could live by?

HIERARCHY... AND ANARCHY.

Resurrecting anarchism as a personal approach to life.

Stop thinking of anarchism as just another "world order," just another social system. From where we all stand, in this very dominated, very controlled world, it is impossible to imagine living without any authorities, without laws or governments. No wonder anarchism isn't usually taken seriously as a large-scale political or social program: no one can imagine what it would really be like, let alone how to achieve it-not even the anarchists themselves.

Instead, think of anarchism as an individual orientation to yourself and others, as a personal approach to life. That isn't impossible to imagine. Conceived in these terms, what would anarchism be? It would be a decision to think for yourself rather than following blindly. It would be a rejection of hierarchy, a refusal to accept the "god given" authority of any nation, law, or other force as being more significant than your own authority over yourself. It would be an instinctive distrust of those who claim to have some sort of rank or status above the others around them, and an unwillingness to claim such status over others for yourself. Most of all, it would be a refusal to place responsibility for yourself in the hands of others: it would be the demand that each of us be able to choose our own destiny.

According to this definition, there are a great deal more anarchists than it seemed, though most wouldn't refer to themselves as such. For most people, when they think about it, want to have the right to live their own lives, to think and act as they see fit. Most people trust themselves to figure out what they should do more than they trust any authority to dictate it to them. Almost everyone is frustrated when they find themselves pushing against faceless, impersonal power.

You don't want to be at the mercy of governments, bureaucracies, police, or other outside forces, do you? Surely you don't let them dictate your entire life. Don't you do what you want to, what you believe in, at least whenever you can get away with it? In our everyday lives, we all are anarchists.

Whenever we make decisions for ourselves, whenever we take responsibility for our own actions rather than deferring to some higher

power, we are putting anarchism into practise.

So if we are all anarchists by nature, why do we always end up accepting the domination of others, even creating forces to rule over us? Wouldn't you rather figure out how to coexist with your fellow human beings by working it out directly between yourselves, rather than depending on some external set of rules? Remember, the system they accept is the one you must live under: if you want your freedom, you can't afford to not be concerned about whether those around you demand control of their lives or not.

Do we really need masters to command and control us?

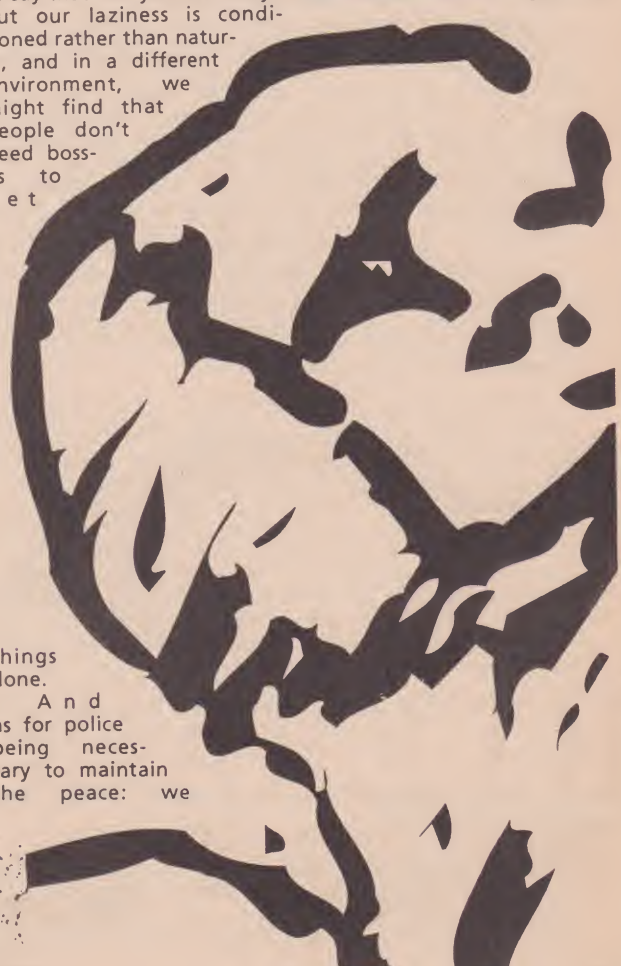
In the West, for thousands of years, we have been sold centralized state power and hierarchy in general on the premise that we do. We've all been taught that without police, we would all kill each other; that without bosses, no work would ever get done; that without governments, civilization itself would fall to pieces. Is all this true?

Certainly, it's true that today little work gets done when the boss isn't watching, chaos ensues when governments fall, and violence sometimes occurs when the police aren't around. But are these really indications that there is no other way we could organize society?

Isn't it possible that workers won't get anything done unless they are under observation because they are used to not doing anything without being prodded-more than that, because they resent being inspected, instructed, condescended to by their managers, and don't want to do anything for them that they don't have to? Perhaps if they were working together for a common goal, rather than being paid to take orders, working towards objectives that they have no say in and that don't interest them much, they would be more proactive. Not to say that everyone is ready or able to do such a thing today; but our laziness is conditioned rather than natural, and in a different environment, we might find that people don't need bosses to get

things done.

And as for police being necessary to maintain the peace: we



AND ANARCHY.

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won't discuss the ways in which the role of "law enforcer" brings out the most brutal aspects of human beings, and how police brutality doesn't exactly contribute to peace. How about the effects on civilians living in a police-protected state? Once the police are no longer a direct manifestation of the desires of the community they serve (and that happens quickly, whenever a police force is established: they become a force external to the rest of society, an outside authority), they are a force acting coercively on the people of that society. Violence isn't just limited to physical harm: any relationship that is established by force, such as the one between police and civilians, is a violent relationship. When you are acted upon violently, you learn to act violently back. Isn't it possible, then, that the implicit threat of police on every street corner-of the near omnipresence of uniformed, impersonal representatives of state power-contributes to tension and violence, rather than dispelling them? If that doesn't seem likely to you, and you are middle class and/or white, ask a poor black or hispanic man how the presence of police makes him feel.

When the standard forms of human interaction all revolve around hierarchal power, when human intercourse so often comes down to giving and receiving orders (at work, at school, in the family, in legal courts), how can we expect to have no violence in our system? People are used to using force against each other in their daily lives, the force of authoritarian power; of course using physical force cannot be far behind in such a system. Perhaps if we were more used to treating each other as equals, to creating relationships based upon equal concern for each other's needs, we wouldn't see so many people resort to physical violence against each other.

And what about government control? Without it, would our society fall into pieces, and our lives with it? Certainly, things would be a great deal different without governments than they are now-but is that necessarily a bad thing? Is our modern society really the best of all possible worlds? Is it worth it to grant masters and rulers so much control over our lives, out of fear of trying anything different?

Besides, we can't claim that we need government control to prevent mass bloodshed, because it is governments that have perpetrated the greatest slaughters of all: in wars, in holocausts, in the centrally organized enslaving and obliteration of entire peoples and cultures. And it may be that when governments break down, many people lose their lives in the resulting chaos and infighting. But this fighting is almost always between other power-hungry hierarchal groups, other would-be governors and rulers. If we were to reject hierarchy absolutely, and refuse to serve any force above ourselves, there would no longer be any large scale wars or holocausts. That would be a responsibility each of us would have to take on equally, to collectively refuse to recognize any power as worth serving, to swear allegiance to nothing but ourselves and our fellow human beings. But if we all were to do it, we would never see another world war again.

- Of course, even if a world entirely without hierarchy is possible, we should not have any illusions that any of us will live to see it realized. That should not even be our concern: for it is foolish to arrange your life so that it revolves around something that you will never be able to experience. We should, rather, recognize the patterns of submission and domination in our own lives, and, to the best of our ability, break free of them. We should put the anarchist ideal (no masters, no slaves) into effect in our daily lives however we can. Every time one of us remembers not to accept the authority of the powers that be at face value, each time one of us is able to escape the system of domination for a moment (whether it is by getting away with something forbidden by a teacher or boss, relating to a member of a different social stratum as an equal, etc.), that is a victory for the individual and a blow against hierarchy.

Do you still believe that a hierarchy-free society is impossible?

There are plenty of examples throughout human history: the bushmen of the Kalahari desert still live together without authorities, never trying to force or command each other to do things, but working together and granting each other freedom

and autonomy. Sure, their society is being destroyed by our more warlike one-but that isn't to say that an egalitarian society could not exist that was extremely hostile to, and well-defended against, the encroachments of external power! William Burroughs writes about an anarchist pirates' stronghold a hundred years ago that was just that.

If you need an example closer to your daily life, remember the last time you gathered with your friends to relax on a Friday night. Some of you brought food, some of you brought entertainment, some provided other things, but nobody kept track of who owed what to whom. You did things as a group and enjoyed yourselves; things actually got done, but nobody was forced to do anything, and nobody assumed the position of chief. We have these moments of non-capitalist, non-coercive, non-hierarchal interaction in our lives constantly, and these are the times when we most enjoy the company of others, when we get the most out of other people; but somehow it doesn't occur to us to demand that our society work this way, as well as our friendships and love affairs. Sure, it's a lofty goal to ask that it does-but let's dare to reach for high goals, let's not fucking settle for anything less than the best in our lives! Each of us only gets a few years on this planet to enjoy life; let's try to work together to do it, rather than fighting amongst each other for miserable prizes like status and power.

"Anarchism" is the revolutionary idea that no one is more qualified than you are to decide what your life will be.

—It means trying to figure out how to work *together* to meet our individual needs, how to work *with* each other rather than "for" or against each other. And when this is impossible, it means preferring strife to submission and domination.

—It means not valuing any system or ideology above the people it purports to serve, not valuing anything theoretical above the *real things* in this world. It means being faithful to real human beings (and animals, etc.), fighting for ourselves and for each other, not out of "responsibility," not for "causes" or other intangible concepts.

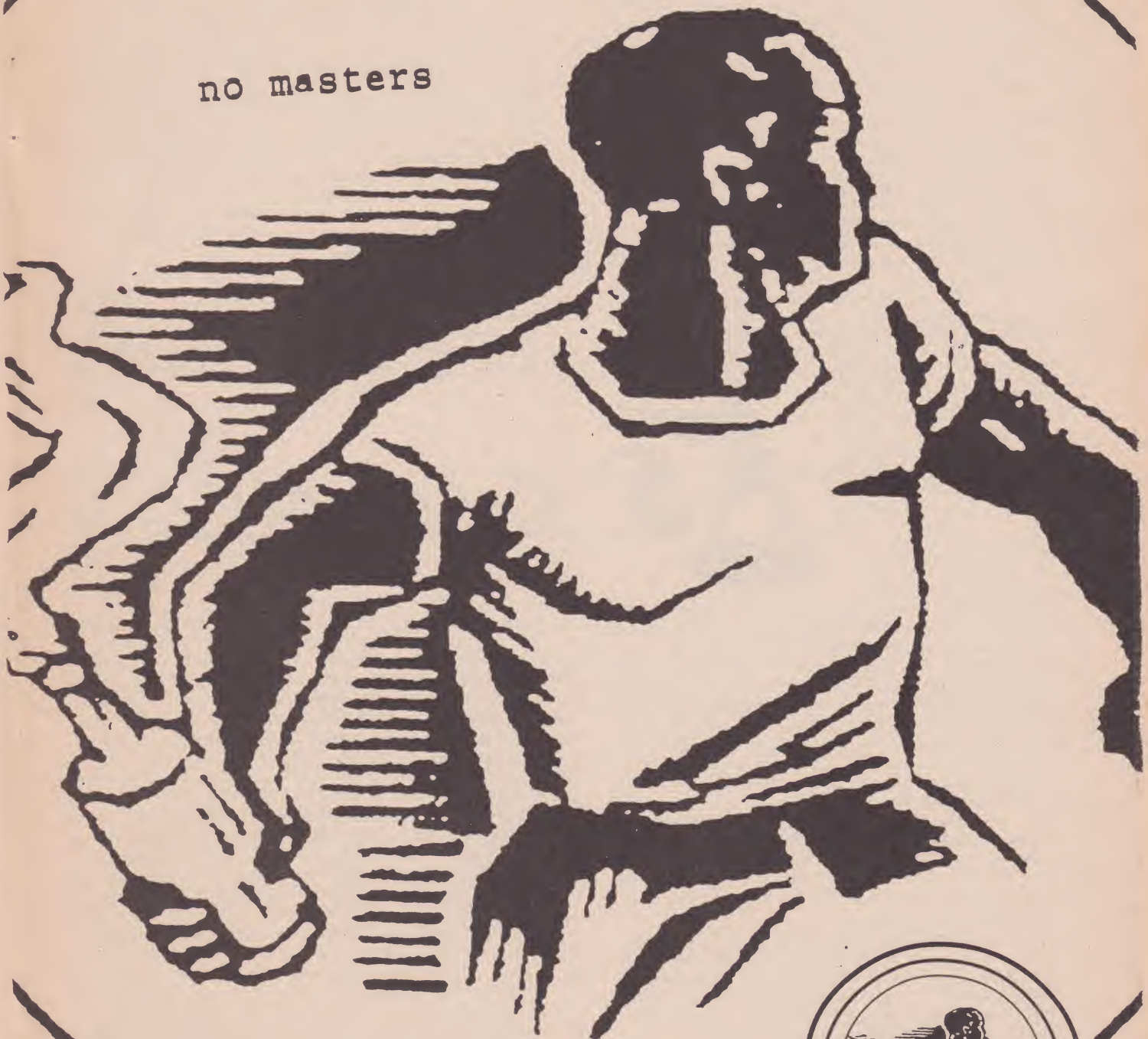
—It means not forcing your desires into a hierarchal order, either, but accepting and embracing all of them, accepting yourself. It means not trying to force the self to abide by any external laws, not trying to restrict your emotions to the predictable or the practical, not pushing your instincts and desires into boxes: for there is no cage large enough to accomodate the human soul in all its flights, all its heights and depths.

—It means refusing to put the responsibility for your happiness in anyone else's hands, whether that be parents, lovers, employers, or society itself. It means taking the pursuit of meaning and joy in your own life upon your own shoulders.

For what else should we pursue, if not happiness? If something isn't valuable because we find meaning and joy in it, then what could possibly make it important? How could abstractions like "responsibility," "order," or "propriety" possibly be more important than the real needs of the people who invented them? Should we serve employers, parents, the State, God, capitalism, moral law before ourselves? Who was it that taught you we should, anyway?

no gods

no masters



Reinventing our Surroundings / Reinventing our Lives

Greg Bennick

KABINDA, ZAIRE - In a move IBM offices are hailing as a major step in the company's ongoing worldwide telecommunications revolution, M'wana Ndeti, a member of Zaire's Bantu tribe, used an IBM global uplink network modem yesterday to crush a nut. Ndeti, who spent 20 minutes trying to open the nut by hand, easily cracked it open while smashing it repeatedly with the powerful modem.

"I could not crush the nut by myself," said the 47-year-old Ndeti, who added the savory nut to a thick, peanut-based soup minutes later. "With IBM's help, I was able to break it." Ndeti discovered the nut-breaking 56K V.34 modem yesterday, when IBM was shooting a commercial in his southwestern Zaire village. During a break in shooting, which shows African villagers eagerly teleconferencing via computer with Japanese school children, Ndeti snuck onto the set and took the modem, which he believed would serve well as a "smashing" utensil.

IBM officials were not surprised the longtime computer giant was able to provide Ndeti with practical solutions to his everyday problems. "Our telecommunications systems offer people all over the world global networking solutions to fit their specific needs," said Herbert Ross, IBM's director of marketing. "Whether you're a nun cloistered in an Italian abbey, or an Aborigine in Australia's Great Sandy Desert, IBM has the ideas to get you where you want to go today."

According to Ndeti, of the modem's many powerful features, most impressive was its hard plastic casing, which easily sustained several minutes of vigorous pounding against a large stone. "I put the nut on a rock, and I hit it with the modem," Ndeti said. "The modem did not break. It is a good modem." Ndeti was so impressed with the modem that he purchased a new state-of-the-art IBM workstation, complete with a Pentium processor, a 24X CD-ROM drive and three 16 bit ethernet working connectors. The tribesman has already made good use of the computer system, fashioning a gazelle trap out of its wires, a boat anchor out of the monitor and a crude but effective weapon from its mouse.

"This is a good computer," said Ndeti, carving up a just-captured gazelle with the computer's flat, sharp internal processing device. "I am using every part of it. I will cook this gazelle on the keyboard." Hours later, Ndeti capped off his delicious gazelle dinner by smoking the computer's 200-page owner's manual.

IBM spokespeople praised Ndeti's choice of computers. "We are pleased that the Bantu people are turning to IBM for their business needs," said company CEO William Allaire. "From Kansas City to Kinshasa, IBM is bringing the world closer together. Our cutting edge technology is truly creating a global village."

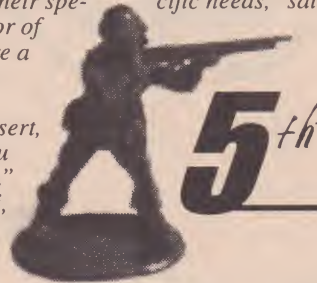
This column is intended for readers who are willing to take risks. It is aimed at those who are excited by the idea of looking beyond their immediate surroundings in order to expand their modes of thought, and in turn, their depth of life experience. If, dear reader, you are of the sort who does not enjoy taking risks or feeling more thoroughly fulfilled in this life, then, aside from asking you why you are reading Inside Front in the first place, I will ask that you skip this

column and go straight to the ads. Examine the ads without conscious thought. Look at the eye-catching photos and graphics. Purchase and consume the products advertised there. Continue "living" as you have been, by others rules, and for God's sake, please have a nice day.

For the rest of you, thanks for taking a chance with these words...

I die regularly. I have moments of total terror which are so overwhelming that I can do nothing except endure the nothingness until movement and feeling return to me. These moments often come at night, when there is no escape. To realize that some aspect of my life has stagnated, and that I have been wasting time which needed to be spent more effectively or intensely is what brings the episodes on. The moments of fear are a combination of physical and emotional negation... of total paralysis. These are moments rooted in the fear of death, the recognition and acceptance of death, and the related identification of the value and experience of life. They are moments of rebirth, and as terrifying and uncomfortable as they are, they hold the promise of renewed hope for the future.

My friend Kevin used to call this a "paradigm shift," a term which I have come to learn is actually used relatively often, but one which I always attribute to Kevin's own wisdom whenever it appears before me. I respect that wisdom because Kevin knew the value of life and what it meant to have life slowly slip away. I met Kevin when I was



5th Columnists

the 5th column

going to school at Syracuse University in New York. Syracuse and I were definitely not meant for one another and I knew that right from the start. The social scene there didn't interest me... the students there were alien to me... the living situation (a twenty story dorm building with little cubicle enclosures to live in) was boring to me. It wasn't a good situation. On the first night of school, after a day of orientations and other idiotic pleasantries, I found myself on the top floor of the sky-rise dorm I was made to live in, in the midst of a large group meeting at which all of the resident advisors for the dorm were explaining to all of us freshmen the rules and regulations of college life. The speeches went on and on and eventually I thought I was really going to lose my mind, when one of the speakers made reference to growing up in a two car garage family. Nothing strange there, but a new student raised his hand and asked something odd (but with serious intent) about whether or not the speaker actually lived in a two car garage, or if the family just had a two car garage. An unusual question, enough to break me out of my temporary snooze to look up in confusion. My eyes met a kid's across the room who had looked up with the same puzzled look on his face, and we shared a smile and a shrug. The kid was Kevin Costello. Our friendship just rolled from there.

We spent a lot of time hanging out throughout that year at school (our first and only Syracuse University year) and the entire time was spent questioning the patterns applied to us endlessly by the school and its inhabitants. We both struggled to maintain a degree of independence. Throughout that year, I realized that Kevin's outlook on life was forged by the fact that he had been living with cancer since his high school years. It never beat him psychologi-

cally, and the physical elements of it only served to strengthen his mind and his overall resolve. He died in New Hampshire on September 20 1996 at the age of 25 after his decade-long battle. We used to talk about health issues and the effect a sudden change in health has on your outlook on life. Kevin's terming of the psychological/physical temporary death as a paradigm shift was a reference to the sudden awareness that the rules by which the world regularly exists didn't apply any longer... the realization that you had to work from that point onward to redefine the world as it is rather than as you had assumed it was. It is exactly the moment of terror I described earlier. A combined sad acknowledgment of an end point and a frightened, reluctant recognition of a beginning at the same time. Why is it that it takes moments of despair like these for us to recognize the inherent patterns in our own lives? Why does it take the potential loss of life for us to see that life has value and that it is not only worth living, but that to live to full potential is the only option? I no longer feel that the forces to change the paradigm always need to be external, like they were for us that year at Syracuse.

Taking control of your life means making active choices. Making active choices means taking risks, and taking risks through confronting challenges is the end point of an internal rather than external process. The issue is one of actually initiating situations, rather than waiting for them to happen. We are surrounded by traditional forms: days of

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the week occurring in sequence; day jobs which make each day exactly the same as the one before and the one after; homes and places to live which make it easy to be static and boring in terms of movement or discovery of new territory. I could list the examples for another ten pages. Just look around the room you are sitting in right now. How do you view the surroundings encasing you? How do you view the tools at your disposal? Are you even seeing the items around you as tools? Or have you just always assumed them to be baggage, weight, surplus, non-functional items? Taking the time and making the effort to see with new eyes, so to speak, is a risk in and of itself, and since what might be a risk for one person might be standard and commonplace to another, only the individual knows what his/her limits are and what boundaries need to be pushed in order to move past the accepted norms. What are determination and commitment, or conviction and dedication other than fuel for risk-taking and motivators for continual personal change and development? They are not to be taken for granted. The moment itself, and the potential value of a life fully lived are the only forces necessary to inspire a paradigm shift. Every moment brings new conditions and influences into play. As the forms of the past are continually reexamined and redefined, there comes a flow of development which builds upon any new realizations. Ideas lead to new ideas and so on, like an inverse pyramid. The newly found perspectives last longer within this process than if they were simple momentary glimpses to be forgotten as the seconds roll by. Each moment now influences the next rather than only being remembered as individual failure much later on into the future in the midst of an episode of late-night terror-eternity.

Here is an example which describes the use of new

perspectives on old forms (and is also an excuse for me to tell another story about my travels in India! - check Inside Front # 9 and #10 for the entire story). I thought of including this after typing out the story of Ndeti above, who took a physical creation, the computer, and used his own initiative to adapt it to his own needs. If there is a point to this article as a whole, it is that our lives are just as tangible an object as that computer in their ability to be adapted and transformed into something greater than what we have come to decide they are.

When I was traveling in India, I had a few basic first aid essentials in my backpack - you know, the type of things you throw into a pack because you are supposed to even though you never end up using them along the way. Well, the same was true for my time in India: no injuries involving blood or gore, and the first aid gear was just added baggage for the trip. When I reached Northern India (MacLeod Ganj) and situated myself for a few weeks rather than rushing around to new places every day, I forgot about the first aid equipment entirely.

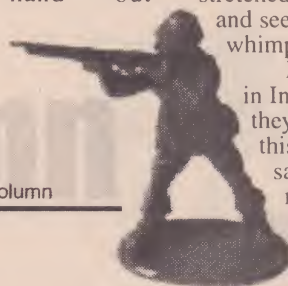
One day, while walking with my new monk friend Mi Pam, I saw a Hindi woman standing by the side of the path, begging for food or for the rupees she could use to buy food. She looked like countless other people in India in that she was dressed in scraps of cloth, with a small metal bowl resting in one hand, a small stick for a cane, and the other hand out- stretched, palm up. She looked very old and seemed to be speaking in a quiet whimpering voice.

Most of those searching for alms in India let you know for sure that they are needing your generosity, but this woman didn't seem to have that same intensity. I tossed about ten rupees into the bowl and was going to just walk on away from the woman, having achieved what I felt to be the end of a simple interaction, when my eyes happened to meet hers. I realized that she was crying, and that the timid voice I was hearing actually was her making tiny whimpering noises alternating with bits of Hindi spoken between breaths.

I asked Mi Pam if he could ask her why she was crying. He translated (though his Hindi was not very good) that she had just been bitten by a dog! As she talked, she lifted her saree (dress/wrap around garment) to reveal a fresh wound on her leg at shin level about the size of a dime with blood trickling down to her ankle. I looked back up to her face and saw that the look in her eyes registered fear more than anything else. I noticed that the hand which held her bowl was shaking, and I suddenly began to think that the woman might be going into shock or something.

I turned to Mi Pam in confusion, asking him what to do: was there a clinic nearby? He told me no, that since it was Saturday, that there was no medical attention available anywhere. I freaked. Here in front of me on one side was a woman who was getting increasingly upset and frightened as she sensed my confusion, on the other side was Mi Pam, standing peaceful and monk-like, also not sure of what to do, and all around us, a little crowd was beginning to form of Tibetan, Indian and Western onlookers, wondering why this ancient woman was crying at the hands of the frantic white western tourist (me!).

That is when I remembered the first aid kit in my backpack! I turned to the woman and gently asked her to move over to this big rock on the side of the path and sit down for a moment. I motioned to her that I would be back in one minute, and I hoped that the translation in pantomime reached her because she looked so very afraid, with tears now streaming down her face. As I started to run back to my



guest-house room, I ask called back to Mi Pam to try and find a fluent interpreter. I was back to the woman in about three minutes, having run up three flights of stairs in order to tear through my pack for the first aid supplies.

The translator Mi Pam found was a fat Indian man, a rich man - evidenced by the fact that, aside from having money enough to at more than his share, he had a home of his own along side of the path where we were sitting. He stood by with a disinterested look on his face as I started to tell him that the woman had been bitten by a dog a few minutes before. He cut me off after that much, saying "I know...I know...I saw it happen." He saw it happen?! He did nothing because the woman was a beggar and he was wealthy. I turned away from him and back to the woman who was trembling and looking around, overwhelmed by all the people who had surrounded her by this point. I knelt down in front of her and without much of a clue as to what the proper thing was to do, began to inspect the wound. Aside from my surprise at how deep the bite was, I was also hit by the smell of the woman's long unclean skin. I take cleanliness for granted as a Westerner. It is a supposed need for us all. To this woman of course, to be clean would have been a luxury she would worry about after being fed and having a place to live for the night. I told the Indian rich guy to tell the woman that the cleaning I was doing to the bite area might sting a little bit, but that it would disinfect the wound and that she'd be fine. He started asking me questions about the first aid kit and about my medical training, trying to establish contact between us as privileged rather than accepting that we were tending to the "untouchable." I ignored him, and told him to please tell her what I had asked him to. He reluctantly did. I had the man tell her to go to the local dispensary as soon as she could in case the dog was rabid. He responded that "Yes... I know the dog that did this. It is a bitch and should be shot." Again, I had to redirect him to the issue at hand.

After I had cleaned and put a bandage on the wound, the man told me that the woman "would be all right" because he had told her to go to the local clinic as soon as she could. I dismissed him, and helped the woman stand up. She had stopped crying and was noticeably calmer.

Mi Pam and I walked her slowly down to the center of town where she repeated the word "namaste" (nah-mah-STAY) a half a dozen times as we said our goodbye and slowly walked away.

The next morning, I was walking down the street, when I heard a call of "Namaste...namaste!" again. I turned to see the woman smiling at me from about twenty feet away. She had lifted her saree a bit and was pointing down to the bandage which I had placed on her wound. There was nothing wrong with it...she was just saying thanks. I smiled and waved as she continued to praise me. All I did was slap on a bandage! I thought a lot about that afterwards...

I had taken the first aid equipment for granted. I had taken my skills, though limited by western standards, for granted. But most importantly, I had taken my to adapt to the situation for granted. Both the Band-Aid's value and my own value had been compromised, up until the point they were challenged and explored, by my own self-imposed limitations. The outside influence here made me think about the possibilities available to me if I thought beyond what was comfortable or usual to me. I recognized limitless potential. This is not to say that I should have then gone around to every woman I met on the streets of MacLeod Ganj and asked through an interpreter if she had been bitten by

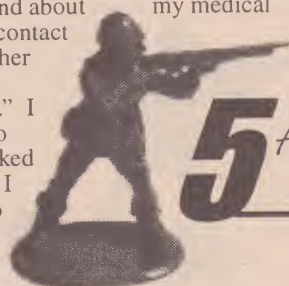
anything and if she needed my help! Rather, to be aware of my surroundings and confident in my ability to create. Create what? That depends on the situations as they arise and the limitations in place in each individual mind.

Yesterday I was in my backyard here in Seattle practicing juggling when a woman who lives across the driveway from my apartment came over to the fence which divides the two properties. We talked, small-talk, for a few minutes, and then she headed back to her apartment, saying that she'd come out and watch me again in a while. I mentioned that I might not be practicing after a few more minutes had passed. She responded with "It's OK...I have nothing to do...I am just going to sit in here on the couch and rot in front of the TV."

Her words are going to be the epitaph of our generation. Granted, she might love sitting on her couch. She might love TV. But, to look at the day as having nothing to do, to sit and rot, is to be completely defined and consumed by the parameters enforced by the outside world and established in our own minds. We can't let our existence be that way. We have to live.

We must constantly work to reinvent the present.

For further discussion, juggling lessons, or tips on first aid for 90-year-olds, write to: Greg Bennick/ 427 Eleventh Avenue East/ Seattle WA 98102/ USA



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Your Body Fucken Matters. Desire and Bodies as Revolutionary.

Eric Boehme

(This article is dedicated to the memory of my friend, my ally, and one of my original revolutionary inspirations, Tim Yohannan. Although we often disagreed about tactics, we never lost sight of the ultimate goal-the complete and total overthrow of the economics, politics, and ideology of the capitalist system. You will be missed Tim.)

This is a manifesto about the importance of bodies. This is a call to re-affirm the value of desire. This is about the revolution that is and will occur not just in our minds but in and through our bodies. This is about pleasure and fun, feelings and sensations, the rhythms of our own and others' bodies. This is about how life and revolution can never be separate from desire and pleasure. Most importantly, this is about how our minds can never be separate from our bodies.

At Detroit Fest this year, during an otherwise stellar set by Bane, the singer gets on the mike and said something that kinda bothered me. "Don't let your body control you." I had to stop and think for a minute. I know this is common enough rhetoric in str8edge, but I wondered how much we are ultimately damaging ourselves by thinking this way. In a place where everyone is distinctly aware of their bodies, moshing and stage-diving, affirming the rhythms of their

bodies by dancing in unison to music, we are told to control our bodies, to repress and stifle ourselves in favor of our minds. What's going on here? Are we advocating a revolution only of our minds? Where does that leave our bodies? (As if we could ever get rid of them) Are we trying to change the minds of a sick society without attending to its varied and different bodies? Why are we separating the mind from the body at all? And finally, what role does str8edge philosophy play in all of this?

1. Separating the Mind and Body

Culture in the West and particularly in the late-capitalist society in which we live, has been all about separating the body from the mind. Beginning with Plato, western philosophy posits a hierarchy with mind over and distinct from the body, while Christianity advocates the spiritual salvation of the soul, the mind, at the expense of repressing and limiting the body. Our history consists of a constant attention to the differences and the boundaries between the mind and the body. Indeed it is in the interests of the system to reinforce these strict boundaries and separations.

We grow up in a society that pays very close attention to the body. Yet it is a body that is seen as clearly separate from the mind, distinct and unconnected, a tool to be molded, manipulated, sold and used. The idealized bodies of men and women parade before us in mass advertising and



entertainment. It is not that bodies are invisible, it is that bodies are too visible as bodies, separate from any kind of mind. We also separate the labor of our bodies to sell in the marketplace, to exchange for wages.

We go to therapists to heal our minds, medical doctors to heal our bodies. There is an implicit assumption behind all of this that we are minds reflecting and acting upon our bodies. Our bodies are seen as tools-for us to use, to develop, to suppress, to workout with, to hide, to show off, to obsess over, to destroy, to cleanse or to purify. Fitness and workout crazes, the techno-medical profession, and cultural and religious norms all serve to make us think that our bodies are distinct from our minds.

1.2. Priority of Mind: Repression and Control of the Body

Yet separation also serves to reinforce the idea that our mind does and should control our body. Separation begins the process that seeks to replace the chaos of bodily desire for the orderliness of the analytical mind. The emotional upheavals of pleasure and bodily sensations make us lose control, a control that is essential to the power and legitimization of the system. Thus the mind comes to take control of the errant, evil and erratic body-the cool, detached, and objective mind masters and controls the heated, involved madness of the body. This allows capitalism to get us into the workplace-they control our bodies (in an environment that our bodies naturally rebel against) so that we can sell our labor for the capitalist's profit. As a cultural idea, the repression and control of the body also sustains racist and sexist world views-mind has traditionally been associated

with white males, while body (and all the attendant evils and the subsequent restrictions) has been associated with people of color and women.

2. Suppression of Desire and the Body in the Interests of Capitalism

There are two interconnected ways that reinforce the priority of the mind over the body and kill any revolutionary potential we could have from reintegrating the mind and body through pursuing pleasure and desire. Capitalist ideology either forces direct and coercive repression onto the body or perhaps more insidiously, funnels and channels desire and pleasure into acceptable consumerism.

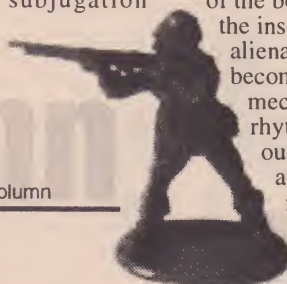
Direct repression and subjugation of the body by the capitalist system comes in two forms: incarceration and wage labor. The staggering amount of people incarcerated, the fact that the prison-system is one of the fastest growing sectors of the economy, and the general cultural and ideological apparatus of discipline as the threat of potential punishment all attest to the prevalence of capitalism's direct repression of bodies. In spite of Foucault's claims that the prison-system tends to discipline one's mind rather than punish one's body, the simple fact is that there are millions of bodies imprisoned-millions of bodies directly and forcefully locked down. Capitalism also stretches its subjugation of the body into our daily lives through the institution of wage-labor. As labor is alienated from the person, the body becomes a machine, a cog in the mechanisms of the factory. The rhythms of the body (which previously in our history may have been attuned to sunrises or sunsets) are now set to the watch of the nine-to-five workday. Bodies are directly transformed into appendages of the capitalist system-even the health of one's

body is seen in terms of worker productivity. Global capitalism ever increasingly remakes indigenous cultures in its own image by putting people to work in labor markets making your shoes, your clothes, and your hi-tech stereo systems. Yet instead of any kind of minimum or livable wage, global capitalism subjugates and represses the bodies of so-called Third World peoples for pennies a day. Everywhere in the world, capitalism owns the bodies of her wage-laborers.

For those with the privilege to choose the type and amount of wage-slavery to which they will be subjected, capitalism adds the bonus of channeling the desires and pleasures of the body into consumerism. We are given false pleasures through the media of television, movies, and entertainment that take the very real needs and desires of our bodies and transform them into substantial profits for the culture industry. Our life energies that come from the pleasures, the desires, and the sensations of our bodies are funneled into the only acceptable means of interaction between capitalist victims-shopping during the day, amusing ourselves to death at night. Drugs, alcohol, and entertainment become the palliative for the yearnings of the body. Any real pleasure or desire is quickly channeled into a new product, a new form of entertainment until we can no longer tell the difference between what our body wants and what the capitalist system wants us to buy.

2.2 Disconnection of Sex at the Expense of Eros

Capitalism also channels the very real and broad desires of the holistic erotic body into the controlled and repressed



channels of sex. Capitalism does not repress sex, indeed it encourages the proliferation of sex-bodies, sex, and lust are everywhere, on display, on sale, available at the blink of an eye or the touch of a button. Sex becomes disconnected from the body and life energy. Just as the mind is separated from the body, the body is now separated from the whole of its eros, its life energies, and its ability to interact meaningfully with other bodies. Sex becomes a commodity to be bought and sold, an image to accompany any product, the overwhelming display of flesh all in the interests of what Marcuse calls "repressive desublimation." Our erotic desires, our desires for passion, emotionality, play, and pleasure are directed into the one-dimensional and sterile commodities that is offered to us through sex in the capitalist system. Instead of interacting directly with other bodies and minds, we are isolated as individuals, viewing sex from afar, repressing our deeply erotic life energies to be redirected into the "acceptable" modes of interaction-work, school, television, and a maybe a little Internet porn on the side.

2.3 Isolated Individualism

The separation of the mind from the body, the subsequent priority of the mind, and the suppression of the body by capitalism all ultimately push us into thinking that we are individuals, isolated and unconnected from each other. Yet our bodies can never be separate from other bodies. The actions and reactions of bodies together in a social surrounding are what constitute us as human. We are not separate or isolated from one other. Our bodies are a social whole, working together or against each other, our actions have consequences and effects on others. It is in the interests of the capitalist system to construct us as isolated individuals. In capitalist ideology, we are minds that are separate and distinct and we believe that the actions of our bodies have no consequences upon others. We are individuals that can alienate our labor, exploit each other, or see each other as sexual objects. We think that we can separate our theory and our practice and we think that selfishness should be a priority while accumulation of profit should come before the existence, indeed even at the expense of others. Yet this is the way our society makes and creates our bodies.

3. Bodies as Social Constructs

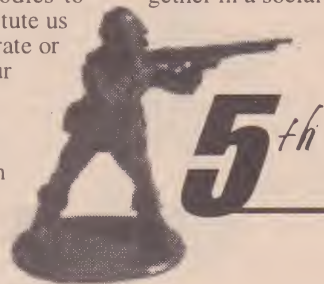
It should be clear in what I have been arguing that the problems that arise from an ideology that separates and prioritizes the mind over the body are culturally specific. Every society and every culture has a different take on the way the body is constructed. Many of us agree that gender, as a category, is constructed specific to the society in which we live. Ideas about what constitutes "masculinity" or "femininity" are derived from our history and culture. Yet some theorists have even argued that things we normally take for granted as "natural," like the specific difference between the sexes, the difference between man and woman, are also socially constructed. Foucault and Butler argue that our bodies are created by the cultures in which we live. Our bodies are maps and landscapes where culture has written its norms and values. The very movements of our bodies, the very pleasures and desires that we think are part of our bodies, are lived experiences of our society. If this indeed is the case, is there any way that we can make our bodies part of a revolutionary experience? How can we resist the values of capitalist society if they are written on and into our very bodies?

4. Resistance

Resistance first takes the form of re-integrating our minds and our bodies. Any action that maintains a separation between the mind and the body, affirming one at the expense of the other is doomed to failure. This is not a call to prioritize the body over the mind. Yet part of re-integrating the mind and the body comes through listening to your body, listening to your desires, your pleasures, and your passions.

4.1 Str8edge Philosophies

At the outset, str8edge was about revolution and change. It was about listening to your body. By not putting drugs or alcohol into your body, it was argued that your mind and body together could be better able to make and create change. The mind and body, free of the poisons with which society tries to mark our bodies, could act together in a revolutionary way. Str8edge was about choice, it was not about coercion-you had the opportunity to choose what you wanted to put into your body, indeed it was that very choice that was part of the pleasure. There was passion in this choice, this was a desire and a pleasure, that by not partaking of drugs or alcohol we could use our minds and bodies to feel the real sensations of our world. Yeah, drugs were a part of our world, but like anything else that gave us pleasure, we could choose what we wanted, we could desire things other than those our society gives us, and we could pursue our



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passions. We still pursue intoxication, we still pursue pleasure. We just pursue it in ways that do not separate our bodies and our minds.

Str8edge has now become a new religion, a form of coercion and a set of ideologies that separate our minds from our bodies while punishing and repressing our bodies. We have, under the guise of continued vigilance and revolution, completely replicated the capitalist notions of priority of mind and repression of the body. Rather than a positive take on affirming your life, your body and mind free of the poisons of society, working together for positive change, str8edge has become a negative religion. We have replicated all the "thou shalt nots" of our guilty Christian heritage. We have substituted our attempts to find new forms of intoxication and play for the monk's attitude toward life. We think that through suffering, in punishing our body by not allowing ourselves pleasure, by not "giving in" to our desires, and through denying our bodies, we can make a revolution called str8edge. Rather than finding different ways to be intoxicated, different ways to pursue pleasure, we have given up on pleasure and intoxication all together.

This is fucked. I don't want to be a monk. I don't want to live my life always holding myself back from something I find pleasurable, meaningful, or desirous. I want to indulge myself and my desires while celebrating my body and the bodies of others. I do recognize that desires are created by culture-I don't give in to every desire I have-I pick and choose based upon listening to my body and listening to the bodies of other living beings. Yeah, that includes the bodies of animals and the bodies of my sex partners as well. I don't

want to live my life by a series of things that I don't do, living by repression, by denial, or by guilt.

4.2 The Ascetic Ideal

Nietzsche called this the "ascetic ideal." Basically, it means that we think that our minds can and should control our bodies. We think we can achieve, through our suffering and denial of our bodies, some kind of higher place. He calls the ascetic ideal the fundamental weakness of any culture that cannot handle the chaos of desire, the unknown of the body, and the solidarity of people intoxicated together. Instead of denying our bodies through the ascetic ideal, Nietzsche calls for us to use our will, our will to power. To him, the will is fundamentally and inherently a part of the body, a part of desires, and a part of pleasure. Any culture that thinks the will of mind can be separate from the body (as str8edge does when we talk about using our mind to control our body) is a culture that is based upon weakness masquerading as power, oppression masked by the rationality of the mind.

5. Indulgence as Revolutionary: Pursuing Passions and Desires

Why do we echo the long-dead yearnings of medieval monks, praying away our bulging erections? Why do we imitate the corseted culture of Victoria, the repressed and disciplined attempts to hide our bodies beneath fitness,

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fashionable clothes, makeup, or hygiene products? Why do we fear the primal, bodily pleasure of intoxication, the ecstatic oneness of mountain maenads dancing the rhythmic sociality of bodies and desire? We do we deny our pleasures and repress our desires, to "not let our bodies control us?" Our bodies are the place, the site where everything happens-culture is written on our bodies, why can't we rewrite ourselves?

I will pursue my passions and desires as revolutionary. I will listen to my body. I will never separate my mind from the workings, the sensations, and the pleasures of my body. I will resist the ideologies of capitalism and the maps it has created on my body. I will resist through purposeful play, through laziness or activity, through pleasure, through my five senses. I will love my body. I will love the bodies of others, human and animal alike. I will respect the choices others make with their bodies, yet I will remind them that they are bodies too, not just minds. I will live and affirm life through my body, my emotions, and my desires. And I will change the world with you, if you choose to change it as well.

Further Reading:

Judith Butler, Bodies that Matter

Michel Foucault, The History of Sexuality Vol. 1

Elizabeth Grosz, Volatile Bodies

Hebert Marcuse, Eros and Civilization

Fredrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power and On the Genealogy of Morals

Eric Boehme/ATR 'zine/ 118 Raritan Ave./ Highland Park NJ 08904/ USA

NOSTALGIA FOR AN UNPREDICTABLE FUTURE

text provided by Unapack Spring Commando

I. OH CYBERSPACE, WHAT BIG EYES AND EARS YOU HAVE!

*When action is impossible
"Communication" is consolation.
Freedom is a sensation.
We only have "choice."*

It is said, "the map is not the terrain." The comment is meant to point to the limits of human abstraction in friction with full reality. But we are now being herded with electronic prods from the terrain to the map, from the real to the virtual--soon there will be no friction! Simulated electronic space is a map, merely a map: the better to simplify, rationalize, describe, monitor, predict, propagandize, contain, and control you with. Cyberspace is a closed playpen, where everything is permitted, but nothing is possible. Use cyberspace to get information? When you use cyberspace, you get in formation.

Interactive communication enhances central control. Cyberspace integrates us into a neural network; together, we become the extended brain of the technological system. The more interconnected the population, the faster propaganda diffuses. Yesterday's control by communication: politicians polled the public, processed the results, and adjusted their rhetoric to correct image problems. Today's control by communication: the outfitting of employees with pagers, and voice mail. It is interesting to notice that the current theme of

propaganda is that consumers need more information, and therefore must not only plug themselves into the system, but must also carry an array of communication devices with them wherever they go. And the future?

The days of the Spectacle are over. The audience storms the stage. Propaganda is obsolete.

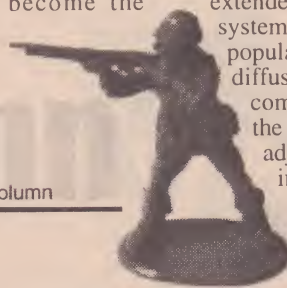
That is to say: in the future, we will no longer be misled and distracted from reality by the media and other forces. We ourselves become the distractions, interacting with each other in a medium in which no reality is possible. We remove ourselves from reality into Cyberspace.

*A new design for relationships,
Relationships of distance.
Relationships which don't require meeting,
Relationships which require never meeting.*

(ever had an internet relationship?)

II. SAFETY. TOOLS AND MASTERS. FREEDOM.

Safety? Though we depend on the technological system due to coerced adaptation which reduced our ability to live independently, that dependency does not mean we are SAFE. The system cannot be reformed or redirected; but the more complex, unified, and centralized it is, the more vulnerable it is to catastrophic breakdown (death). A slight change in an important factor could be amplified throughout the system causing instantaneous collapse. The predictable, warm and fuzzy catastrophe we all predict is that we will overwhelm the earth's capacity as a host: we



imagine a gradual death by overcrowding, starvation and territorial violence--perhaps not in our lifetime! But this is only the obvious possibility, and maybe the most gentle. Any number of occurrences could upset the pseudo-equilibrium of the system. Think of the overuse of antibiotics and the mutation of viruses; think of the unthinkable. The system only works until it fails. It is delusional to think that there is security in not rocking the boat. And besides, safety--is it your highest value, your ultimate goal? What do you want? And what are you working for?

In this system, we work for the sake of organization. And organization increases, which increases work. The harder and faster we work, the more work there will be to do. Humans--originally carefree and free-ranging--have been tied down, first to the farm, then to the city factory, then to the office, and now to the computer monitor's virtual glo-grid. Thirty years ago offices didn't have PCs or cubes. How many of us today are forced to sit solitary under fluorescent bulbs in windowless gray cubes most of our waking hours (most of our LIFE) immobilized in front of a computer monitor staring at flickering blue nothing, listening to high-pitched machine hum, making tiny movements with our fingers to manipulate symbols that have no vital meaning to us, all the while subconsciously panicked by pervasive surveillance? Forget the whole dynamic complex of simultaneous coercion, persuasion, socialization, sticks, carrots and credit that condemn us to the console. Would we do this if instead we could just live our lives, foraging in one way or another, eating, socializing, fucking, fantasizing, sleeping, drawing, singing, dancing, just being human, unemployed, not in use, free, free of fabricated goals? Subsistence would be such a luxury, compared to the "luxuries" we have, the luxuries we have paid for. Paid with what?

Human minds are transformed into information-processors. (At least with physical labor your mind is free to fantasize.) We are degraded into serving machines--processing raw reality into computer logic data (scanning products at a cash register, data entry). We are used more and more as either physical robots or translators, that is, as *interfaces* between computerized systems. In the service industry, the food chain gang must wear uniforms and logos, spout scripts, weigh scoops of ice cream while wearing plastic gloves. *Machines cast us in their images.*

Technology uses men, men do not use technology. Technology is not any single isolated object, it is a unified *system* of relationships between elements and systems. Those who claim that technology is a "neutral tool" or that it is an accumulation of independent "things" to be picked through selectively for keepers, fail to realize that technology is a metaphysical whole, that it is an expression of organization, and therefore can only direct itself toward higher order, increased centralized control, and the inevitable degradation of its human components. The metabolic flow must speed faster in pursuit of total productivity. We can always be more efficient, but we can never be efficient enough.

The electronic fist comes in molded beige plastic, beeping. Suddenly we all do Windows, and he who will not compute will not eat. And as our work, so our play: Both are communication. To be silent or un-in-formed is to be anti-social. Evermore we will be engulfed in the electronic, starved of light, fresh air, fresh food, spontaneous movement, friendly face-to-face human company, human warmth, human smell, human touch, animals no more. We struggle: depression, agoraphobia, addiction, bulimia, panic, obsession-compulsion, suicides. And doctors medicate.

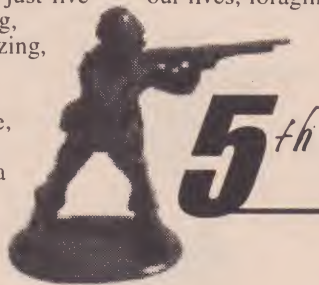
Our pre-pacification ancestor the cavewoman would never have sat still for this. Nor our four year old selves. But cyberspace disperses the crowd, and clears the streets. We are living in the post-riot era, inside our cubicles (office blocks, suburban blocks, cell blocks), staring at the screens, being entertained.

Universal Aliens/TPONS -Don't worry, we will help you escape- PO Box 120494/ Boston MA 02111/ USA

The Punk Rock Contradiction

a hardcore critique by Demian of famous rock band Culture

For the most part, the straight edge scene is composed of individuals who end their efforts at just that: SXE. Occasionally veganism is brought to light, although the motives may be questionable there. Nonetheless, many of those persons indisputably have a tendency to limit their thinking to those two decisions, while boasting about how they are saving the world through those choices. But honestly, those decisions are not always the great acts of will that those making them would like to think they are. It is (for most) easy to be straight edge and, yes, vegan too. These choices really require very little resistance or dietary sacrifice, and are by no means the tests of strength and



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determination that we'd like to believe.

This is not an attempt to refute straight edge or veganism, as I will proudly confess to both myself. It is, however, an acknowledgment that (unfortunately) the scene in question has become a rather unthinking one. A facile subculture. Stagnant.

But a greater concern is that from that subculture has spawned a sect of self-righteous more-politically-correct-than-you people, who, although for the most part they are more informed than the aforementioned group, will probably do less good. These people, who have made many significant social, political, and consumer connections, seem to feel that it is more beneficial to the pressing and urgent global issues that they are concerned with to only share that knowledge with members of their own select scene, through select music, and select association. And it seems that in their attempt to disengage from the SXE scene because of that scene's tendency to "preach to the preached" and to act as an elite, they opt instead to preach "different" information to a "different" scene that already possesses that information, in the process becoming merely an elite within an elite. I would think it'd be more effective if those intellectually superior punk rockers would come grace us with their god-sent smarts. Come frolic with the lessors at, heaven forbid, an Earth Crisis show, rather than distributing pamphlets at a Dickie's and sweater-vest fashion show to the same people that made the fucking pamphlets in the first place. A lot of you have a lot to say. A lot of you don't say it.

So how about, considering how concerned you are with improving our social and political conditions, coming down off your high horses and sharing those social remedies with that same "closed-minded" SXE scene that you so

condemn. Why confine the solutions to one room, when the entire house is aching?

It's O.K. corduroy boys n' girls... come mingle with the Jenco kids. Realize that mainstreaming your positive views is the only way to aggravate change on a massive scale. Hitching your wanna-be blue collar pantaloons up to expose your little ankles is *not* revolutionary. It's a clique, just like ours.

I admit, the SXE and vegan hardcore scene of which (through my band) I partake *can* be a very stupid one. But also understand that there are a handful of us that are not completely ignorant, and are trying to wisen folk 'round here up. Hell, we may even be able to teach your blessed ass a thing or two. If so inclined, you're more than welcome to help out at any time. It's only logical, wouldn't you say?

Oh, and we remember your running shoe days, baby.

Be sure to write to Demian (at 116 N.W. 12 St., Gainesville, FL 32601, last time we checked) and encourage him to publish the embryonic 'zine from which this article was taken. We're sure it will win him a lot of friends!

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A NEW DISTRIBUTION ETHIC

Timojhen Mark

Somehow Brian and I ended up discussing record distribution recently, which is where the idea for this article came from. For what it's worth, and to diffuse any misconceptions, this is entirely about how I think things should work. The reality, as it can often be, is that this would be an article about the ideals, not the practice. I felt somewhat strange about writing this, knowing I don't live up to it, but hell, might as well talk about it.

First, the basics. Most people understand the record/CD food chain, but I'll run through it regardless. Label person hears a band they like who'd they'd like to release. Generally speaking, the label would contact the band(s), arrange for some mutually beneficial cooperation. Assuming the label and band want to work together, the expenses begin. Labels often pay for a band's recording costs for the release in question. Sometimes cheap, sometimes not. It's a gamble at points for the label - if things don't go well, and the band's in the studio longer than expected.... the costs are mounting. Let's assume everything goes well.

Next step - production. Depending on the label's situation, this would be all of the layout/artwork etc. etc. More costs, somewhat dependent on the attitude of the label. It's obvious that some labels spend almost no money on this step. Ha.

Assuming you've got a recording and artwork, you move into manufacturing. Mastering, pressing, printing, so

on and so forth. For most labels, this would be a C.O.D. arrangement. You're paying the printer as the plates are made, you're paying the pressing plant as the records are pressed. You get the general idea. While it's true some labels are in the financial position to get credit/terms from pressing plants or printers, this is often after they've established themselves.

Whoa. Final product has arrived. (Assuming the label has paid for the shipping!) Now there's a stack of records sitting in your garage. Gotta get rid of the damn things - sick of this project already. Best send out promos - distros, radio, promoters. Pack those suckers in boxes, get 'em to the post office, and get 'em off. More expenses, obviously.

Depending on the quality of your release, you're going to get differing reactions. I'm sure it's pretty safe to say that everyone has some measure of fallout - radio stations who don't care, distros that don't respond, whatever. Total waste of cash, but somewhat unavoidable, as it's tough to tell beforehand how things will develop. Sit back and wait.

My point with all of this - the labels pay, and pay, and pay. And perhaps pay again if there's not sufficient interest in the title, and there's still hundreds laying about.

Check the distro side of things though. You get a promo in the mail, and it seems like a reasonable release. Not terribly exceptional, but y'know, not bad. "Sure... I'll take 25."

Done deal. The label pays to send 'em out to you, and you promptly use the unopened box as a coffee table for a couple months. "Hey - just wanted to check on those records I sent you." "Yeah, we still have a bunch, we'll get in contact when they sell."

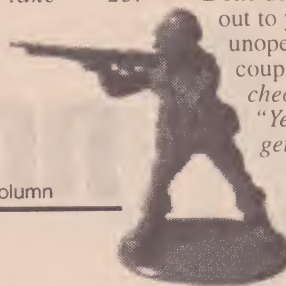
Here's the gist of all this. Labels take the risk - front the money, and do the work. Most distros work on some kind of terms - net or consignment. Net means they pay after a certain amount of

time (net 30 day, net 60, whatever), consignment means they pay as they sell (I've sold two, here's 4 dollars. There's still 98 here.) It seems to me that the investment doesn't ever really even out. There's nothing preventing me (except the eventual bad reputation) from committing to distributing far more records than I could ever do responsibly, or committing to distributing records that I'm not terribly excited about. It's easy to overextend yourself (I know - I've done it plenty!).

What if distros were paying C.O.D.? Think they'd be more selective if they ended up with their own cash tied up in product? Hell yeah - when you own a 100 of that record, you know you're going to bust ass to get rid of them. Or not survive financially. Either way, you're invested. Think you'd be as likely to take some ridiculous amount of that record you thought was 'okay'? I'd hope not - although natural selection would play a part as well - too many overbuys of those 'okay' records, and even your day job won't help you.

Also on the 'effect' side of the fence - think that label would keep investing in mediocre releases if they're not selling? I'm not sure - hope not though. It's got to be tough to be a label nowadays though - there's a lot of people releasing records, and a lot of records floating around with no real audience. I'd consider it a safe statement that some people shouldn't be releasing records. I mean seriously, there's a limited amount of landfill available, right? Perhaps natural selection could figure in to the current record glut. We can only hope!

Before you get the wrong impression - I've not been able to practice this as I would like. It's tough to put into action - for any number of reasons, usually between over



commitment and under funding. But thinking about this in terms of running my own distro has helped - I'm taking less of the 'okay record, good label', 'okay record, nice people', 'bad record, nice people' etc. etc. It's like many of my ideals - progress rather than perfection. It's always a bit frightening to me when I hear of distros that are in heavy debt - punk rock seems to be particularly forgiving with the financials. Doubt many corner stores would be able to stay afloat if they were run anything like some punk distros! I don't know hope many times I've seen someone start a distro, and three weeks later, be carrying 300 titles. Unless you're independently wealthy, it's not a sound business plan. While some would call things like planning 'unpunk' - I'd venture that ripping people off, especially the ones who trusted you with their cash, very 'unpunk'. Most people wouldn't lend money to someone they considered 'irresponsible' - often a difficult judgment to make when dealing with someone you've never met!

Damn - now I've done it - just imagining all my labels demanding payment up front! Arrghhh...

Timajhen/Vacuum/ POB 460324/ San Francisco CA 94146/ USA/ Fax 415.826.0797/ www.vacuumsf.com

TWELVE BOXES

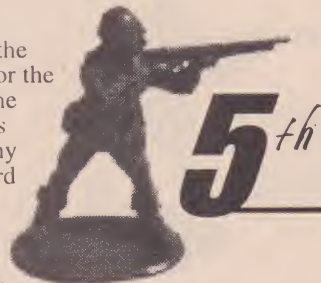
Disco Dave

Some months ago the UPS lady brought to my door the twelve boxes that encased the publishing juggernaut that is Slave Magazine. I signed my name on her digital clipboard and she asked what the content of the boxes were.

I told her it was a magazine. She asked about what. I told her punk rock, hardcore, politics, and art. She kind of raised both eyebrows with a somewhat impressed look on her face and then turned to begin unloading the twelve boxes onto my front porch. I helped her carry the boxes in and asked her if she knew Jack. Jack was a Teamster I had interviewed for the alternative community newspaper I also write for, the Greensboro Gazette, during the recent strike. She stopped loading boxes and her face brightened up. "I know Jack, he's my shop steward!". I asked her if she had seen the Gazette before and she had not. I went to my car, where the Gazette archives are stored, and pulled out a small stack of papers and gave them to her. She took a look at the cover, nodded in approval with a smile and said she would read it. She thanked me, turned, and sprinted back to her big brown truck and was gone.

So here were these twelve boxes in my living room. Twelve boxes in which the contents cost me more than an entire months rent-over \$250. The cost roughly translates into about a week and a half of labor for me. Twelve boxes that I still owe money to my zine cohorts on...

There are times that I question whether or not the contents of those boxes are worth it to me. I question if it is worth the hours I put in under the heel of the time clock at my deli job. I question the amount of time I spend reviewing shitty records that I will never listen to again. I question if my energy and resources are directed at where I really want them to be. Essentially the question is whether or not I want to involve myself actively in the punk scene any longer. The energy and enthusiasm I once held so consistently is no longer there. Talking with Jack about the UPS strike and the struggle against the company excites, inspires, and is generally more interesting to me than the new issue of MRR



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or the new Converge album. I would rather sit down and have that conversation than interview some band and talk about what happened at this show or the production on that album. Granted, Slave is much more than all those things but it is a publication within the punk and hardcore scene and as such my dad or Jack are not going to read the articles about the Cuban revolution or the case of Kwame Cannon and those are the people who need to be reading those things most. I feel as if I am stuck somewhere in the middle of being a punk kid and devoting all my time, resources, and energy to a greater struggle. I do not know at which point these two ideas began to run in contradiction (or if the even have to), but more and more I feel that way. There is a difference between being a part of a subculture and part of a counterculture. A subculture, like punk and hardcore, can, and usually does, mirror the mountain of problems that are present in the culture at large that it stepped out of. A counterculture stands in direct opposition to those things. Being politically active only within the scene is ineffective because that activism is doomed to become just another aspect of the subculture. And as such it is isolated and alienated from the rest of the world and challenges nothing.

So here I stand at a crossroads of sorts, staring down the path that I have been on for some time wondering how I can even think of abandoning it. I look at all the things that I have learned and the ethics that I have embraced and I see how they are not as clearly present anymore. These lessons and ethics are what brought me to the conclusions

that I find myself at now that call into question my part in the punk community.

With all the things I criticize and what little patience I tend to have with "the punx" these days I know that the lessons and the connections with people I have made will stick with me long after I have put away my Filth records for good. People like my roommates John and Jeff, who work on Slave with me, inspire me and make me remember the positive things about this whole scene. Zines like Betterdays and Doris help create that counterculture that I want so badly to exist here within punk and hardcore. Sincere bands like Zegota, Sharkskill and Encyclopedia of American Traitors are what keep me involved and energized just to the point that I do not throw up my hands and quit going to shows altogether.

A friend of mine once told me punk was only as revolutionary as you made it. Essentially I guess it all comes down to the contents of your twelve boxes and how you use them...

Dave Coker/ PO Box 10093/ Greensboro NC 27404/ USA

Sexual Politics

Al Burian

Sexual politics! In the early eighties I was obsessed with a book entitled *Sexual Politics* by Kate Millet. I was intrigued by the fact that the book had the word "sexual" in the title. Pilfering the book from my dad's shelf, I retreated frequently to the attic of my parent's house to leer over the

opening passage, a lengthy quote from Henry Miller's *Sexus*, in which Miller describes in lurid detail his erotic exploits with a French maid in a bath tub. The section was bracketed by quotes, after which Kate Millet would begin her literary analysis of the power dynamics implicit in the prose of Mr. Miller. I'd lose interest halfway through the second sentence of that, and go back to the bath tub.

Time passes, and the next thing I know it's the late nineties. I have actually read entire Henry Miller books now, and have come to consider him a great writer, although I wish he'd tone down the sex and concentrate on his forte, free food. Sexual politics abound-everything is political, everything is sexual. The guys I work with at the copy shop nod in the direction of a sorority girl and lean in, breathing heavily in my ear, "She's hot, dude! Where do I get some of that?!" Henry Miller, at least, never used the words "hot" or "dude."

Then there's Brian D-----, who I ran into the other day. He began relating a story about a friend of his, whose girlfriend joined a religious cult and threw him out of her house. His friend was forced to live in his band's van as a result. "The problem with all you CrimethInc. guys," I opined, "is that you're all brewing up your molotov cocktails and shit, but you all live with your girlfriends! Have you seen *The Decline and Fall of Western Civilization: The Metal Years*, Brian? It's about all the eighties LA glam bands, and how they basically just sponged off of gullible women, eating their food and living rent-free, all the while promising

on-ramp decade to the Apocalypse, have seen much frantic regurgitation of styles and crazes. Sadly, I have noticed a sharp increase in Reynoldsism in both myself and others. The other night I had to kick a guy out of my friends' house because he was drunk and harassing one of the girls who lived there. After the incident there was a discussion in the kitchen about it, where I worried (because I am, after all, such a swell, sensitive guy) that my own behavior might, at times, not be much different from that guy's.

"Oh, no," the woman on whose behalf I'd ejected the offending dude assured me. "Not you. You'd never invade someone's personal space."

That's a nice premise, but unfortunately untrue. Sitting in a coffee shop about a week ago with a female friend of mine, I was asked, "Hey, do you remember the first time we met?"

I tried to recall. "Um, not really, no. Why, did I do something embarrassing?"

"Yes," she said. "You put your hand in my shirt."

"What?!" I said.

"Yeah, you touched my back under my shirt. It was kind of weird."

"Man... that's.... uh....." I didn't know what to say. "That's not very cool, huh. I honestly do not remember doing that. I'm really sorry."

"We were both pretty drunk," she recalled. "I'm not mad about it, really. I was just wondering why you do that sort of thing. You seem like an OK guy. You have pretty good ideas about things."

Most everyone, when it comes to their sexuality, is a hypocrite, unhappy with themselves, reacts in ways which don't conform to what they believe abstractly. I'm certainly no exception, and, though arguably not the worst offender in the misogyny sweepstakes, I definitely have my moments of sucking really bad. It is difficult to talk about these sorts of issues in a non-

confrontational manner. Talking about your faults opens you up to easy criticism, and it is a lot rarer that someone takes you out for coffee and quietly asks you to justify your behavior that the more common tact of just telling all your friends that the person in question is an asshole, writing graffiti on a bathroom wall, etc. (And I don't think either of these responses are inappropriate-I'm just lucky that my friends are usually nicer than that, at least as far as my behavior is concerned.)

The more vocal you become in your opinions, the more likely it is that people will call you out on your actions. And this is a good thing. We should all talk about what we do and why we do it, and there shouldn't be a code of silence, either snickering gossipy silence or mute horror, which accompanies people acting in ways which make other people uncomfortable. Life is full of contradictions, as Lenin observed. Man, I bet he got a ton of girls with a line like that.

Al Burian/ 307 Blueridge Road/ Carrboro NC 27510/ USA

The CrimethInc. workers' collective categorically denies Burian's allegations as to Brian D---'s lifestyle. Besides, they got evicted from that apartment.

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them limo rides to the Grammys when they 'make it.'"

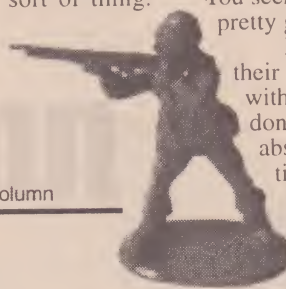
Brian, being a good sport and a lover of cogent analogies, nodded in agreement. "Yes, it is an unfortunate situation. One man's molotov cocktail is another man's *Appetite for Destruction*, and the limo ride looming on the horizon, is, perhaps, as phantasmal as the impending revolution of daily life. Nonetheless, what can I do? I've got a girlfriend and she has a nice apartment."

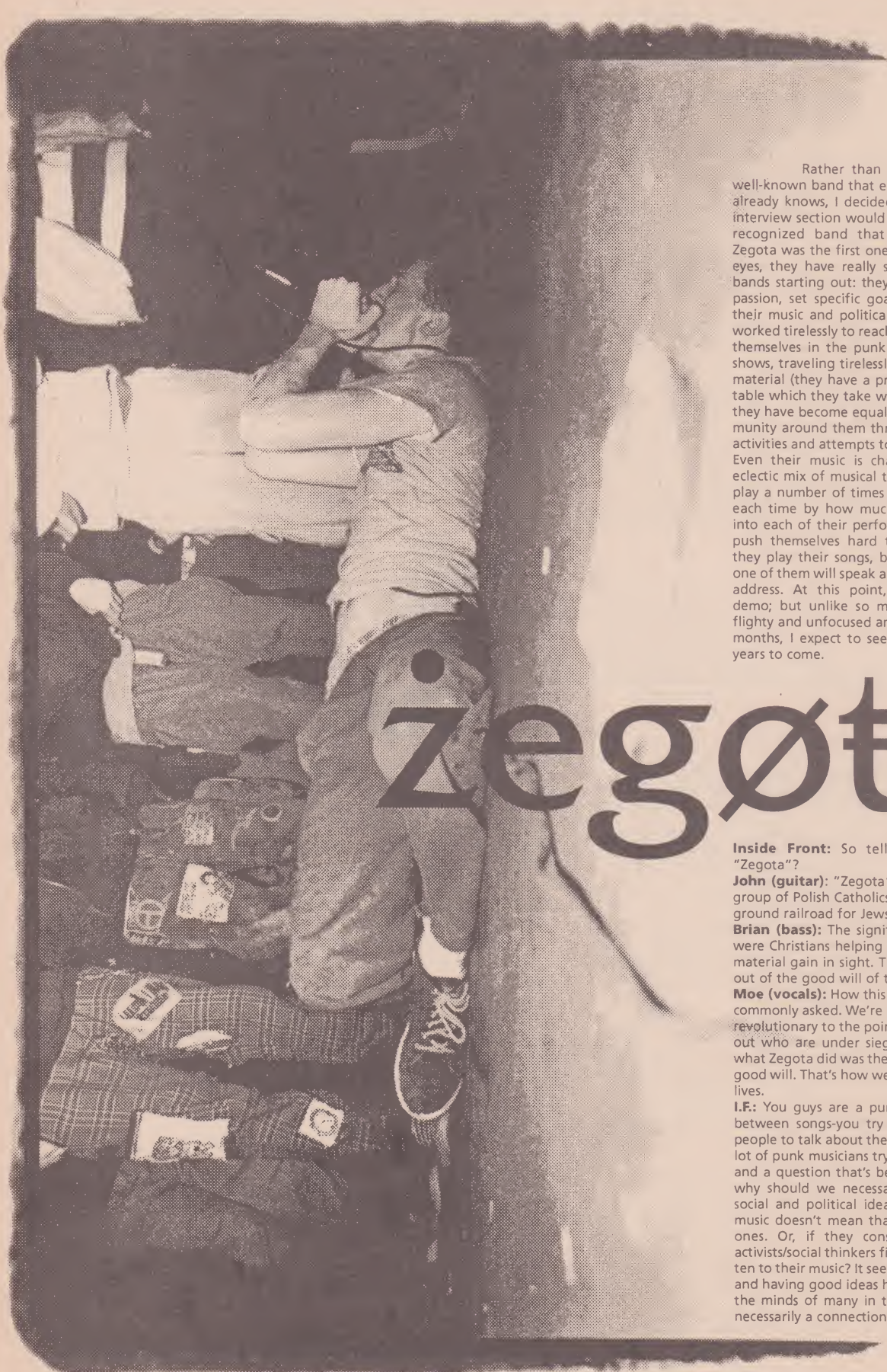
"Until now, I never noticed that fascism has many disguises," sang D. Boon in an old Minutemen song. "Every woman adores a fascist," wrote Sylvia Plath. I am sympathetic to Brian's situation. What can I do? I have this girlfriend and she adores fascists.

Once, while very drunk, a good friend of mine postulated his theory of the nineties man as the man who is so sensitive to the ladies that he actually accommodates their desire for insensitivity. He is so nineties that he is seventies. "I'm so sensitive that I'm insensitive!" my friend proclaimed. I thought that this was a fairly profound summation, and of course he denied having said anything of the sort the next day.

In the film *The Man Who Loved Women*, Burt Reynolds portrays the archetypal "seventies man": a man who really loves women, all kinds of women. Unfortunately, it's the seventies and so there's lots of women catching on to his thing and calling him out on it. Burt has a lot of trouble with the ladies in that film. The problem with this whole "nineties man" construct is that once you articulate it, you're immediately going to have a bunch of nineties women articulating their paradigm, which is basically going to boil down to "fu-uu-uu-uuck you."

The nineties, being the universally acknowledged





Rather than just interviewing another well-known band that every reader of Inside Front already knows, I decided that the best use of the interview section would be to talk to a newer, less recognized band that deserves the attention. Zegota was the first one that came to mind. In my eyes, they have really set an example for young bands starting out: they began with sincerity and passion, set specific goals for themselves both in their music and political/social message, and have worked tirelessly to reach them. They have involved themselves in the punk community by setting up shows, traveling tirelessly, and distributing reading material (they have a pretty sizable free literature table which they take with them everywhere), and they have become equally active in the larger community around them through a variety of political activities and attempts to raise social consciousness. Even their music is challenging in its unusually eclectic mix of musical traditions. I've seen Zegota play a number of times now, and I've been struck each time by how much energy and thought go into each of their performances: not only do they push themselves hard to express emotion when they play their songs, but in between songs each one of them will speak about the subjects the songs address. At this point, they've only released a demo; but unlike so many new bands, who are flighty and unfocused and disappear in a matter of months, I expect to see Zegota working hard for years to come.

zegøta

Inside Front: So tell me, what exactly is a "Zegota"?

John (guitar): "Zegota" was the code name for a group of Polish Catholics who worked as an underground railroad for Jews during the Holocaust.

Brian (bass): The significance of this is that they were Christians helping out Jews, and they had no material gain in sight. They were doing this simply out of the good will of their hearts.

Moe (vocals): How this pertains to us is a question commonly asked. We're not trying to say that we're revolutionary to the point that we're hiding people out who are under siege-but getting down to it, what Zegota did was they carried out selfless acts of good will. That's how we try to perform in our daily lives.

I.F.: You guys are a punk band that speaks a lot between songs-you try to bring up issues to get people to talk about them and think about them. A lot of punk musicians try to talk about social issues-and a question that's been bothering me lately is: why should we necessarily look to musicians for social and political ideas? Just because they play music doesn't mean that their ideas will be good ones. Or, if they consider themselves political activists/social thinkers first, then why should we listen to their music? It seems that playing good music and having good ideas have become inseparable in the minds of many in the punk scene, but it isn't necessarily a connection that makes sense.

Brian: Well, people shouldn't necessarily listen to us more than to anyone else-but since we have the opportunity to get up there and express our opinions and what we believe, then we do it. And I wouldn't encourage anybody to listen to us more than to anyone else, whether they're in a band or not; that's why we have that song that we play as a speaker forum when we offer up the microphone for anybody to speak about any issue or any burning desire that they have at that moment. They don't have to be in a band. A lot of the time I feel like my ideas might not make as much sense as someone else's, but I can still try to present what's going on in my head, and it might make somebody else think. We're not trying to say we're right, we're just trying to help get people motivated to think about things...

I.F.: So do you consider yourselves musicians first or activists first?

Moe: I don't feel like I'm that much of a musician-I'm a vocalist, and I scream, to put it bluntly. At the same time, I don't consider myself that much of an activist-what I portray in my lyrics are my own thoughts and feelings about an issue. It doesn't necessarily mean that I'm right, it doesn't mean that I've lived what another person has lived. Their living experience might have shown them things I haven't seen.

I.F.: Tell me what has happened in your living experience that led you here, then, to playing in Zegota.

Moe: I came from a white, middle class family. I've had a lot of things that other people have been deprived of, and a lot of these things I've decided are completely unnecessary. My parents live a much more luxurious life than a lot of the people throughout this world, and now they can't relate to a lot of people outside of their social class... I don't want to restrict myself to only being able to socialize with a certain class. The social class my parents are in, I don't want to be a part of. I see no value in materialism, in my father working until he's sixty years old to attain this dream of his, of living on a golf course. Not wanting those ultra-materialistic dreams of America molded me into a lot of what I am today.

I.F.: Do you think that dream is right for your parents?

Brian (mumbling): Maybe now it is...

Moe: Well, I've talked to them about it. My parents are happy with their lives, as far as they portray to me. My father comes home from work every night and it's the news, dinner, sitcoms, and that makes up his evening... and on weekends, it's escape to the golf course, and then escape to the TV to watch the latest sports event. That's not where I want to be, but if that's his dream, then (spoken with some perplexed resignation) go for it...

John: Especially if he doesn't have a problem obtaining that at the expense of others.

I.F.: Do you think that if your father knew the people who are suffering so he can have the lifestyle that he has, assuming of course that such a middle class lifestyle does depend upon the exploitation of others, do you think he would still live that way?

Moe: He's gotta be aware of it. I mean, like I said, every day he comes home and turns on the news, and all over the world you see suffering, countries starving, civil war in countries throughout the world, people pushing carts down the street. He sees it-he just ignores it.

John: It's hard to see the direct cause of all that they show on TV-it looks so far off, like you had nothing to do with it, and you don't realize how much you actually affect the rest of the world with your purchasing power, when you're sitting there behind your big TV. People don't make the connection of how the balance is so far out of whack-and it's not easy to do that because we're very far away from Nigeria. We're very far away from the rainforest, where the things are actually happening.

Moe: My father grew up poor. Being successful has always meant wealth to him. I guess that's how it was portrayed to him as a child, so as for wealth, he just didn't stop attaining it.

I.F.: Let's talk about how you guys address that stuff. Everyone in Zegota sings-except, I guess for you. Will

Will (drums): I used to, but I can't do it and play drums anymore...

I.F.: And, pretty much except for you, everyone talks between songs. Is this a conscious attempt to break down specialization in the band, to break down hierarchy, in which one person speaks for all the others?

Moe: I don't feel like I can totally represent the opinions of anyone in this band by myself. With Brian and John speaking with me, they can add a lot that I couldn't.

Brian: And if we all 90 or 95% agree on everything, it only makes sense for all of us to have the opportunity to talk.

I.F.: Are there any drawbacks?

Brian: Sometimes we might start feeding off of each other and end up talking for a bit too long, which can decrease the intensity of a show.

I.F.: How do you guys decide what literature you're going to distribute and what topics you're going to address between songs?

John: The way we do literature is a lot different than the way we do speaking. With literature, when we encounter something new that we think could be a good thing to distribute, everybody reads it and we see if anybody has any real objections. As far as speaking between songs, for me it's all been about what I'm feeling at the moment. I've tried to remember things to say, but it doesn't feel as sincere and it doesn't come across as well.

I.F.: Outside of the band, what other projects do you participate in that relate to the issues Zegota addresses?

John: We're all involved to some degree in different causes, showing up for demonstrations and rallies, critical mass [a pro-bicycle, anti-car rally that takes place across the U.S.A.], and one thing I'm working on now is trying to do some education about what is going on in Iraq. I'm putting together a panel discussion of people, a college professor, somebody from the Anti Arab-Discrimination League, a few people from around the area who know what they're talking about, to come and speak and let some people in on what is going on in Iraq. Somebody set something like that up at G.C. [a local college] and I went over to that, and some of the stuff I heard just blew my mind.

Moe: There are numerous events in which we participate, but when it comes down to band politics and practicing what we preach, to actually use that in my daily life, I ride a bike to places I need to go, and... It's like, you can just as easily go to a big chain supermarket and buy a stick of deodorant where an animal was killed for it or they dumped a lot of shit in the river... it's easy to do that. But you sort of

have to **wreck your life**

and start going out of your way to start living differently, to start getting the products that you feel are consciously acceptable. A lot of times in my life I can't just go the convenient way, because I can't be at peace like that. That's basically it-as far as living my politics every day, I try to avoid being hypocritical.

Brian: "You've got to wreck your life..."

Moe: Exactly. Wreck your life so you're not supporting the things your conscience is not at peace with.

John: What you've got to do is wreck your life the way you knew it before you became conscious, in order to feel good about what you actually do. It's like wrecking the fake life we think we have, in order to build a new life that we can be at peace with.

I.F.: Give me some more concrete examples of what you guys are doing...

Brian: This weekend, we're giving up our home to twenty three people, in order for them to be able to attend this "Students Unite" conference that we had this show tonight for [that night Zegota had played a free show in the middle of a weekend conference on organizing and activism]. Food Not Bombs has served three meals a day here, so people who come can get free food and lodging for the weekend.

Moe: We're doing a march April 1 to 4 to free

Kwame Cannon-we're all going to be walking from Greensboro to Raleigh, which is an hour and a half by car, just like the path that protesters marched when Martin Luther King was assassinated. Kwame Cannon has a racially biased court sentence against him, just as it was a racist when Martin Luther King was shot. And we'll protest on the governor's lawn at the end of the march to let the governor know that we want Kwame Cannon out of jail, because he's unjustly in there... Other things we're into: the Environmental Awareness Foundation, they help out in being active at the High Point furniture market, one of the biggest furniture markets in the world, that happens twice a year. They use a lot of mahogany and teak woods, which are rainforest woods-they're chopping down the rainforest, and at the same time big business comes in and kills indigenous people. We protest the hell out of that, try to discourage the furniture buyers from purchasing more of it, to hopefully reduce the market for these products.

I.F.: Anything else you want to mention?

Moe: That's just a lot of name dropping...

I.F.: You've been talking about a lot of political action groups, a lot of meetings, and the fact is that a lot of people, even punk kids, are bored to death with politics. Why do you think this is?

John: I think media has a lot to do with it-the decreasing of people's attention spans. You watch the news and every six to twelve seconds they're going to bring up a new topic. Media's original purpose was to provide a link between government and the people, to make information more accessible to the average American. The media has become as consumer oriented as everything else, and what they're after is not to be a link, to keep open lines of communication; they're there to make you want to watch them so they can sell advertising time. The more technology grew, and the more television operators were allowed to and able to set up shop, the more narrowly focused each channel has become-thirteen years ago there wasn't a golf channel, a music channel, a bowling channel, a history channel, a comedy channel, there were thirteen channels for everybody...

I.F.: You think that the specialization of the media is preventing information from being as widely disseminated as it was before?

John: And it used to be a law that you had to give equal time to opposing sides of an issue-like, if you gave Newt Gingrich thirty minutes, you would have to give his opposite, say Jesse Jackson, thirty minutes of time, but now that has all gone away. The theory now is that the more channels there are, the more they'll be competing to be the best they can be; but really they're competing not to be the best information channel, but to be the highest earning, the most popular.

I.F.: So you think that television channels, in their quest to earn more money, have destroyed the attention spans of Americans by showing them nothing but soundbytes... if that's the case, then should political activists make their points in soundbytes too, to not lose the attention of the public? How do you deal with how bored with politics people are today, with how disinterested in it they are?

John: The thing that helped me the most in becoming politically aware was my own experience. And the best thing I can think of to help people come to that is to encourage them to live their lives in a manner that is not sedate-in spending your time doing things that are going to get you experience, like going out and accomplishing a goal, and stuff like that, as opposed to sitting at home watching South Park [the latest moronic American TV show].

I.F.: So how do we bring firsthand experience into people's lives?

Brian: I don't know if there's one sure way to do that, but I think one key element that helps, is to remember how to have fun and remember how to interact with and relate to people who are different from you, so you can keep their interest.

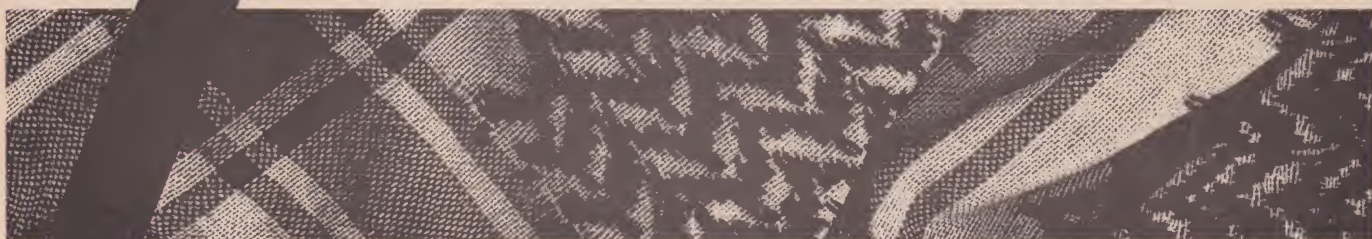
zegota live together at 2312 princess ann street, greensboro, nc 27408, the u.s.a.

get your money and buy your american dream, you'll find out it's not what it seems

Through language, we describe the world. Different languages are different ways of describing the world: different ways of constructing it. That's why Latin love poetry reads like military instructions, and French military instructions sound a little like love poetry (thus their poor showing in the second world war-sorry, guys!). The

more set in one way of describing things we are, the less free we are to see things from different perspectives, and the less free we are to imagine different ways of thinking and living. By learning and using different languages, we can liberate ourselves from patterns of restricted thinking, we can become more open-minded and more open-eyed.

In hardcore, there are very few bands who dare to sing in any language other than English. Most fear they will not be understood. There must be hundreds of bands from Europe and Asia that sing in English for this reason. But many of them have actually learned English through listening to hardcore. Couldn't other languages be learned from hardcore, then? It's absurd that what is supposed to be an internationally revolutionary movement is actually helping to spread the language and culture of the U.S.A., which already dominate the world. It seems to me that if each of these bands weren't afraid to reach out in their native tongue, and we all tried to learn from each other, hardcore could spread knowledge of more than one language, just as it offers more than one perspective. Rather than standardizing our language to English and our way of life to American capitalism, we should seek to preserve what is individual about ourselves as we communicate with others, and at the same time learn as much from them as we can.



I first came across Ire when we received their 7" for review last issue. After reviewing about forty almost indistinguishable records that day, I took theirs out of the review box and was amazed to discover that I was holding something in my hands that I had never before encountered: a trilingual 7". And as it turned out, the songs were all about important topics, and were written with creativity and played with passion.

I mailed Ire a letter, telling them how excited I was about their record, and Radwan eventually called me back. We talked for a little while and it turned out that he was a really nice, intelligent guy, with an interesting perspective on a lot of things. We agreed to arrange an interview for this issue of Inside Front. Unfortunately, a short time later I was forced to abandon the phone number and address I had given Radwan, at the end of a long struggle with the, uh, property holding class. Eventually, I found another place to live, and we got in touch again just in time for this interview to make it into this issue. Present for the interview were Patrick, Jeff, Eric (French lover and 6thiran) and Radwan. Keith and Alex were lost somewhere.

Inside Front: Why does Ire exist? What is it you are trying to accomplish, and how does the name "Ire" relate to this?

Jeff: I'm not using music as a medium to get across an agenda or message, but rather music is what I love and political and personal opinions are just some of the things that can be expressed by it.

Patrick: Music is definitely a big part of it, because if it wasn't for the music, the five of us wouldn't be together trying to express our ideas and views. And to me the music is my expression.

Radwan: To me, this band is the single part of my life that I feel responsible to. Everything we do in our everyday lives seems like it's part of someone else's plan or game. It's just something I can belong to and feel comfortable and creative, without restrictions and use it as a vice for me to express what I feel. We really underestimate the power music has. If it wasn't for that I don't know where I'd direct all my stronger emotions at. As for the name, it relates to a feeling that every person can relate to. I wouldn't say that we play a style of music that you'd associate to happy feelings, and I think the name to an extent reflects that.

I.F.: Incidentally, what are we going to do when there are no more

looked over because of a lack of "talent", a great opportunity to enjoy music and create it and get their message/feelings out to others. However, if your goal is to reach a certain audience you can be limited in the different styles you incorporate into your music (but the same could be said about jazz).

Eric: Firstly, it is difficult to identify a universal formula by which bands abide in the process of choosing a name. As an example, bands that form for the purpose of advancing a political cause will choose a name that specifically represents the political ideology or opinion that such bands seek to disseminate. In contrast, bands who exist for the sole purpose of providing entertainment will choose a name that avoids any association to a particular school of political thought or a name that represents the collective for its entertainment value. As for the pros and cons of the punk rock system, it can be somewhat intimidating for audiences to be subjected to the preachy amplified ramblings of punk rock bands in turn impairing the free exchange of ideas between audience and band, especially for "new scene members". It can be extremely disconcerting for a person attending her/his first punk rock show and be labeled a blood thirsty genocidal

music: how does Ire go about constructing songs? Why does it take you so long to write them? And how do you make sure that each one will be musically fresh, creative, and original?

Patrick: We just get together and write stuff, no real plans I guess: what comes out, comes out.

I.F.: Ire contains people from many different cultural backgrounds—please give a brief summary of where each member is coming from. How does this diversity affect your interactions as bandmates and the views that Ire expresses?

Radwan: Alex and Patrick both come from a French Quebecois background, Jeff is American (Boston) and has been living here for 3 years, Keith is from Brockville (Anglophone town), Ontario, and moved here 3 years ago, Eric was born in Quebec but moved to Toronto when he was 8 and is now back in Montreal, and I moved here from Oman 7 years ago. I think that this is not something unusual for the area where we live, where cultural diversity is a lot more accepted than in the parts of the U.S. that I've been in. Montreal has a very diverse ethnic and cultural demographic, therefore people are "forced" to interact with each other. I think this is probably the main reason that makes me like Montreal and living



words left to use as band names? What do you think the pros and cons are of the present system by which punk rock music is made—in which three to five people get together, give themselves an often arbitrary group name, and limit their music-making to this group—compared to other music making systems, such as the more free-form association of musicians in the jazz community?

Jeff: The punk scene offers so many people, who would otherwise be

capitalist for the act of drinking Pepsi or wearing Nike shoes. The advantage the punk rock scene poses is that the media and forms of communication other than music are deemed legitimate. If Joe Average punk rock scenester wishes to publish a zine or distribute a flyer to express his opinions or difference in opinion with a prominent scenester or band member, he can do so. To a large extent, the punk rock scene is an open forum!

I.F.: Speaking of ways of making

in it so much, I feel safe! I also think that cultural backgrounds do have a strong impact on how people view certain things but for us, our views are more or less along the same lines regardless of backgrounds. What you feel is what you feel, even if your approach to it differs.

I.F.: For example—there has been quite some controversy about whether French-speaking Canada and English-speaking Canada should split up. Ire has members from both backgrounds. What do

you think about this question?

Jeff: I am not a Canadian citizen and won't be voting if another referendum happens but living in Montreal you can get an interesting feel for both sides. The feeling of being a second-class citizen for Francophone Canadians and the economic ruin that could occur here if Quebec did separate. However, what seems to be heading the debate among people on both sides are emotions and animosity. When the last referendum occurred the streets were filled with chants and insults rather than discussions of the possibilities. I think everyone needs to rethink exactly what it is they are voting for, because nationalism (whether it's Canadian or Quebecois) is a dangerous thing.

Patrick: I think that the problem is that the whole debate is more politically driven rather than factually. The politicians let you hear what they want you to hear, and what backs up their views, but not the flipside of the coin.

Radwan: It's all bullshit. People have no idea what the fuck they are voting for. Politicians have done an amazing job at making Quebecers feel this insecurity about their heritage and how Anglophones are slowly taking over. The whole idea of separation is absurd, because it would create a massive economic

federal system. I just can't believe people can be so blind!

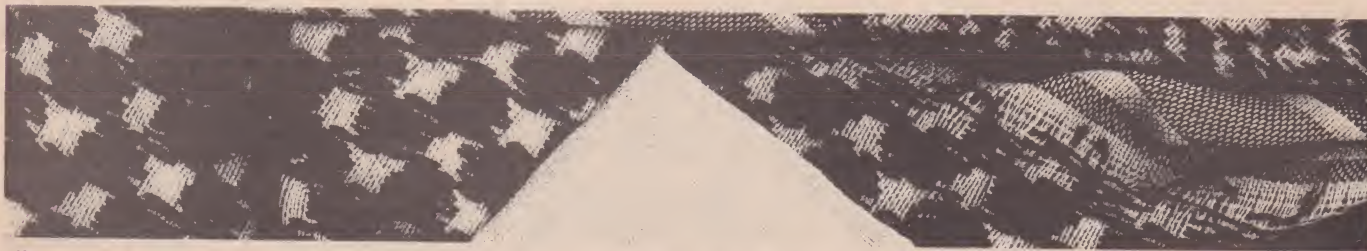
I.F.: Radwan, you come from a Lebanese background, from an immigrant family. Hardcore is largely white and middle class in most of the United States and Canada. How did you come to be involved in this community? How did you decide that it had potential as a place for you to be creative and address political and social issues?

Radwan: I got into punk rock like everyone else I guess, just by accident. I started a band with my friends in high school without any musical background or talent. You know, the same story you've heard a hundred times before. I guess I found a freedom to be a little more expressive, because I come from a very strict religious family. My parents tried their best to stop me from getting too involved with it but you know the whole rebellious teenager thing. I think that's what made me like it more and more. As for deciding whether it was a place for me or not, well, I don't really see it that way. The 3 guys I did the band with were my only friends. I wasn't allowed to go out and hang out on weekends because my parents were so paranoid. So finding a place to belong wasn't a concern because I was having a blast with my friends and didn't really care who didn't

Arab Canadian, or Indian Canadian, or Asian Canadian, you're just Canadian! It never was and I don't ever expect it to be an issue. People here are really tolerant. I don't really know what it's like in the U.S. because I never lived there.

I.F.: As a first generation immigrant to Canada from Lebanon and Oman, how is your relationship with your parents? Do you see the world differently than they do, having spent the final years of your youth in the West?

Radwan: To my parents, I'm an Americanized person who doesn't recognize his roots. That's natural because they don't know what I think or what I am. I always had a problem ever since I was little mainly because I had a hard time adapting to Islam. I try to take what's best from both worlds and use my own judgment. There are a lot of Arab cultural aspects that I hold on to dearly, but at the same time, there are Western cultural phenomena that I adopt, like hardcore and whatnot. I visited Lebanon last summer and I had a real hard time enjoying myself. People over there are much more intense, and don't take things for granted, like I've come to learn here in the West. I guess it's all perspective. I'm definitely not close to my parents because of our differences, but to a



disaster. And this isn't just random speculation, because Quebec has been in very unstable economic shape because of this ongoing debate, and companies are relocating to Ontario. It is next to impossible to sell your house here, because nobody wants to get rooted in an unstable economy. It took my father 3 years to sell his house at a big loss! And the politicians still insist that separation would create more jobs and give the economy a boost more than under the present

like it. I definitely think that it's a healthy scene on the whole because nobodys like us get to say something and people sometimes listen. That's the beauty of it and that's what attracts me to it.

I.F.: Have you felt completely at home in the hardcore community as a member of a cultural minority group?

Radwan: Like I said before, Montreal is just such a mixture of cultures, that people don't even see it any more. You're Canadian, not

certain extent, my parents and I share a lot of basic morals and principles. To me, my father is a great man, even though I can't be around him and not feel uncomfortable.

I.F.: The occupation of Palestine and the oppression of its citizens is one of the most glaring examples of the atrocities of Western imperialism in this century. Ire addresses this subject in the first song on the Schema records 7". Why has this issue attracted so little attention in the West, even in the hardcore commu-

nity? What do you think the solution to the conflict between the Palestinians and Israelis could be, if there could be one at all?

Radwan: Well, the reason why this issue has gotten very little attention in the West is because those who control the media sadly control our opinions. It's gotten to the situation where nothing you hear or read is unbiased journalism, and I don't mean just reporter opinion, I mean bureaucrats and old men playing god deciding what gets printed and published. No wonder alternative media is so scarce and expensive, comparatively. We all hold one opinion, even though we like to think otherwise. The simple fact is that it isn't in the US's interest to grant the public access to information that they don't want us to know. That's the beauty of living in a system where power is measured in currency, and those who have no power, have no say, as cliched as that sounds. Israel is an economic ally of the U.S., where the U.S. stands to make arms sales with, whereas Palestinians, because of their background, are a people with a very angry attitude towards the West. And the fact that they are a poor "nation" puts them in a weak situation. This goes not just for Palestine, but the West doesn't realize that there is a whole developing

and how unknowledgable we are. As for why is the hardcore scene not conscious of shit like this? Well, if it's not in HeartattaCk then it's not worth knowing. Nothing against HeartattaCk, they are a great zine, but I just mean that people just don't care. And to a certain extent, if something doesn't affect you directly, you're probably not going to be too passionate about it. Sorry.

I.F.: Explain the meaning of the song on the split 12" addressing abortion, and why it has been misunderstood.

Patrick: Hardcore has a very narrow mind when it comes to issues like this. Hardcore + Abortion = Pro Choice. No ifs, ands or buts. People don't generally even want to hear what others have to say, and that's what the song is about. And this is where people get confused. Abortion is the right of the mother. The problem is that we have all those "enraged" discussions about the fetus and its rights, but everyone seems to overlook the person whom this affects more than anyone, the mother. Abortion should be legal and accessible to everyone, it just makes sense. No matter how illegal it becomes, it's going to happen.

I.F.: What kind of "life" is it that the people who describe themselves as

people who think that life is just a question of eating, breathing, and excreting, and perhaps obeying the will of God. Is that "life" that they claim to be defending all that you think life is, or do you think it has some greater meaning and value that can't be defined merely biologically? Should we let these people define life itself for us with their slogans?]

I.F.: In reference to another song on your 12"-people often look down upon criminals, the homeless, and the poor. But one of the reasons they do this is because our hierarchical system teaches that your value is determined by how many people are below you on the social ladder. (This is probably why, for example, homophobia is so common in poor black communities in the U.S.A.) Given that so many people today believe that they are worthless if they are not considered superior to others, how do we go about building a less prejudiced, more open-minded society?

Radwan: Building an open minded society is just something that isn't going to happen, and you can't convince me otherwise. But I'm not just going to accept that, I do what I can and try to communicate what I think is right to me. That's all that it is. What a person views others as. The problem stems way too deep in



world with a lot of hatred for the West, because they have to starve, slave and die, so that we can get our Bic razors and Nike shoes conveniently. And I don't want to be around when they've just about had enough of us and come for their revenge. I know to most it's an unlikely situation, but fuck, is it ever around the corner. People are only willing to take so much shit. Sorry, I'm getting off topic but it all goes hand in hand, and we don't realize how fucked up the world is

"pro-life" are talking about? What do you think they mean by "life"?

Jeff: It's my understanding that the people who describe themselves as pro-life feel that "life" begins with conception, and any termination of a pregnancy after that point is taking away a life, but it's important to remember that someone could be pro-choice and still hold this view of "life". [Editor's note: Is "life" just a question of having a beating heart and functioning kidneys? The "pro-life" movement consists largely of

the evolution of things. I think that if we can teach our kids our morals and ethics (not force, TEACH!) things just might get a little better.

Patrick: We are convinced of what we know and what our ideals are because, to a certain extent, it touches us everyday, but the average person's life doesn't touch on this topic. And it won't as long as they don't get exposed to it. You know, a question like this, is being asked to people like us by a magazine like yours... of course it is only

going to be contained in our community.

I.F.: Speaking of contempt for criminals and prisoners, tell about what is going on in Canada right now with prison privatization and the exploitation of prison labor.

Radwan: Prison privatization is an American phenomenon that is trying to creep into Canada. In Ontario, there are talks of privatizing 3 to 5 prisons, as an experiment. I really don't know all that much about the issue factually because it's not public knowledge. YET! I guess this seems to work out just fine in the US. It's like one of the biggest growing sectors, and that is a very scary thing, to think that it is more beneficial to keep government sectors that are privately operated. That means more efficiency for the job, and a less hassle for the government, other than that they have to pick up the tab, which taxpayers end up paying. In essence, we are paying to put ourselves behind bars.

I.F.: You told me there will be a song on your new record about what happens to people when they become too old to be "productive machines" in the economy. What do you think the way we treat older people in our society (hiding them away in "rest homes," etc.) says about our society itself?

grams, but it still doesn't change the fact. Once you're too old, what the fuck are you supposed to do? I don't know, but know I don't want to be around when I'm 70 and all alone, in a rest home watching TV, rotting away.

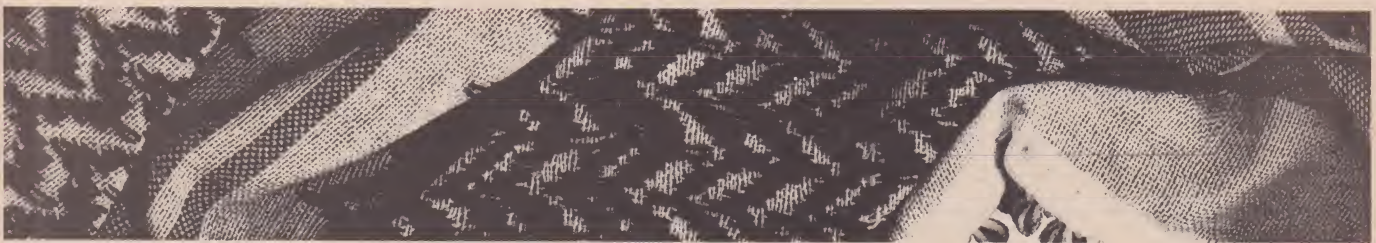
I.F.: And after old age comes death. We seem to hide death from view in our society even more than we hide old age-as if we want to deny our own mortality. Why do you think this is? What role do funerals play in our society these days, and what do you think might be a better role for them to play?

Radwan: Well, I don't think people really realize what death is and how it affects us directly. I'm 22, and I honestly don't know how I'd deal with death, if it happened to someone close. I don't see it happening anytime soon, but that's just how I deal with it, and that's bad. The problem I have with it is that people don't understand that death is a natural part of life, and letting go is so hard for them. A lot of people in Lebanon, and other Arab cultures dress only in black at funerals, and women dress in black for the rest of their lives. If I was to show up to a funeral in jeans, it would be considered a disrespect to the dead. Another point is the fact that Western Christians makeup the dead and try to make them look as

Radwan: That is what our system (and lives) is based upon. You get paid to work, and produce so you can go out and purchase what someone else got paid to produce, and hope they do the same so you keep getting paid. All of us live lives that revolve around consumerism and materialism. I don't think anyone can get around that, but you can deal with it better. I think that we all get attached to objects in our lives, but it is important to keep the fact that they are objects in perspective. My parents always tried to teach me to learn the value of money, and they failed. I can't save money because I don't understand its value, which explains why I'm so fuckin broke all the time. I can't just sit here and say all sorts of idealist statements about how we should rid ourselves of this, but I try my best not to think about money, as much as I can. Of course you have to at times, but it's nice sometimes to just say fuck it, and not feel chained to colored paper with numbers on it.

I.F.: Please list all the music, etc. Ire has released, and your future plans.

IRE: Split 12" with Seized on Spineless/Fetus Records; 7" on Schema Records; upcoming 12"/CD on Mountain Records (out early Summer); 1998 August tour with Cave In across the U.S.



Patrick: The question answers itself. This shows how we view people, as machines and not as people.

Radwan: I guess before it was people like to grow with their company, and I still think that people have this loyalty thing to their employers, especially if they have been working there for a while. It's sad that to the corporation, an employee ranks at the same level as a machine. I guess they try to fluff it up by offering all the fringe benefits and pension & insurance pro-

alive as possible before they bury them. I don't really know what people get out of that. I've never been to a funeral, and I really don't know how I'd deal with it.

I.F.: In your song "Dead Among the Dead" on the 7", you speak about the deadening effects of participating in the worker/consumer system. Is there a way out of this? What do the members of Ire do in their daily lives and lifestyles to try to free themselves from the chains of the capitalist economic system?

Contact:Ire
P.O. Box 902
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H2L 4V2

Most ads, even in our sacred hardcore scene, use a combination of false promises and exaggeration to convince you to buy one product over another. Whether it is scantily-clad women, a message of revolution, or even photographs of the big show, the implication is that there is an experience you will be a part of once you buy the product. Of course, we all know fully well that you won't get sex for buying a hardcore record, the capitalist system will not fall when you buy that punk album, and you're probably just as far from the huge sold out rock show in California as you ever were even after spending your fifteen dollars at the mall. Therefore, in an attempt to maintain some sense of integrity and perhaps to motivate you to look at things a little more closely to decide if they really are something that will make your life more worthwhile, we propose to present our advertisements more as announcements than as tools of coercion. Only you can decide what's best for you... so in that spirit, here is a little bit on what we are about and what we have available. I know that was a lot of words, you can turn your tv back on anytime you like.

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COMMUNITY WATCH REPORTS

"Scene Reports," like columns, show up in almost every hardcore magazine, almost as predictable as reviews and advertisements; it's unusual to come across a unique one. As a result, most of us are pretty damn bored with them. And yet, magazines keep printing them, without trying to push the limits of the format, without trying to exceed anyone's low expectations. We'd like to change that in *Inside Front*, if we can... because it should be interesting and important to all of us what our comrades are working on in faraway countries or nearby cities, but nobody is going to learn from dull, repetitive accounts.

We have a few ideas of what "scene reports" could evolve into that might be better. It's worth noting that the best scene reports we've seen so far have been the ones that tell the history of a certain hardcore community and try to convey an idea of its atmosphere. Often, scene reports from places like Greece and Slovenia are able to follow the evolution of hardcore punk in their nation from its beginnings, telling stories about their bands and the ways that hardcore punk worked within or against their cultural climate, in a way that proves really interesting. We should all learn from their example: when you're compiling a scene report, don't just list bands and information-tell interesting stories, recount tales of yesteryear, describe the kind of people who are involved in punk in your area and what it is that makes the whole thing exciting to you. If you don't tell about the things that are exciting to you, how is your report going to be exciting to us?

So experiment a little. Try talking about more than just bands-describe the hilarious guy you see at every show, describe the atmosphere of the dirty ghetto warehouse squat where the shows are held, tell about what punk kids in your area are doing to "fight the evil system" besides just forming bands and screening patches. Tell the myth of the punk rocker that was killed by the cops at a Bad Brains show in your town twelve years ago, and relate that to things that are happening today. Entertain us as you educate us.

I really don't want us to discontinue this section, because I want to keep up to date with Japanese hardcore at least as much as any of you do. But we're going to have to make some changes if we can keep printing "scene reports" with our consciences clean. If any of you think you can offer some new life to this section, please get in touch with us-we're dying for your help. Eventually we'd like to hire a travel correspondent on full salary, whom we would fly from one city to another, staying in each location long enough to provide a detailed story on its hardcore scene before moving on to the next.

Brooklyn

by Michael Scondotto

Since my last report in issue #9 of *Inside Front*, Brooklyn lost two of the five bands we have. In 1997, both Step Aside and Muddlehead called it a day. However, Step Aside drummer Pete has been in No Redeeming Social Value, and guitarist Joe has joined Inhuman. Muddlehead bassist Dion went on to join Shutdown. As you can see, we Brooklynites stick together. Here's some info on the "Big Three":

SHUTDOWN: Are now part of the Victory Records family! After 3 yrs+ of hard work, Shutdown unleash their debut CD on Victory in late March/April 1998. Not sure of the title. Their CD EP *Turning the Tide* is still available through Striving for Togetherness. Look for full tour in spring/summer 1998.

INDECISION: Spent two whole months in Europe in late 97 and come home to a full house, twice, at NYC's CBGB's. Indecision have added second guitarist Rachel to the fold. She also plays bass in noise-core outfit Milhouse. Guitarist Justin also plays 2nd guitar for Milhouse. The guys and gal have new songs on NY'S Hardest Vol. II, and a not so new split 7" with Sons of Abraham out now. There will be a new full length for Indecision in 98 on Wreckage Records.

INHUMAN: By the time you are reading this, a split 7" with Belgium's Out For Blood should be out on France's Inner Rage Records. Inhuman covers the Sheer Terror classic "Ashes, Ashes" on this one, with a new song called "Fearless" as well. The band's full-length debut CD, *Evolver*, is out on

NYC's Eyeball Records, and has gotten tons of good reviews. Look for an East Coast tour in the spring/summer of 1998, and possibly Europe in the summer.

I urge all to check out Brooklyn's only true hardcore bands. Thanks again to *Inside Front* for the support. Keep hardcore true and "in the streets where it belongs." R.I.P. Raybeez - Never Forgotten...

INDECISION: P.O. Box 09-581, Brooklyn, NY 11209 USA

INHUMAN: 2668 East 21st, Brooklyn, NY 11235 USA

SHUTDOWN: 2668 East 21st, Brooklyn, NY 11235 USA

EYEBALL RECORDS: P.O. Box 1653 Peter Stuyvesant Sta., New York, NY 10009 USA

WRECKAGE/EXIT RECORDS: P.O. Box 263, New York, NY 10012 USA

Pittsburgh, PA.

by Justin Straw

Although the Pittsburgh hardcore-punk "scene" has never been huge (as far as I can remember) and probably never will be, there are a handful of impressive bands who deserve as much recognition as they can get.

Of course, some of them may already be familiar to you, such as Anti-Flag and Aus Rotten. While I don't generally get off on the sort of predictable, anthemic, sing-along, simplistic, melodic hc-punk that A-F specialize in on their *Die For Your Government* CD (New Red Archive), their songs are simply too goddamn catchy, memorable and well-written

for me (and many others) to ignore. The band has done several tours (including a recent jaunt with the UK Subs) and the album has reportedly sold 6-7000 copies, so things are looking positive. (P.O. Box 71266, Pittsburgh, PA 15213-put A-F, NOT Anti-Flag) Anarchists Aus Rotten have also been successful on the touring and recording fronts, though what their future holds for them remains to be seen. Their music is of the heavy, crusty hardcore type not dissimilar to Discharge, but with a tad more variety and individuality than the countless numbers of "Dis" bands currently boring us (or at least me) to death. (P.O. Box 71287, Pittsburgh, PA 15213) Past and present members of both Anti-Flag and Aus Rotten participate in Human Investment, who infuse a somewhat more melodic and intricate indie rock influence into traditional anarcho(?) hc/punk. I believe they've been together for less than a year and they've already put their first full-length out! (no address, just write to Aus Rotten c/o Dave) Based on their 7" on Self-Serv (sic) Records, Pressgang offer emotional (though socio-political), melodic, screamy hardcore, but their new material (which I've mostly only heard live) seems a little heavier and more complex, while incorporating some wailing and spoken female vocal parts. Sounds pretty strong. (Self-Serv, P.O. Box 71466, Pittsburgh, PA 15213) Creation Is Crucifixion (formerly Chapter) are definitely the most extreme and metallic "hardcore" outfit from Pittsburgh/Greensburg, as they churn out 'evil,' discordant, technical, offbeat, violent death-thrash metal. They have a few different 7's available. (138 Walton Tea Room Rd., Greensburg, PA 15601) Shale play crazed, 'progressive' "tight noise," which is remindful of a more complex, more instrumental-oriented Deadguy or Today Is The Day. They've been doing that style for quite a while, though, and are probably actually influenced more by metallic indie/prog-punks Don Caballero and Breadwinner than the aforementioned bands, so don't assume they're part of the current "crazecore" trend. (Peas Kor Rec., P.O. Box 8116, Pittsburgh, PA 15217) Not infinitely far removed from Shale but much more tuneful and controlled is Jumbo, whose excellent musicianship and clever songwriting is above almost everyone around, be it Pittsburgh or elsewhere. Only for the open-minded. (see Peas Kor address) Pittsburgh also has a few (tough guy?) "hardcore" bands like Endless, Gutwrench and Built Upon Frustration. I don't know enough about these groups to offer much praise or criticism, but I will say that they tend to only play with metal or NYHC/old style sort bands rather than participating in the overall true punk/hc scene. (Endless, 347 Grove St., McKees Rock, PA 15136; Gutwrench, 1814 Penn Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15222; Built Upon Frustration, Box 191, Everson, PA 19631)

Which brings me to zines, the most prominent of which unfortunately being Eric from Endless' Da' Core. I say unfortunately because the zine doesn't shift too far in scope from popular hardcore and metal and always features multiple phone sex ads!?! In spite of this, it is free, and is a good place to send your music for review (if your music falls within their realm), as it seems to be well-distributed along much of the East Coast. (see Endless address)

As far as booking shows here, your best bet would be to get in contact with the bands listed above, or if you're more on the punk than metal side of hardcore (although he did do the last Neurosis show), possibly Manny Theiner (412-422-8864). Manny also does Pop Bus Records and distro (5883 Darlington Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15217) while the rest of us just sit on our asses. Actually, I do a newsletter/mini-zine, but I think I'm going to end it

soon, but if you'd like to write me for some reason, my address is Progression/Aggression, c/o Justin Straw, Pittsburgh, PA 15228.

Switzerland

by Renaud

Hi! My name is Renaud and I'm from Geneva, the French speaking part of Switzerland (CH). As you may know, Switzerland is a small country in the middle of Europe. It's a country with four official languages, German, French, Italian and Romanch. Well, let's stop about geography and let's start with what you are expecting from this report, the hXc/Punk movement in CH.

First of all you have to know that the scene here is growing every day. I'll also speak about what's up in each part. In this scene report I'll only speak about the people with whom I have gotten in touch and about what/who those people told me. For sure, there are plenty of other people who are involved in the scene, but I don't know them.

The German speaking part is the biggest scene in CH. It has existed for a long time now. The first name that comes to my mind is Prawda (scholastikastr. 24, 9400 Rorschach, Switzerland). Peter, the guy who runs Prawda, started Prawda zine in 1987, then it also became a mail order, and since 1996 it's been a label, too. It released a 7" V/A with four Swiss bands. The second record is a CD/LP from the band Cwill (see Prawda address), one of the best bands around. They play a new school hXc with old school influences. Now Peter has opened up a shop in Zurich. Another band, which was very cool, is called Mine, but the band split up and a new band called Damage ID (Simon Fullemann, Trichtenhausenstr. 47, 8053 Zurich, Switzerland) was born from the ashes. This band plays very great music influenced by bands such as Breakdown or Killing Time with a new school groove; they have a demo tape available and a split 7" with German band Elision on Fat for Life Rec. Pray Silent (Attila Varga, Gen-Guisanstr. 34, 6300 Zug, Switzerland) is one of the most promising bands; they play a powerful newschool hXc. Their first release is a 7" on the Belgian label Genet Rec. Check them out, you won't be disappointed. George (Kupferweg 6, 6430 Schwytz, Switzerland) is one of my favorite bands. They play a cross between hXc/crust with some Deadguy influence, and their demo is available. Curb Dogs (José Venegas, Nordstr. 227, 8037 Zurich, Switzerland) is a band from Zurich. They play NYHC-style music, and they have a demo, too. And the last band I know is Crooked Cops (anarcho/punk) (Mike Kessler, Burghalde 8, 6110 Wolhuen, Switzerland). They recorded a 7" which is pretty good, and a political booklet is sold with the vinyl.

About the fanzines. XSober PrideX (Ricki, Hauptstrasse 14, 9556 Affeltrangen, Switzerland) is an English-language zine, and as the name says, it's a zine about sXe stuff (but not only), and the second issue should be available when you are reading this. My Little Sister (see Pray Silent address) and Concrete (Ray Schorer, Weidenweg 4N, 3608 Thun, Switzerland) are two German-language fanzines. There are also two punk publications, The Meaning of Resistance (29 Ch. des Champs, 2504 Bienne, Switzerland) and Blocher Youth (Christian Liechti, Sienthal, 3434 Landiswil, Switzerland), and also a newsletter called Fear No Love (P.O. Box 9351, 8036 Zurich, Switzerland or email patxdt@bigfoot.com), which is pretty funny. Besides Prawda, there is another small mail order called Kleinod-Vertreib (Bachwiesstr. 12, 9400 Rorschach, Switzerland). Fat for Life (address above) is a brand new label that already has three releases: a Damage ID/Elision split 7", Elision 10"/CD, Voice of Regret (MCD). Drive to Play (see Fear No Love address) is a booking agency, which booked tours for Morning Again and Catharsis, to name a couple. A shop opened up a few months ago, it's called Analph (Strassburgstr. 10 in Zurich).

About the Italian speaking part now. It used to be bigger than it is now; I only know two band from there, maybe there are others... The first one is Open Close My Eyes (Chris Paracchini, Via della Salina 3, 6600 Muralto, Switzerland), which has a song on the V/A 7" on Prawda, and a 7" on Division Rec. The second band is Reference 21 (Fabio Colombo, Via alla Chiesa, 6807 Taverne, Switzerland), who have a demo tape available. Word of Coalesce (see Open Close My Eyes address) is the only zine out there; it's English-language and the second issue is available.

To end this report, I'd like to tell you about what's going on in

the part where I live. Division Rec. (P.O. Box 208, 1400 Yverdon, Switzerland) is a label that has already released music from Faction Zero (USA), Out For Blood (B), Schizma (Pol), Open Close My Eyes, Prejudice, and Unfold. Well, speaking about where I live now, Geneva. Prejudice (75 rue de lausanne, 1202 Geneva, Switzerland) is the only hXc band here, but new bands are coming out, although nothing serious to speak about at the moment. Fans of metal, you have more choice, Nostromo (brutal metal), Knut (psychotic metal) and Fragment (technical metal). All these bands have put out a CD on Snuff Records (P.O. Box 5117, 1211 Geneva 11, Switzerland). You can get in touch with the bands through the label's address. Another band which will kick you is called Body Bag (Snuff Records address), brutal ska-core; a 10" will be out soon on Snuff Rec., too. Le Dépôt 83 (P.O. Box 1982, 1211 Geneva 1, Switzerland) is a shop near the train station where you can find spray cans, body-piercing jewelry, clothes, music, fanzines, and all at very low prices. Well to end it, there are also a couple of zines. Haro (5 rue B. Menn, 1205 Geneva, Switzerland) is one of the best (in my opinion) French writing zines. The #6 will be out in a few months. Transit (51A rte du Bois-des-Frères, 1219 Geneva, Switzerland) is a free fanzine and contains a lot of interviews of all kinds of bands and to finish, Holy Noise French-language zine (c/o Le Dépôt 83, address above or email rmeyer@students.est.vsnets.ch) is a new zine: the second issue is out.

Thanks a lot for reading all this. My English is not the best, but I hope you have understood everything, and that it makes you want to try to know more about this scene. If you have questions do not hesitate to get in touch. I will be glad to answer your questions. Bye. Positively Renaud.

Japan

by Yoshinori

What's up?! Yoshinori here from Out Ta Bomb Distro/Fanzine, Natsuo and Suguru here from Numb! The scene in Tokyo is really great! We have lotsa bands and shows every week. Here's what's goin on in Tokyo.

TOKYO

E.S.I.P. (Oyakata 3-2-20-103 Jindaiji Mitakaku Tokyo) I don't like to compete for who's better than who, but they're probably the best hardcore band around here, musically and lyrically for me. They play straight-forward hardcore with a touch of Jap-core influences. Sounds like Agnostic Front. They have been around since 1989 and got 4 demos out so far and a 3-way split 7" with Comin Correct from USA and Stormcore from France out now on Back Ta Basics Records. I'm glad they're gonna be known by the people in other countries. Thanks to Rick! Unfortunately, they have broken up and the singer started a new band called No One Rules. You can check them out on Nothing But A Hardway compilation CD. NUMB (Natsuo Kawase 2-27-4-302 Nakai Shinjukuku Tokyo) They play heavy, brutal and aggressive hardcore with lots of breakdowns. Sounds not unlike 25 Ta Life or Sub Zero. They've got an MCD called Roar 365 out on Slam Records and a split 7" with T.J. Maxx out now on Radical East Records. They are also appearing on Hardcore Ball 2 comp CD and Nothing But A Hardway CD. Keep your eyes and ears open for these mutha fuckas! They make your lousy ass off! They are talking to Time Served Records for their next release now. State Craft (Hiroyuki Kohama 2-45-21 Izumi Suginamiku Tokyo) play heavy and mean metal. They got

a MCD called Never Forget, a split 7" with Standing Point out on Slam Records, and a MCD coming out on XLife SentenceX Records from USA. It's awesome, get it when it's out.

Protect (c/o Kohki Shinohara 2-17-2-521 Shinsayama Sayamashi Saitama 350-13) play fast, energetic, powerful and youthful old school styled hardcore. Youth of Today meets Shutdown and they still carry on the spirit. They got a demo out and a 1st full length CD coming out soon on Straight Up Records. Switch Style (You X Suck 2-10-28 Kamagaya Kamagayashi Chiba 273-01) are a big band and probably best known Japanese band in other countries. They play intense emotional hardcore like Strife or Refused. They got a 7" out on HG Fact and a MCD out on Win Records. Offside Trap (Sinsaku 2-12-3-205 Kamiishiki Edogawa-ku 133 Tokyo) play fast, raw, aggressive and brutal hardcore with lotsa mosh parts, like Madball, Sheer Terror, Killing Time, or Confront. Stinger (Kazuo Hariya 5-9-3 Adachiku Tokyo 121) features ex-members of ESIP, Divided We Fall and Offside Trap. They got some demos and a 7" out on Handa and Company (Hideki Handa 3-71-8-102 Ikebukuro Toshima-ku Tokyo 171). They've got a very original sound. Divided We Fall from Tokyo have a 7" out on Tribal War Records and a split 7" with 25 Ta Life out on Radical East records. They have broken up. Up Hold from Tokyo play new school styled hardcore cross Strife and Earth Crisis. They've got a 7" Answer and a CD Water out on Slam Records.

There are lots of up and coming newer bands in Tokyo. Down 4 Life (Tatsuya Masaki 6-10-10 Funabashi Setagaya-ku Tokyo 156) Features member of Numb for drummer. They've got a demo out. Metal core! Hybrid (Nakamura 2-28-12-202 Nakai Shinjuku-ku Tokyo 161) Play NYHC like Madball, Sick Of It All. They've got a demo. Release Field (Tatsuo Hitomi 163 Iwasaki Kuroiso-City Tochigi 325-01) Got two demos out. Rebirth (Issay Hada 6-49-7-106 Tokumaru Itabashi-ku Tokyo 175) They are from the ashes of Strong Bones who have two demos out. They play brutal metallic hardcore with strong death metal influences. New demo out by now.

Eternal Brotherhood (Kenichi Karasawa 1-3-21-202 Sakurajyosui Setagaya-ku Tokyo 156-0045) They play fast and aggressive hardcore with lots of breakdowns. Sounds like Madball. New demo out now.

Zone Zero (Masatoshi Saitou 7-25-15 Azuma-cho Iruma-City Saitama 358) They play brutal metalcore cross between All Out War and 25 Ta Life. Birthplace (Kaoru Fujii 1-30-15 Shimorenjyaku Mitaka-City Tokyo 181) They are influenced by State Craft. They've got a demo out. It's really great! Check it out! At One Stroke (Jun Suwa 8-1-208 Yahata-cho Hachioji-City Tokyo) They play heavy as hell hardcore. Reminds me of Hatebreed. They've got a four song demo out! Down Fall (Takahiro Kawata 2-1-4-202 Higashinakanobu Shinagawa-ku Tokyo) They are influenced by Sub Zero and Madball.

Clinch (Kentarou Kaneko 1-1-21-101 Honcho Meguro-ku Tokyo 152-0002) are old school hardcore, and have two demos out. Garpiki (Sakio 2-34-5-102 Kohenjika Suginami-ku Tokyo) are representing the old school spirit. One of them is SXE. Sounds like Floorpunch.

Enlink (Yuji Yokoyama 156-3 Nitta Ooyamato Yachiyo-city Chiba 276) are metallic emotional hardcore. Suns Owl (XXX Records 3-3-8-B1 Takatanobaba Shinjuku-ku Tokyo 169) play very mean metal like Sepultura and Machinehead. They have a split 7" and a 7" out now and a full-length CD out soon! Bench Warmer (3-20-14 Sekihara Adachi-ku Tokyo) have a very melodic sound. They will have their 1st CD out on Start Today Records, which is run by YouXSuck of Switch Style.

There are tons of bands in Tokyo but it's hard to follow all of them. If we forgot anyone, sorry-it doesn't mean we don't like you.

NAGOYA

Wits End (Tsuzuki 205 Sansala-A 5-15 Honen-cho Chikusa-ku Nagoya Aichi 464) They are from the ashes of Take Tha Lead. They are one of the great Nagoya hardcore bands. They play raw, brutal, and heavy hardcore. Check out their powerful live performance. Sounds like Darkside NYC. They've got a 7" out on Radical East. It's out of press. They are also on the Nothing But A Hardway comp. Fragment (Hideyuki Kamata 7-403 Mizukusa-Danchi 2-20-2 Mizukusa-cho Kita-ku Nagoya-City Aichi) play fast, emotional and intense hard-

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core. If you like Integrity, Structure or Eolution stuff, it's for you. Inner Unit (Atsushi Hashimoto 5-8 Nakata-cho Atsuta-ku Nagoya-City Aichi 456) play emotional metallic hardcore with some singing vocals. They've got a demo, and are also on Nothing But A Hardway. Not A Thing (Kanta Kinoshita 1-25-8-304 Haruoka Chikusa-ku Nagoya-City 464) play energetic postive youthful old school styled hardcore. Sounds like Side By Side and Wide Awake. They are the only straight edge band in Japan (in my opinion). They've got two demos out and also appeared on Nothing But A Hardway. Maniac High Sense (Ippay Matsui 3-51 Yahata-cho Okazaki-City Aichi 444) from Okazaki play fast, youthful early 80s hardcore. They are a well-known band in Nagoya. They have a 7" on Answer Records and are on Nothing But... Device Change (Motoki Morita 5-36 Hanyugaoka Kani-City Gifu 509-02) play evil as fuck deathcore! They have a demo and a split 7" with One Last Sin from NY out now on Answer Records and another split with Comin Correct out soon on Answer. They are great! Check em out! Swing Arm (Kohta Sasano 3-17-1 Nakaiwata Toyohashi-City Aichi 440) from Toyohashi play metallic, fast, youthful hardcore with a lot of Strife influences. Their local scene is very nice. They are on Nothing But A Hardway. There are some more bands in Nagoya. Elemental, SDS, Dive, Knockout Puncher, Stab 4 Reason, Tomorrow, Power Dive, Out of Touch, Result, Nice View, Without Limit, etc.

SENDAI

Strength play heavy brutal metalcore with negative lyrics. They are influenced by metal and hardcore. They have a demo and a split 7" with Comin Correct and No Compromise out now on Back Ta Basics. They are also on Hardcore Ball 2 and Nothing But A Hardway. Sounds like Merauder and Aftershock. Half Life (Inazuma 106-53-7-3 Miyachi Aoba-ku Sendai-City Miyagi 980) play emotional metallic hardcore. They have many releases so far. They have just put a CD Down Right out on HG Fact and are also on Hardcore Ball 2 and Nothing But a Hardway. There are some more bands in Sendai: Spike Shoes, Ability, Consumed, But-Scream, etc.

SAPPORO

Slang (Straight Up Recs-Kowa Bld2F Minami-2 Nishi-1 Chuou-ku Sapporo-City 060) play very fast and typical Japanese style band with Japanese lyrics. They have been around for 10 years! They are very active guys in the scene. They run Straight Up records, Club Counter Action and record shop. Straight Up Records has put out Face of Change CD (fast, strong, and youthful hardcore like YOT, 7 Seconds, and Uniform Choice. German pressing is done by Lost and Found) and Nex Style MCD (one of the great emotional hardcore bands), Hardcore Ball 2 compilation CD, Protect CD coming out soon, and lots of other great stuff!! If you are interested in their stuff, get in touch with them!

OTHERS

Up Set Behind (Yoshiaki Yonezawa 2-8 Akezonomachi Takaoka-City Toyama 933) from Toyama play old school hardcore like Madball and SOIA and have a demo out. Earth Quake (Yamaguchi B-101 3655-2 Tsuruta-cho Utsunomiya-City Tochigi) from Utsunomiya, Tochigi play fast metalcore and have a 7". Their 1st full length CD will

be out soon on SIH Records. I run Out Ta Bomb distribution and fanzine. Just send us US\$1 or IRC for our recent mailorder catalog. (Yoshinori Oe c/o Out Ta Bomb 1236-20 Shimotomi Tokorozawa Saitama 359 JAPAN)

Hi. I'm Gun from T.J. Maxx. I'll report on the western Japanese hardcore scene as much as I know. My town is Osaka (it's the second largest city in Japan) and there is a rather large hardcore scene here, but it is very divided into smaller ones. This time I'm only reporting the bands strongly influenced by the East Coast U.S. hardcore bands.

OSAKA

T.J.Maxx (Kohhei Gun Iwata 7-10-10 Habikigaoka Habikino-City Osaka 583) This is my band. It was formed in 1994. Strongly influenced by late 80s NY hardcore bands like Breakdown, Killing Time, Sheer Terror, Cro-Mags, Agnostic Front, etc. Our sound is old metallic hardcore, but it also includes the various NY hardcore types like the bands mentioned. Some songs are very heavy, and the others are a bit Oi tuned recently. Second to None (Hiroyoshi Shoji 104 Doi Yawata Yawata-City Kyoto 614) Consisted of fucking heavy and slow guitar riffs along with satanic gruff vocals (ha ha ha). The mosh part of their son is very slow and nice to dance to. Sounds like All Out War, Next Step Up and Hatebreed. Dug Revenge (Keiichi Kabeta 3-39 Ogura-Cho Hirakata-City Osaka 573) At first their sound was kind of alternative, such as bands like Prong, but now their sound is changing more to a brutal hardcore. Sounds like Merauder, Dmize, etc. Reason of Hate (Hiroki Inoue 6-36-401 Asahigaoka Toyonaka-City Osaka 560) At the beginning, their sound was Integrity type-heavy, hate, brutal, angry-but since some members changed, their sound is now against these negative words (message) I guess. They changed to a more melodic, emotional type band. I don't know much about these type hardcore bands, but I think they are greatly influenced by Ebullition bands such as Born Against.

KOBE

John Holmez (Kohsei Hashimoto 4-3-205 Matsukaze-cho Suma-ku Kobe-City Hyogo 654) This is one of the oldest bands playing this type of sound. They are highly skilled, so they might sound more like thrash metal with a bit of hip-hop flavor. About their songs, recently the vocalist sang a "song" and so it sometimes reminds me of V.O.D. This is a very good band. Dying Race (Tomoki Nishimura 3-3-11 Koutoucho Nagata-ku Kobe-City Hyogo 653) They were formerly Age Limit 20. The vocalist changed, so the band changed their name. I only know one of their songs, but it's very nicely done and fucking brutal like Hatebreed, Fury of V. Age Limit 20 was also known as a brutal band, but Dying Race will probably become a more brutal band.

HIMEJI

Meaning of Life (Takashige Okada 2-120 Shimizu Shikama-ku Himeji-City Hyogo 672) They are the only hardcore band having a taste of the late 80s NY and NJ SXE bands' sound. Their sound is very emotional, and sounds like Vision, Up Front. In Japan, it's very hard to find this type of band. Very cool.

One final lost little classified ad:

TWO-FACE SETS THE PACE! Get in touch and send \$1/ 1.10 DM for mailorder list. Write to: André Hoppe, Donnersbergstege 69, 46569 Hünxe, Germany. Nerds: TWFACE@aol.com These classifieds are free in Inside Front, you know... why are none of you taking advantage of that?

cd compilation: Inside Front #11

1. "STUPID ME" -BOTCH
2. "BOIA NAZISTA" -SOCIETY OF JESUS
3. "ATFAL AL-HEJARA" -IRE
4. "I BELIEVE" -EARTHMOVER
5. "MONEY" -EARTHMOVER
6. "NOTHING BUT REGRET" -LOCKJAW
7. " " -ZEGOTA
8. "MOURNING...." -HEADWAY
9. "ELEVEN YEARS OF VIRGINITY" -STICKFIGURECAROUSEL
10. "YEAR BY YEAR" -OPPOSITE FORCE
11. "NEVER AGAIN" -KRITICKÁ SITUACE
12. "THE DARKEST HOUR" -AMEBIX
13. "CHAIN REACTION" -AMEBIX



Although each of the first nine bands on this compilation arrived here from a different route, they all have a few things in common: they're all bands from the grass roots of the D.I.Y. hardcore scene, they're all bands that give a fuck about something, and each is, in its own way, an innovator. We're proud to be able to associate ourselves with bands like these, because they are the life's blood of hardcore music today. It's also exciting for us how much territory these nine bands cover: they hail from places as distant from each other as Rome and Seattle, Canada and North Carolina. We urge you to communicate with them-you can reach them through the Inside Front address, if no other way.

The final three tracks were recorded long before the other songs on this CD, by bands that have since broken up. We've included these here to introduce Inside Front readers to two older bands they may not have heard of before, bands that have meant quite a lot to us. It also gives us the opportunity to look back upon some of their records and discuss what it was that made them so important. Anyway, enjoy the music!



it's just another selfish game, but i won't participate in this way of conquest, rite of passage. strive for stature, exploit the passive, point-rank system, joint-rape project. count me out i'm not submitting. your score proves nothing to me not your masculinity

stupid me **BOTCH**

I haven't been around long enough to label myself "old school," but i've seen enough bands, heard enough speeches, read enough zines, and read enough lyrics to identify the standard "hardcore issues." Veganism is good, big business is bad, fuck the government, organized religion is evil, blah blah blah. i've heard those words before and i've heard them stated more articulately and eloquently. i hate the cynicism and the increasing disgust i feel towards what is typically referred to as "hardcore politics," yet i can't buy into bullshit. how much of it is the simple regurgitation of the ideas espoused by intelligent bands like Crass, Dead Kennedys, and Downcast, and how much of it involves real independent thinking? Sadly, a great portion of it falls under the former. it took me two years just to find someone who could explain to me why all the DIY kids had such a bug up their asses about Dutch East. So many slogans. So many empty beliefs adopted simply to be harder-core-than-thou. i also recall asking a handful of sxe kids why cigar smoking isn't straight edge, and the responses always ended up being along the lines of "that's just the way it is" or "just look at the lyrics to 'out of step.' it says don't smoke." yeah, it also says "don't fuck" and i know a lot of sxe kids that break that rule. more importantly, that song says "at least i can fucking think," but all too often it appears that that little line is ignored too. and before any sxe kids start getting all pissy about my criticisms, i must state that i consider myself straight edge. but my concept of sxe is based on a principle, not on a bunch of rules made up by some guy in some band. think, goddammit, think. anyway, despite all these gripes i have concerning issues within our community, i also realize that as human beings we all share common experiences. and these experiences often manifest themselves in hardcore lyrics that sometimes seem a bit cliché. but if it's honest, then that's all that matters. if it comes from the heart and not from your record collection, then it's fucking awesome. the broken friendship, the lies we've been told, the alienation we feel; these are things we can all identify with. and often times the subject matter is much more specific and much more politically or socially significant. songs about sexism and rape are a good example. this topic can fall into the same trap of recycled formulas, but it tends to have more thought and emotion involved in its creative process. why? because it's something that touches all of our lives at some point. a lot of bands write about political issues that they really don't know jack shit about. but you don't need to have degree in sociology or political science to understand the impact sexism has on our society. even as a male, i've felt the weight of this problem. hearing the stories of my female friends who are victims of sexual assault, or my male friends that suffer from repressed memories... god, where do i begin? or the talk i had with someone i'd known for several years regarding accusations of date rape against them. the emotions involved in these encounters can never be fully articulated through words or music. but they should never be cheapened through vacuous repetition of catch phrases and slogans. "stupid me" deals with the topic of sexism and it is based on a very specific incident from my high school years. it's honest and from the heart. and that's all i can say about it.

recorded by jake snider

correspondence: botchrock@hotmail.com or suite #364 2522 N. Proctor; Tacoma, WA 98406

Society of Jesus

NAZI ASSASSIN

The only good nazi is a dead one,
the only good fascist is a dead one.
For everything they did,
for everything they will do,
for every single thing theorized
by their dickheads.
Assassin, assassin...
Every fascist is an assassin,
every nazi is an...

BOIA NAZISTA

L'unico nazista buono è quello morto
L'unico fascista buono è quello morto
L'unico nazista buono è quello morto
L'unico fascista buono è quello morto
Per quello che hanno fatto,
per ciò che faranno
Per ciò che teorizzano
le loro teste di cazzo
(sono) Bola, bola tutti i fascisti
(sono) Bola, bola tutti i nazisti.

... ABOUT MIRACLES

You're waiting that from above, from something you support and agree with, something comes to you. Something you didn't want to fight for, preferring to delegate someone else. A miracle: a worldly or a superior entity is what you're waiting for. It's not difficult to understand why you prefer waiting than fighting: fighting is expansive in terms of engagement, thinking and sometimes even personal freedom. That's why it's easier to wait and just say "You can't change the way things are!" Is it possible to think, for example, that the fascist dictatorship would have been defeated without the partisans' action, only by a divine will? We dare to dissent. Somebody preferred to risk his own life and personal freedom to make his dreams come true. It's a matter of choices. Wilful choices. It's not enough to complain, you mustn't be an accomplice. Create dissens in your mind. "Ever since the alienated man waits in vain his liberation from a providential messiah as well as imaginary. The moral of the slaves, moulded by their masters, beats every revolt done in the name of God. The most efficient weapon of the tyranny is of psyhological kind." (Albert Joel)

DIY MUSIC AND GRAFIX BY SOCIETY OF JESUS

SOJ are: Ringo-vocals/Melo-bass/Matteo+Gallo-guitars/Adri-drums.
This song also appears on "...dei miracoli" 7"EP on SOA recs.
Contact us: Matteo Verri, C.P. 6, 41100 Modena succ. 7, Italy
Massimo Meloni, C.P. 8, 41100 Modena succ. 7, Italy



RECORD REVIEWS

record is so derivative that I'm afraid that soon there will be generic "Firestorm"-revival bands the same way there are terrible "spirit of '88" revival bands today. I'm sure that Absence is smarter and more D.I.Y. in focus than their forerunners Earth Crisis (how could they possibly not be?), but I wish they would establish an identity of their own. Also, the writing about "Innocent Life" and "paying for your sins" in the liner notes smacks of the kind of superstitious Christian morality that I thought we had all left behind, especially in hardcore. I'm sorry, I'd like to say nicer things about this band, since they are from Italy, but I have to be honest about the way I feel. —b
Cycle, address below

ACREDINE "10": The absence of a lyric sheet or insert of any kind makes

it hard for me to know how to approach this record. The music is fast, simple, straightforward punk music, punk as in grittier, older Bad Religion, perhaps, not as in Discharge. Not that they sound at all like Bad Religion, but they come from that side of the punk family tree: straightforward fast music, singing vocals, simple approach. There's definitely nothing apocalyptic, filthy, or violent here. The singer's voice is unaffected, which is good, but it's a little nasally, and his melodic singing doesn't ultimately do much for me. It's not catchy, either, which is what this kind of music needs to work, in my opinion. At least the music is fast and has a little energy. I think the lyrics are in Italian, so I really can't tell what they're talking about here. So, that's it. 10" records are kind of cool, I'll give them credit for that. —b

Vacation House, Via San Michele 56, 13069 Vigliano B.S.E (BI) Italy

ALL ELSE FAILED "A Most Bitter Season"

CD: Dynamic, tense, fast hardcore, with guitars that alternate chunky parts with discordant open strumming. This kind of music usually works better with a heavier, more polished recording than this has, but it's certainly good enough, and I appreciate that they went to the trouble of making the bass sound so gritty and distorted on the fourth song (that is a bass, isn't it?). It's just the guitars that need more weight and force. The two vocalists both alternate screaming and talking, and they do their work fine when they sing separately, but when they scream together they occasionally create an indistinguishable mess. The fifth song begins with an acoustic part, and they do some singing together; they carry it off better than I expected them to, for the most part. The general atmosphere is one of ugliness, self-hatred, angst, all-encompassing disgust, as reflected in the lyrics (about suicide, for example) and packaging (gut-wrenching paintings that tell the same story). The climax of the CD comes after almost ten minutes of broken guitar noise near the end: an apparently improvised, distorted, agonized, interminable ode to desperate loneliness and despair. There's some heart here. Let's hope they stick it out long enough to make a record that will really kick us in the teeth. —b

Tied Down, see address below

ANOTHER PROBLEM "12": The guy from this band gave me this record to review in Germany, but it turned out it didn't have any lyrics, so the next day I shopped a lyric sheet out of a copy I found in a record store. That just goes to show there are no limits to the lengths we will go to give a useful review in Inside Front. By the way, if the poor soul who bought the record I stole the

lyrics out of is reading this, write me and I'll send you the lyric sheet back—sorry! The music here is fast and straightforward hardcore, very old-fashioned, complete with deep yelling vocals. I imagine when these guys think of hardcore they think of old Sick Of It All, Confront, old Slapshot, earlier Judge, Raw Deal, Outburst, the faster mid- to late-'80's NYC hardcore bands. They don't really have the immediate energy of most of those bands I just listed, although they don't exactly sound bored, either. The songwriting is fairly tight, and the performance is decent, although it takes a fucking excellent performance to make this kind of music interesting, let alone fresh, these days. And what about the lyrics, since I went to such trouble to obtain them? Well, most of them are pretty predictable, too: "I live my life just the way I like, listening to

noone, for me that's all right" "won't hear your excuses, won't believe your words—it makes me sick!" ...but occasionally their shaky grasp of the English language results in some unusual combinations of words: "not again, don't suck up to me, my ass is closed to people like you!" —b

Acrid Production, Oppenhoffallee 53, D 52066 Aachen, Germany

BALLROOM "The Race With the Devil" CD:

Melodic, melodramatic rock and roll/indie rock stuff. The vocalist has a sort of whiny singing voice, and the first line he sings is "swimming in a sea of emotions." I'd say a lot of the melodrama comes from him, although the music itself isn't far behind, with major key rock chords and super-clear rock and roll production. The layout is fancy—it features gold ink, photos of fancy antique cars, and quite a few pictures of the band members dressed up in really fancy clothes. I don't mean to be a jerk, I think that it's important to explore the emotional themes this band seems to be reaching for with their lyrics and music (that is, angst, romantic turmoil, etc.), but these guys will have to work harder to blast through the artifice and predictability of this genre and actually move me. The only moment they strike a chord in me is when the singer admits: "I am so afraid to miss my life, I am so afraid not to really be in love..." —b

Pateline, Vogelsbergstrasse, 29, 75031 Eppingen, Germany

CAPTION "Emotions to Sever" CD: I was surprised how well-performed and well-constructed these songs are. Not because I didn't think anything good could come out of Alabama, but just because... well, I just didn't expect it. The music depends on a fair bit of acoustic work, which works itself up into more powerful electric melodies, before taking off into full-strength screaming chunky hardcore. The guitars offer some layering at the right moments, going off in different directions before rejoining

to give the chunky parts the necessary punch. The playing is tight and the recording is excellent, clear and powerful without being overproduced (except, perhaps, a little of that reverb on the drums). This is more atmospheric than most hardcore, in that the songs are extremely long and don't vary in tempo much at all—that means that a mood is created rather than a blow being delivered. The lyrics touch on lost loves, among other things. I think this band still has plenty of room for improvement, since they aren't making the most unique music in the world yet (you know, screaming vocals, shouted backups, danceable chunky parts, acoustic and electric guitar melodies, etc.), but this is just fine for the first thing I've heard from them. —b

These Trying Days, P.O. Box 1125, Decatur, AL 35602

BESSEMER PROCESS "7": Although this band hails from Delaware, they seem to have had a lot of trouble learning to speak English. Maybe people don't speak English in Delaware... that might explain lyrics like these: "baby cries cat dies bad day to be petrified" "it's bleak I'm weak I'm sober but I've had a lot of vitamin c broccoli can cure every disease but you still won't get me to eat my greens" "you can scratch my skin 'til your fingertips bleed and your nails fall off and your hands turn green when you feel the onset of rigor mortis does it ever move you to serve a purpose? you can break me down but you won't watch me crumble all the people standing around start to mumble" ...I do have to give them credit for not trying to write good lyrics when they are obviously incapable of it (I mean, I hope they weren't trying-!), maybe some of these other bands should also try to be as ridiculous as they can rather than boring and confusing us with their second-rate "poetry." The lyrics here are probably the most interesting part; the music is pretty basic late '90's hardcore, the genre best exemplified by bands like Botch but played much worse by bands like this. The mix lacks the power it needs to have presence, lacks the presence it needs to have power, and pretty much doesn't work. The vocalist doesn't have the strong voice he needs to make this kind of screaming work, either. So I can't say much for the music... but if you get a chance to read the lyrics, go for it—they're hysterical. I couldn't write anything that funny with my brain tied behind my back. —b
Tied Down, P.O. Box 134, Lansdowne, PA 19050



Nothing But Regret

Everything I feel exposed / You can see right through my stares / Never a word shared / Someone I will never know / Still I know you so well / You could never understand / Regret / Left here impaled by my actions / Condemned by my lack of action / Someone I will never know / Still I know you so well / You could never understand / Now I'm left with nothing but my regret

Recorded February 24, 1998 at Watchmen Studios, engineered by Doug White Information Lockjaw c/o Bill Page, 348 N. Pleasant Pkwy., Buffalo, NY 14206 USA (716) 897-1160

ŻEGOTA

How we choose to live our lives greatly affects our environment. Driving automobiles contributes to air and water pollution, acid rain, global warming, ozone depletion, solid waste, and problems to the health and safety of all animals. When we drive, we are forced to support companies that have neither our environment, nor our best interests in mind. Profits come first to these people. We choose not to support this industry and destruction whenever possible. Finding alternative forms of transportation is a solution. We do realize that neither you nor I are perfect and that we all end up in cars from time to time. This society is based upon the automobile, so it is nearly impossible to banish it from our lives. Reduce your driving. Find other ways to get to your destination when you can. Free yourself from inCARceration!!!

"eight"

nnnnoooooooooooo.....
pedal away from global decay
every pedal strikes a blow for
freedom
every pedal strikes a blow against
global decay Brian

Brian

goes...

it's not your fault
goes...
don't know what else
to do

to do
taking the prescribed path
you'll have to wreck your life
it's not our fault
we had to wreck our lives
we had to wreck our lives
we wreck our lives...

moë
sez...
what will we sacrifice?
what will we sacrifice for
life and land?
when will we understand?
we're responsible for
the environment.
• what will we justify?
making way for you...



2312 PRINCESS ANN St.
GREENSBORO, NC 27408
usa

ZEGOTA

mourning

father's eyes are bleeding love, blinded by this love for me
he leaves me to die out, so alone in this ocean of tenderness
i feel dirty, ugly and cold, does not shock you, dad?
i don't feel so good you love, you don't comprehend my weariness
i look for my soul, i look to fill in this void.
mum, the more time passes by, the harder it is to bare this cross.
i can't take on my evolution and my mourning.
dad, help me, all is not well, i'm not strong
i feel my shell crumble away
i'll leave with the first gust of wind...

music is a way to express ourselves... this song represents something really personal and emotional for us... it will not change the world... in a way, it has changed ours...

headway is against the current political system and the established economy, neocapitalism and its rationalization of minds, that places profit as the main objective, everything that concerns the well-being of humanity and the state of nature has been put aside, if not ignored... we transmit these feelings as well as our passion, our emotions by means of our music... we attach a great importance to the opening and the independence of the mind, to tolerance and respect... recorded and mixed by tim, christophe and sylvain at meamtime studio, toulouse, france, january 1998... lyrics by julien, music by headway... thanks to brian and inside front/criemthine, collective, loïc lepillat, christophe, tim and sylvain, our families, our friends and everyone who has helped us in a way or another... headway is:

guitar, vocals-xavier combes/ 12, allée du puy-morrens, 31770 colonniers (france)
bass-olivier argagnon/ 8, impasse des sillons, 31170 tournefeuille (france)
drums-mathieu dufour/ 3, allée du var, 31770 colonniers (france)
guitar-arnaud brissonnet/ 6, rue des chanterelles, 31820 pibrac (france)
vocals-julien boutonmier/ 266, rue henri desbals, 31300 toulouse (france)
...please don't hesitate to write us for more "informations" or for anything else... thank you for taking the time to listen to this song... our music, our feelings, our beings... thanx... headway...

headway



STICKFIGURECAROUSEL

Eleven Years of Virginity

erect steal from child pollute the lines inbred spawn bastard
forgiven a gift of plunder dominion over the lesser rib salivating
glances nod in accord she weeps as you beam dons the mask of
fault youth must lick her wounds as the demon roams free
penetrated lips stain pale stand in line for your proper turn chew
the infection drawn and quartered for the sake of sisters castrate
the dominance.



rape is a plague that somehow engulfs us all. when a young precious child is preyed upon (and subsequently becomes pregnant) by her own cousin while his friends observe, something is absolutely vile. when a girl is abused or forced upon by her own boyfriend or another is taken advantage of while intoxicated, there is a filthy problem. rape is, in all actuality, determined by the individual. sadly, the lines are often blurred and the reality of the crime is forgotten. the guilt that is brought upon the victim runs deep. this is a personal account of how male dominance directly affects those that i love. (dedicated to r.m., j.a., a.t. & m.b.)

recorded and mixed august 10th, 1996 at doubletime studios, by chad stroup, justin mcmahon, keith divel, dan sena, and sean brummel. engineered by jeff forest.

Both this Stickfigurecarousel song and the song by Ire are taken from these hands' respective ""s on Schema Records, P.O. Box 1161, Battle Creek, MI 49016-1161.

OPPOSITE FORCE

Year By Year

Silence grows it's better to be alone
My state of mind is not one of a kind
These tired eyes have seen brutal tides
Left to waste in this corrupted place

A group of thieves tried to break my door
Put a gun on my head, "get on the floor!"
In desperation i stay alone to make myself
A protection zone

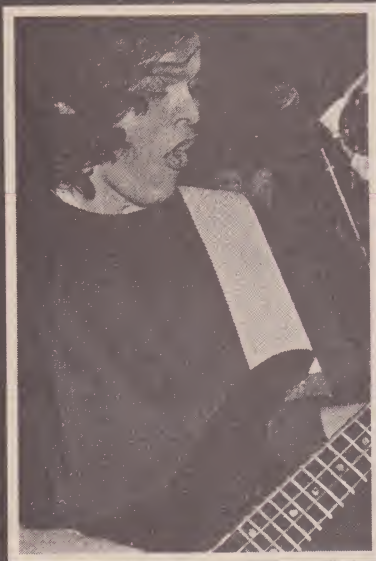
To make my life my own
My voice is but a growl

Nobody remembers us abandoned with our pain
With this system there is no gain
My trek has come to its end
And none of you will be exempt
You have despised what I have been to this day
But looking back you'll have been the same way

Silence grows it's better to be alone
My state of mind is not one of a kind
These tired eyes have seen brutal tides
Left to waste in this corrupted place

Alone!!

Opposite Force is Tripp's throat, Cristianino drum, Danny Meadows bass, Alister's vox, Cicconaxoxo. Dedicated to "Roma Vegan Straight Edge Legion" (Timebitch Purification, Strength Approach, Redemption, Reinforced, Rehumanized) for the support, Brian "Inside Front" for believing in us.



kritická situace

Never Again
(sung in Czech-the lyrics, in English, are:)

In the dark subterranean—
In the glare of the torches
You hide from enforcement
You don't believe in fortune
Not even in salvation
You only trust the black cloak of the night

Only fate knows what will happen to you when the day comes
Meanwhile you are left to dream of a woman's embrace
You start a fire, its smoke repels insects
And the barking of dogs will wake you from dreams

Never again!

With the unknown in front of you
And mercenaries on your back
You hope to pass through the mire
Always on the run,
Run from the army
Across the evil, spiteful land

You'll never again lay your hand on a gun
Never again arm yourself with a weapon
Never again take aim at a brother
Never again hit the mark, Deserter.

Written 1989-91, recorded November 7-20, 1992, by: Robert, Martin, Simon, and Svatopluk. Taken from the LP released by Day After Records (c/o Mira Páty, Horská 20, 352 01 Aš, Czech Republic). The LP is still available, and is on CD now as well.

I've chosen to include this track on the compilation to introduce most Inside Front readers, who probably aren't familiar with them, to what I think was one of the very best bands of the early 1990's, Kritická Situace began playing when Czechoslovakia was still behind the Iron Curtain, in a time when, according to my friend Ulli (from Contrition) in East Germany, it was actually illegal to play punk rock. They worked hard for more than half a decade before they finally got the opportunity to get a good recording of their music, and this hard work shows-the LP is incredible.

Kritická Situace LP

Hearing their singer railing against human cruelty and stupidity, his voice bleeding with conflicted emotion, with outrage and pity and earnest concern, breaks my heart. He pleads with us to feel compassion, he screams at us for our weaknesses and hatreds, he sings the praises of the fragile bonds of common humanity that can hold us together, however briefly. After listening to such an outpouring of emotion, I feel like I know him more deeply than I know almost any of the people around me; I feel a closeness to him that human beings can only approach through art like this. When I listen to these songs, songs about the most difficult and worthy of human undertakings, about deserters risking

their lives hiding out from army scouts in the wilderness, I'm ashamed of how petty and trivial the subjects we address in our Western hardcore are. That is what hardcore should do, I say to myself: it should demand nothing less from us than risking everything for what we believe, putting our lives on the line, playing for the highest and most noble stakes-it should shine with passion and intelligence, it should stand as a glorious part of the history of our species' struggle to make something more worthy of itself, it should draw upon that history to learn from human heroism past and look forward towards the future. Kritická Situace does all those things on this record.

The poetic, urgent lyrics, taken individually, are pieces of human life and experience-of fear, faith, despair, and desire; together, they add up to a mournful yet far from hopeless reflection upon the human condition. Some of them tell stories that we comfortable, complacent Westerners can barely imagine taking place upon this earth-they tell of slaughtering armies, of innocent men being executed, of forced military conscription, of the terrifying brutality that always results from the State having too much power. But here the issues become relevant to us all; for everywhere across the world, we have let ourselves become secondary in power and importance to the institutions we have created; human beings everywhere are very small next to the governments, religions, bureaucracies, and wars they have created. Kritická Situace laments this situation and the inexcusable loss and oppression of life it causes, but they refuse to give up hope: their most touching lyrics occur near the end of the record, in a song called "Perhaps Somewhere Beyond Piava." These are taken from a poem written during the first world war, in which the writer wonders if, on the other side of the trenches, there might be a young man like himself, who also wants peace and brotherhood. In this moment they celebrate the occasions throughout history when men and women have been able to rise above hate, cowardice, and violence, and hint that perhaps the future could be brighter. And the music-this music is comparable to classical music in its dramatic power and diversity, and yet somehow retains the earthy resonance of traditional folk music. Every transition, every pulse-racing drumroll, every heart-stoppingly beautiful guitar melody, every majestic swoop and sudden plunge of each song is perfect. It is so carefully crafted, so complex and so proficiently played, that it is clear that this was a band that took their mission very seriously and spent years perfecting their skills to accomplish it. That they would do this, knowing full well that as an Eastern European band they would almost certainly receive no widespread recognition, fills me with a deep gratitude for their generosity-they gave this beautiful music to the world, made from the very blood of their hearts, not expecting to get anything back from it, not even knowing how many people it would reach. Nothing is more tragic than records and other works of art lost like this one, forgotten by time, unable to touch the human beings for whom they were made, unable to provide the beauty and hope those people sorely need. Let us not overlook Kritická Situace.

AMEBIX

THE DARKEST HOUR

MY FRIEND THE TIME HAS COME FOR US TO SAY GOODBYE.
SO WITH THESE PARTING WORDS I BID YOU FOND FAREWELL
IT SEEMS THE LIFE WE LED WAS JUST A SHAMEFUL LIE
WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD? WELL ONLY TIME WILL TELL

I'M NOT SCARED OF DYING, AND I DON'T REALLY CARE
IF ITS PEACE YOU FIND IN DYING, WELL THEN LET MY TIME BE NEAR
IF ITS PEACE YOU FIND IN DYING, WHEN DYING TIME IS HERE
BUNDLE UP MY COFFIN, 'COS ITS GOING DOWN THERE

AND WHEN I'M DEAD
AND WHEN I'M GONE
THERE'LL BE ONE CHILD BORN
AND A WORLD TO CARRY ON

SOME SAY OUR FATE IS SEALED, AND HELPTO TIE THE KNOT
SOME SAY THAT THIS MAY BE THE LULL BEFORE THE STORM
BUT THERE'S ONE PIECE OF NATURE EVERYONE'S FORGOT
AND THAT'S "THE DARKEST HOUR IS ALWAYS BEFORE THE DAWN"!

WHEN THE CANDLE BURNS LOW
WHEN THERE'S NO MORE TO SAY
THE END IS NEAR
AND THE DARKNESS IS AT

CHAIN REACTION

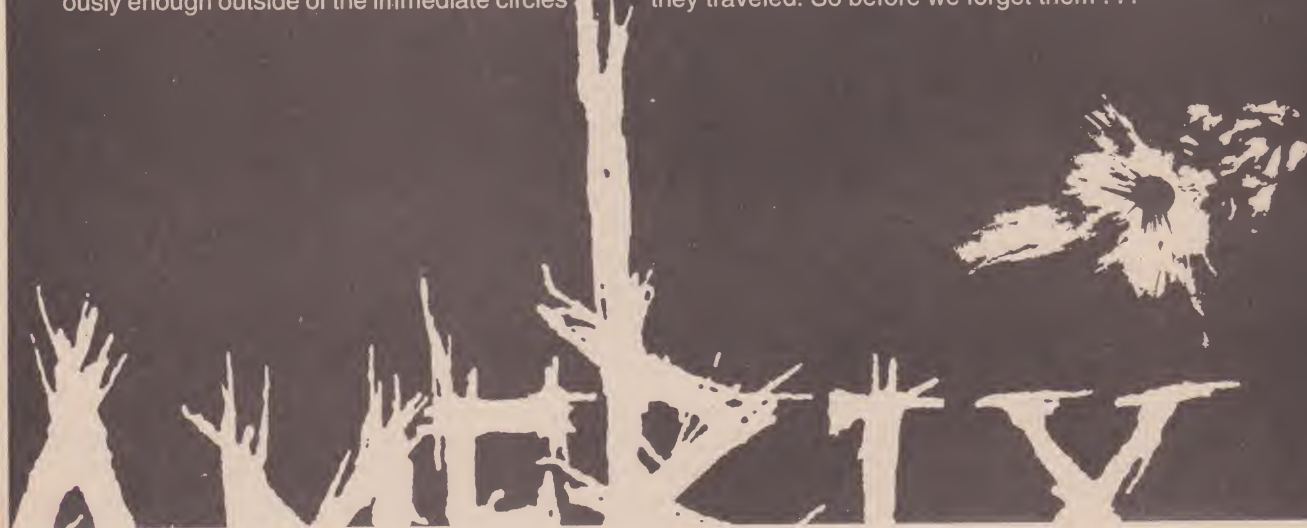
RISE INTO THE LIGHT AND STARRAVE
WE MUST DESTROY THE INSTITUTION
EVERY SHADOW OF DOUBT
THERE IS A VISION NOW BECOMING
SO CLEAR

CHORUS: USE YOUR HEAD
USE YOUR HEAD NO GODS NO FATHERS
FEEL THE STRENGTH FROM WITHIN
DO YOU BELIEVE ITS A SIN
TO FIND THE POWER LIVING INSIDE
NOT FROM THE CROSS OR THE GUN
NOT FROM THE MOON NOR THE SUN
BUT RISING FROM THE VERY SOUL
OF MANKIND

WE ARE STRAINING AT THE LEASH!
WE SWEAR ALLEGIANCE TO NONE BE
THERE IS NO ONE UPON WHOM
WE WILL SHOWER
I BELIEVE THAT THE SIN IS THE
ON THE PATH TO THE
ULTIMATE POWER

Live in Newcastle, 26-4-87

These two barely decipherable live tracks (recorded very near the end of their decade-long existence) are hardly a starting place for a new Amebix listener. They are a final resting place, if anything: the grim, exhausted determination in the vocals and the fearful frenzy with which the instruments are played both betray the fact that after carrying on for so long, the Amebix were finally approaching the end of their path—these two songs were recorded in the last few months of their existence. But I wanted to include these two songs here, not only so that I will still be able to listen to them when my cassette breaks, but also to dig up the long-buried Amebix and made music or written lyrics that had such an effect on my life. the Amebix in the "crusty" punk scene right now (that seems to day live and demo rereleases, and most of all, around their the Amebix never really got their due, never were taken seriously enough outside of the immediate circles they traveled. So before we forget them . . .



AMEBIX

I first heard the Amebix from Rennie of Starkweather, who made me a tape of their final two records. I listened to the tape once and put it away somewhere: to me it sounded like a lot of badly done noise, with a terrible recording, and a real lack of musicianship too. A number of months later, after my life had become somewhat more difficult (sleeping on floors, going without food, getting dirtier...) I put the tape back on, and it sounded a little better to me; still, afterwards I forgot about it again. More time passed—more sleepless nights, more hungry days, more dirt—and when I put it back on I really liked it. I even took it with me on my band's first tour—and there, two and a half weeks into a four week tour in the back of a pickup truck, with six guys and all the equipment crowded together like animals in a slaughterhouse, the night Dan had slipped a disc in his spine, all of us covered in filth, at six in the morning after a sleepless all-night trip, torn-throated and beaten, I realized what fucking beautiful, heart-rending music this was.

For the Amebix made the definitive music of exhaustion, of bitter suffering and impossible struggle. To make their music and pursue their dreams they lived for years and years without jobs or homes, eating out of garbage cans, completely cast out of society, with no hope of things getting better. These were men who existed on the very edge of humanity, barely surviving from day to day: sick and starving and freezing, some of them drug-addicted, all of them looking death in the face. Early in their existence a middle class kid let them stay in his family's house while his parents were away, and when the parents returned they sent their kid to a mental hospital just for associating with such vermin. But the Amebix didn't make music of *hopelessness*—in their songs is a dreadful, desperate willingness to fight to the bitter end, to carry on fighting for their dreams long after hope seems lost and destruction inevitable. For this is also the music of desire: of furious anger and touching sorrow for lost horizons, of courage in the face of impossible odds, of a will to freedom at any cost. And in this, they transcended their own personal struggles to speak for us all in this ruined world. They sang what are to me the ultimate songs of defiance and revolt—they never forgot the freedom and passion they were fighting for, they never lost a drop of their disgust for the absurdities around them, and they held tight to their dreams right up to and over the brink of annihilation. I find a deeper beauty in the courage of this music than I have felt anywhere else: this is the stuff of ragged glory, of threadbare, broken dreams, of human heroism in the face of all-devouring fate.

The music of the Amebix has an atmosphere of impending doom; apocalypse hangs always over it, filling the sky, casting its ominous shadow on the foul, polluted earth below. The ever-present threat of nuclear war, the ever-increasing control of governments and corporations over human life, the ever-worsening environmental devastation of the industrial system

can be heard in the background of every song. Their use of medieval imagery recalls a time when the planet was not subjugated by technology: a time when human freedom was at least closer at hand, not being denied by the forces of pollution, urban sprawl, and technological control as well as the encroachments of mere human power. This nostalgia for the distant past reveals the Amebix' true love: liberty, self-determination, the ability to choose one's own destiny. In the days of old, of which the Amebix were so fond, there was more room in the world for individuals to choose their own paths. Appropriating the slogan "No Gods, No Masters" from the old French Anarchist thinkers, they proclaimed their belief that no human being should accept any authority—that we should each create our own values for ourselves and, if possible, work together to take back control of our lives and our world from the forces that would rule over us.

They set themselves against all gods and governments, and all moralities. [For me, that is the significance of their band name: it is a claim that human beings are "amoebic" in nature, that each one changes over time, and so there is *no* system which can always be right for everybody. Thus, anarchism, the assault on all systems, is the only chance for human happiness.]

The Amebix also celebrated bygone times in their embracing of paganism—they suggested that although nothing is worthy of worship, strength and power can be found in the natural forces that modern civilization has all but destroyed. In their celebration of the lost wilderness, they claimed for all of us as human beings a lost relationship with Nature, a forgotten peace between humankind and the natural world in which we lived symbiotically with the forests and moors, benefiting from them rather than destroying them.



Excerpted from the Pushead interview in M.R.R.

#13, 1984:

Pushead: Give us some background information on band members, lifestyle, etc. **Jenghiz:** Having spent some time in an asylum where one of Europe's top psychologists refused to certify me sane, [he accused me of trying to] take over his hospital, which I did find insulting, since if I was going to be in command it would be the world. My upbringing was working class. In the U.S. I would have been classed as white trash. I don't consider myself a musician. My lifestyle is very frugal and simple. I live by my convictions refusing to be carried away by the stream of commercialism.

Pushead: You stated that you have lived in quite a few squats. Could you explain what that is like, and whether it makes you happy to live in this manner? What is the alternative for Amebix? I've heard stories about Disorder being so poor, they dig through garbage cans for food. Is this the same with Amebix, or is "life" better for you? Now most people shun the thought of looking for food in garbage cans, but if you hit the grocery store dumpsters there are plenty of good vegetables and other edible items which just aren't proper for sale for procedures of looks or date, so this food is wasted while millions starve, and rich phonie movie stars get on TV begging for your money to feed the poor. But to some this is their survival, whether they have money or not, the food is there and free. What do you think of this? Any personal experiences?

Aphid: Yes, we've been squatting [*unreadable*] one bedsit (room, cooker, fridge etc.) which 3 of us rented and lived in for a while. Squatting's OK in the summer, but unless you have electricity and heating in the winter it can be very uncomfortable. We lived in Hampton Road two winters back and the roof was caving in and the windows were smashed, and on top of this there was no electricity and it was snowing-we nearly froze, it was really bad! . Most of the places we've squatted have been OK though; some exceptional ones were St. Andrews Road, Cotham Side, and Oakland Road. Cotham Side even had a cooker, fridge, furniture, carpets and TV! It was a dream come true, a squatters paradise. When we first came to Bristol we had no money for ages, so we used to go raid the skips behind Littlewoods and get bags of doughnuts and cakes which were out of date. Sometimes we'd find nothing, which would mean Disorder had got there before us. Some good bread fights used to ensue as well. I don't know how the fuck we managed to stay alive on such a sickly diet but we did. Apparently that food gets given to the Salvation Army, who charge people all their gyros (social security cheques) to stay in their hostels and eat shitty food. I agree with you that a lot of good food is to be found in skips. At Oakland Road we used to get vegetables down the road as people won't buy ones with even little blemishes on them, and that's bad news. I think the people who have lived this sort of lifestyle would be far better acquainted with surviving any major catastrophe, whereas the rich slobs would starve. It definitely makes you sharper.

from the liner notes to the "No Sanctuary" 12".

Politics means simply, way of life, not political parties with manifestos to be strictly adhered to. To vote for party politics is to vote for state or government control and the abolition of independent expression. The obscenity that is now the British "way of life," Victorian empiristic Americanisation that all parties now seem to advocate condemns the individual to the role of passive supporter and puppet, depriving them of freedom of will to express themselves and develop as individuals, to follow blindly a creed or philosophy regardless of whether it's political, apolitical, religious or atheist. To follow blindly an ideology is to deny yourself free will and condone the actions of those who would be leaders and masters.

Do you really want your freedom? Well do you?

We are made to feel that our potential is limited, we cannot be free. Lies!

There are very few forms of free expression left open to us, but music is an internationally recognized language, so it is a logical conclusion that music should be the catalyst to spark off a reaction in people. Many people find it convenient to be led by a band: it is so easy to sit back and live by that band's "manifesto" instead of using your own initiative to analyze the lyrics and your freedom to dispute the arguments presented by a band.

Will they never understand that the future is in man?

No two people think in the same way. But many "individuals" are desperately trying to mold their attitude into the right shape so that they "fit in" with the "movements" common philosophy. Freedom can only be obtained by the individual going his/her own way on their own terms, so consequently you find that the prospect of being "on your own" is not too attractive to the leech who prefers to latch on to a group of people and nod their head at the right time, in turn being patted on the head and congratulated for their blind faith in that group, the principle on which the church and other political organizations have thrived in the past. Your destiny is in your hands, nobody else's, and if you can't come to terms with that, you might as well retreat back into society's cozy little slot as there's always a place for the lost sheep amongst the blind flock. Security.

NO GODS NO MASTERS.

MONOLITH LP

This was the final Amebix recording, the masterpiece of their career. They had worked for years to be ready to make this record, and they put everything they had into it. And they had finally found what they must have thought was a good label to release it... but, as they discovered too late, there were born-again Christians on the label's board of directors, who refused to even print the lyric sheets when they saw the anti-religious sentiments in them. They let the record go out of press after only 3000 copies sold, and the Amebix, in complete despair and exhaustion, broke up. [Some of them went on the form Zygote, their drummer now plays in Muckspreader, and their singer lives in isolation on the Isle of Skye, as a blacksmith forging medieval weapons-no joke!] The label insisted for years that the master tapes had been destroyed, and that was that-the Amebix' greatest achievement, their reason to be, was lost to the world, only available to a few obsessive collectors. But recently, amazingly enough, the label (Heavy Metal Records) has rereleased the "Monolith" LP on CD-apparently they were lying about the master tapes just so the band would leave them alone. So now this long-lost record is available again.

These songs are performed with absolute abandon, with complete disregard for anything that has come before. You can hear the drums and amplifiers shaking and the fragments of guitar pick flying from the frantically struck strings, you can almost see the sweat pouring from their emaciated bodies, you can feel each musician bent unflinchingly into every chord. When the time comes for a guitar solo, the guitarist doesn't even try to play notes-he just turns his pick sideways and scrapes it back and forth against the strings as hard as he can, straining and bending them, grinding out a terrifying screeching noise like the death cries of a flock of vultures. The drummer never stops to get his balance, and in some places he doesn't even seem concerned with keeping time-he is always beating the drums and cymbals as hard as he can, as much as he can, making as much clamor and chaos as he can, and all else be damned. At the climax of each song, the Amebix pull out all the stops and push their sound into unexplored territory, into total noise and disorder; yet the music comes together where it must, into bitter anthems and broken rhapsodies.

In the brief moments of stillness, such as the haunting instrumental at the beginning of the record, the silent, cold beauty of dusk is evoked; waves crash at the shores of a world not yet dominated by iron and smog, stars glow gently overhead, a prehistoric peace hangs in the air. When the first chord of the discordant, distorted guitars crashes in, it brings with it all the ugliness and awesome, ignoble splendor of the industrial world. The music speeds up with a revving of corroded engines, and the band charge forward, careening and swerving dangerously like a motorcycle out of control, the singer intoning in a spiteful growl "*we're swimming in the lunar sea, drowning in insanity*" rising to an angry snarl "*your leaders were lying . . .*" and to a roar: "*nobody's driving!*" as the whole industrial system lurches forward, smokestacks spewing filth, factories pouring out poison into rivers and oceans, scientists building bigger and bigger bombs, towards our technologically designed, garbage-choked demise.

Even more apocalyptic is the sixth song, "I.C.B.M."² It begins with a stratospheric whirl and hiss: the whisper of morning winds across the enormous belly of a nuclear warhead in flight. As the guitars strike their first notes and the drummer begins a tense count on the highhat, the missile coasts low over vast landscapes, passing over fields of crosses planted by earlier, less conclusive wars, headed for the heart of civilization. And the singer, his voice hardened with a contempt that still betrays sorrowful regret, pronounces "*meatwagon come . . . borne on the rays of the morning sun . . . thy kingdom come,*"

thy will be done", consigning our species in its stupidity to the mass grave we have prepared for ourselves. "*A silver express through the valley of death, a cruise overland to turn the fertile soil to sand.*" Surveying the wasteland obscured by radioactive smoke, choking on ash and cinder, he cries out into the void, the guitars and drums behind him marching forward like the masses of vaporized humanity in the final roll call before the angel of death. As the last word is sung, the music turns up and away from the ruined earth, passing through the mushroom clouds and sailing into the inhuman beauty of the sky... to the regions of space that man had not yet been able to pollute and destroy.

Annihilation is upon us, the Amebix proclaimed with this record. *Let us accept it, come to terms with it.* Death appears again and again in their music, both the meaningless, man-made death of war, pollution, and famine, and the inevitable mortality imposed upon our race by nature and destiny itself. In their finest, most courageous moments, they can accept and



DO YOU REALLY WANT YOUR FREEDOM?

embrace the latter. The song "Last Will and Testament" begins with a final whispered benediction: *"The parchment of my flesh doth break, the winter winds my soul doth take, and all beneath the heavens lies in peace. The world will dawn and fade away, the crystal dawn of the final day breaks upon the shores of death's release."* For an instant, they are able to let this world go in good faith, to pry the clinging fingers of human cowardice away from the frustrating, miserable difficulties of this existence, and accept what must be. I shiver when I hear the beaten resolution in the singer's voice, accepting this when he could accept so little else in this world: that if he could not realize his desires, at least he will be released from them (and all the torment that unsatisfied desires hold) upon his deathbed. The rest of the song is a dirge for our species, which has brought itself to the end of its lifespan as well. *"We made the deserts from the gardens of our youth, spewed our blackened hearts into the sea—through darkened skies and poisoned clouds we blindly groped for truth, we couldn't see the forest for the trees."* Faced with the ruined experiment that was Man, the Amebix are ready to witness our self destruction, to see us rid the planet of all the carnage and corruption that our short rule has brought. *"To my wretched son, I leave this gun, to slaughter all your race—for this, the beast you have become, I have no longer taste."* And yet there is a sadness in all this bile, a barely suppressed grief that it had to end like this.

Close to the end of this record, in the midst of all this despair and destruction, the Amebix leave us with their timeless celebration of self-determination and aspiration: "Chain Reaction." The title is more than a play on words demanding that we react to our oppression and cast off our chains; it is a prayer that if one of us were to dare to do this that perhaps it would spread from one to another until humanity itself demanded freedom from its self-imposed bonds. *"Rise into the light and set aflame to the night—we must destroy the institution of fear,"* their singer charges us: we have created this world, our species has constructed it; why then should we not choose to remake it again if we are not satisfied, take our destinies into our own hands and refuse to be led around like cattle to the slaughter? Take to the streets, recognize your fellow human beings as your brothers and sisters, tear down the system that keeps you

fighting against each other—it is a desperate, near-hopeless dream, but he declares it boldly, daring to demand his wildest dreams, to demand that we recognize our potential rather than letting life pass us by, to demand that we refuse to be crushed beneath the wheels of uncontested fate. As he sang years earlier on the "Arise" LP, *"the kingdom of heaven must be taken by storm."*

When I hear the first bare drumroll that begins this song, my jaws clench, my eyes narrow, my resolve strengthens and deepens. This is music of courage—of more than courage, of the grim will to fight at any cost. In it I hear the merciless determination of men who have already lost everything in pursuit of their destiny, men looking up from the very bottom of the black pit of failure at the unreachable world of beauty they strove for, and yet still refusing to accept defeat. Exhausted, emaciated, their hope and idealism entirely spent, told in no uncertain terms by the entire world that they are worthless filth, they march forward, driven by a superhuman force of desire to struggle to the very death. I have listened to this song in the bleakest days of

terrifying complexity and contradiction, and demand it for yourself. *"We are straining at the leash!"* he roars at the climax of the LP, embodying the immortal spirit of the human quest for freedom.

On this late live recording, battered by so many years of tribulation, he no longer even has the spirit to roar those words. You can hear him, eyes shut and stinging with sweat, nearly unconscious, lean into the microphone and breath them out as if from his deathbed, still unwilling to be silent, still issuing a challenge to would-be rulers everywhere who count on us valuing comfort and safety more than liberty.

And at their final show, at the end of their last song, he struck his final chord, spat *"No Gods, No Masters"* into the microphone, and put down his guitar forever—after ten long years of starving, freezing, and stealing, ten years of not working, not paying for food or rent or tax, ten years of never bowing to anyone—ten years which say to me now, another decade later, that I need not bow before anyone or anything, either.

ARISE LP

This was the Amebix' penultimate record, and it is still available on CD from Alternative Tentacles; although it is not as perfect as the "Monolith" LP (how could it be?), it has some unforgettable moments. It begins with the most unearthly music ever recorded, György Ligeti's "Requiem," which also appeared in Stanley Kubrick's movie *2001*: out of the grinding of distant machines, ghostly voices rise and gather, reaching a wailing pitch of possession by the time the first chords of the song are played. The Amebix' instruments sound even more battered and dysfunctional on this earlier record (maybe they were finally able to afford new equipment before they recorded "Monolith"?): it sounds like they must have stolen the guitars from a pawnshop and found the drums in a dumpster; but the rough, broken sound works for these rough, broken songs.

"Drink and be merry, for tomorrow we may die," they proclaim in the fifth song, trying hard to celebrate the beautiful things that life has to offer in the shadow of so much suffering, menaced by so many dangers. The song begins softly, the



my own life, starved and sleepless myself, having lost all reason to hope for the future, and it gave me the strength to push forward through night after night of weariness and humiliation. *"We swear allegiance to none-be, not become!"* shouts the singer at the end: Never give in! No matter what the odds, accept no lords or limits! Bow to no gods or dogmas! Don't sacrifice yourself, don't settle for anything, never allow them to force you into some narrow definition of humanity or ideology—embrace what it is to be a human being, in all its

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bassist and guitarist singing back and forth to each other in tired, mournful voices, reaching inside themselves in search of a forgotten wellspring of joy but finding only sadness and painful memories. "I took a walk on the beach," recalls the singer, but "the air smelt like Dachau today." Our species can hardly forget the bloodsoaked paths we have wandered up to this point; it is a burden that follows each of us everywhere, always upon us whether we choose to admit it or not, along with the burden of the knowledge of our mortality and of the fleeting nature of all happiness. What miserable, despairing farces so many of our modern attempts to seek pleasure seem! "Down in the square, the party goes on", the singer intones. "The doomed sit down to their last feast. They gorge themselves on the recently deceased-the heat of the day, the foul smell of decay, as they wait for the inferno to be unleashed." When I hear these lines, I always think of the heartbreaking scene in Werner Herzog's *Nosferatu* when the heroine realizes the cause of the plague that has wrought so much misery and death upon her village. She runs to the central square to tell everyone, but she finds that no one there will even acknowledge her. They have all gathered, knowing that their last days are upon them, to spend these final hours dancing, making love, gorging themselves on gourmet food, in an infinitely melancholy mock celebration. She runs from one person to the next, in absolute, frozen silence, but their faces, each lost in a desperate, tragic attempt to forget, will not turn towards hers. She screams, cries out, but her voice echoes unheard through a world from which their hearts have already departed, and the only answer is the dreadful sound of their absurdly merry music.

The final song on "Arise" is probably the most moving one the Amebix ever wrote. In this song, "The Darkest Hour," they explore the no-man's-land between desire and hopelessness, between passion and capitulation, life and death. It begins as a farewell, a letting go, bittersweet and disconsolate; the music is a quiet requiem, as tender as the fingers of the exterminating angel herself, gently cutting each lifeline. It is a terrifying tenderness, a final, smothering tenderness: not a tenderness that rubs balm in wounds, but that severs each nerve one by one, solving the problem of pain and misery in one merciful blow, whispering softly into the ear of the dying man to quiet his anxiety. It is a gentle music for weary, bloodied ears too worn for anything else; it is a lullaby to soothe a beaten man, to lower him into his final

sleep.

"I'm not scared of dying, and I don't really care-if it's peace you find in dying, then let my time draw near." This is an exorcism on the part of the singer, an exorcism of fear: death must come, it will come, it is coming; it will do no good to fight it. Lie down and accept it. All the pain in this world, all the things I wanted and never achieved, all the things I never will have, now, will fade away; if I never got to feel the happiness I so desperately sought, at least now I shall not feel the lack of it. All my life I have suffered, have wanted peace; well now here it is. It is a rejection of the world and all desire, a surrender-but a false one, as the pain and furious bitterness in his voice reveals. It hurts him incredibly to say it, to release all his dreams into the void and accept the end of everything. He says it only because there is nothing else left to say, but if he must say it, he will say it with vicious spite, he will spit in the face of everything he had wanted and fought for just to show how attached to it all he was, how much he did love life, even in its most agonizing extremes, even when it gave him nothing but heartache, pain, and unfulfillable dreams.

And as the Amebix always do, the private struggle of the individual confronting exhaustion and death is now broadened to include our human struggle: "Some say our fate is sealed, and help to tie the knot; some say that this may be the lull before the storm; but there's one piece of nature everyone's forgot, that the darkest hour is always before the dawn!" And he screams it out, over and over: "Before the dawn!" Desperate, torn between accepting what seems like certain defeat and holding on for one instant more: *Before the dawn! Before the dawn!* And as the music builds to a fearsome climax-*Before*

the dawn! Let it be so! Surrounded by all this stupidity and squalor, scraping and stealing to barely survive, grant me this one thing in a life of suffering, that this darkest hour come Before the dawn! What are we living for, if not for this: that things can only get better from here? Before the dawn! What worth has all this world, all this wasted life and beauty, this vast universe, if it only ends like this? Before the dawn! Before the dawn! And the dawn does not come, and it does not come. And finally, he cries out "when the candle burns low, when there's no more to say, dig me a hole where my body might lay," and the song is over, ending in the final capitulation that all our lives must. But still lingering in the silence afterwards is an echo-the echo of a voice screaming: "*Before the dawn!*"

1: "Wrap up warm, you'll catch your death—don't let your death catch you; the winter tears the earth apart . . . let's hope we see it through." -from the "Winter" 7" they recorded in the year he is speaking about here.

2: InterContinental Ballistic Missile, for those of you who don't remember the 1980's and the specter of nuclear war hanging over our heads.



AMEBIX

NO GODS
NO MASTERS

AMEBIX FORMED IN 1978 AS THE "BAND WITH NO NAME" AND WE PLAYED ABOUT 20 GIGS IN THE TAVISTOCK AREA OF DEVON AND GAINED A REPUTATION AS THE WORST BAND IN A 25 MILE RADIUS (NOT BAD). THIS SPURRED US ON TO RECORD A 6 TRACK CASSETTE OF WHICH WE MANAGED TO SELL 4 COPIES. THE 5TH COPY WE GAVE TO CRASS WHEN THEY PLAYED IN PLYMOUTH AND THEY USED ONE OF THE SONGS 'UNIVERSITY CHALLENGED' ON THE FIRST BULLSHIT DETECTOR. WE WENT THROUGH A FEW LINE UP CHANGES AND AT ONE TIME A MAN CALLED MARTIN PLAYED DRUMS IN THE BAND AND ALSO GAVE US LODGINGS IN A MANOR HOUSE IN THE MIDDLE OF BLEAKEST DARTMOOR. WHEN HIS PARENTS CAME BACK THEY WERE'NT VERY AMUSED AND SENT THE UNFORTUNATE MARTIN OFF TO A HARLEY STREET CLINIC WHERE HE HAD ALL HIS HAIR SHAVED.

CONTINUED OVER



AND GIVEN A DE-LOUSING AFTER HAVING BEEN IN CONTACT WITH THE 'untermen'. THIS LEFT THE TWO OF US WITHOUT A PLACE TO LIVE (APHID + STIG) UNTIL WE RECRUITED NORMAN AS A SYNTH PLAYER AND LIVED IN HIS HOUSE JUST OVER THE BORDER IN CORNWALL. WE DID VERY LITTLE WHILE WE WERE THERE AND THE THREE OF US DECIDED TO MOVE TO BRISTOL IN 1981. THINKING THAT IT HAD SOMETHING TO OFFER US AS A BAND. WE MOVED AROUND FROM SQUAT TO SQUAT FOR A WHILE AND EVENTUALLY GOT A BEDSIT WHERE WE ALL LIVED. BY THIS TIME VIRUS HAD JOINED US AS THE NEW DRUMMER AND WE BEGAN TO SERIOUSLY START PRACTICING AND WORKING ON NEW MATERIAL. WE SAVED UP £85 BETWEEN US AND BOOKED A DAY IN S.A.M STUDIOS (8 TRACK) IN ST PAULS, AND SENT THE RESULT OFF TO SPIDERLEG RECORDS WHO RELEASED IT AS 'WHO'S THE ENEMY' E.P. NORMAN LEFT AFTER THIS, SO WE MOVED INTO SQUATS AGAIN (10 SO FAR) AND RECORDED WINTER WHICH WE ARE'NT ALL THAT PLEASED WITH ALTHOUGH THE B-SIDES GOOD. WE HAD STARTED PLAYING GIGS AROUND THE COUNTRY BY THIS TIME, MOSTLY WITH 'DISORDER' AS WE HAVE LIVED IN QUITE A FEW PLACES WITH THEM. WE TRIED TO GET MARTIN TO COME UP AND PLAY SYNTH FOR US BUT FOUND THAT HE HAD BEEN PICKED UP IN LONDON FOR 'STRANGE BEHAVIOUR' AND LOCKED UP IN A PSYCHIATRIC WARD IN THE ROYAL 'FREE' HOSPITAL WHERE THEY KEPT HIM FOR 2 MONTHS GIVING HIM ALL SORTS OF 'MEDICATION' (MOSTLY 'LARCATYL') FROM WHICH HE HAS STILL NOT RECOVERED. JUST RECENTLY JENCHIZ (THE MAD SCOTSMAN) HAS JOINED US TO PLAY SYNTH AND WE HAVE RECORDED THE 12" E.P 'NO SANCTUARY' WITH HIM AND ALSO DONE A FEW GIGS AS A FOUR PIECE AND IT IS A SATISFACTORY LINE-UP IN THE FUTURE WE HOPE TO RECORD AN ALBUM ONCE WE HAVE GOT TOGETHER SOME SUITABLY POWERFULL MATERIAL. COMING YOUR WAY SOON.

THE PRESENT LINE-UP IS STIG - GUITAR VIRUS - DRUMS JENCHIZ - SYNTH APHID - BASS/VOICERS

BY THE POWER OF...



WELL WHAT CAN I SAY. BY NOW EVERYONE MUST OF HEARD AMEBIX FROM THERE
"DEVASTATING "ARISE" LP AND THE ASTOUNDING LIVE PERFORMANCES THEY'VE
DONE RECENTLY. NO DOUBT YOU KNOW THIS ALREADY UNLESS FOR SOME STRANGE
REASON YOU LIVE IN A CAVE. AH WELL ON WITH THE INTERVIEW AND A VERY
BIG TAI GOING TO THE ROCKIN BARON FOR "WRITING A GOODLY SET OF ANSWERS
AND BEING REALLY QUICK IN REPLYING (IT TOOK 5 DAYS TO GET THERE AND
BACK. NOT BAD EH?)
PROCEED YE VARNITS

NO DOUBT YOUR WELL SHUFFED WITH THE LP & ITS PRODUCTION. LOOKING
BACK ON IT, DO YOU THINK THEIR CONID OF BEEN ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT?

WE'VE NEVER BEEN COMPLETELY HAPPY WITH ANYTHINGS THAT WE'VE DONE BUT THE LP
IS THE CLOSEST THINGS THAT WE'VE GOT TO BEING KTSATK OF COURSE THERE
IS ALWAYS ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT BUT IF THERE WADNT WE'D NEVER MOVE
FORWARD WOULD WE.

WHERE THERE ANY REHANS FOR CHANGING THE TITLE OF SANITY TO FEAR OF GOD?

THAT I CAN REMEMBER, ITS JUST THAT THE WORDS FITTED IN BETTER NEVE HAD SONGS
CALLED PRIMITIVE AND BLOODLIT IN THE PAST + HAD TO CHANGE THEM, NOW WE'VE GOT ONE
CALLED CHAIN REKATION AND ITS NOT THE DIANNA ROCKS VERSION!

HAS THERE BEEN ANY BANDS
THAT HAVE IMPRESSED YOU VERY MUCH
IN THE LAST YEAR (EITHER HOME OR ABROAD)
EITHER MYKALD AND/OR LYKALD?

LIVE, I RATE THE DEPRAND A LOT AND
WHICH IS AN ADDED BONUS. I CAN'T REALLY
IN THE PINK SCENE, ITS A SHAME BUT
NO ONE IS MOVING ON.

HAVE YOU ANY INTENTION OF BRINGING
A SYNTH BACK INTO THE BAND OR NOT?

WE HAD A GUY MAY FOR 2
I DON'T THINK THAT WE
CAN RELY ON GETTING A SOLID
OUT THERE HAS THEIR OWN LEAR
AMOUNT OF DEKATION THEN
PARTICULARLY IF YOU LIVE AROUND
A SYNTH FOR THE NEXT LP TO

EVER ULY TO PHASE OUT LYKLS
THE SYNTH EK TO THOSE OF
CLEANER THE BYTICKS OF
IN WHITE STIFF?

DO YOU REKON YOUR
CONDENNING RELIGION,
THE DARKER RISES +
THE VIKAN

MORE AMEBIX.

WELL WE'RE CURRENTLY WORKING ON A SONG CALLED ANYKUR VIKINGS WHICH COULDN'T
BE CONSIDERED PROXYSLANT (TEE HEE!) WE DON'T REALLY STAND AGAINST RELIGION
ITS JUST THAT WE LIKE TO SEE PEOPLE USE THEIR OWN POTENTIAL
AS ID HEARD SOME WOMAN IS CAMPAIGNING TO GET YOU EVICTED FROM YOUR HOUSE IN
RAPIDLY LOS OF YOUR APPEARANCE. IS THIS TRUE?

AND NOT ANY MORE THERE NOT, THEY JUST TOOK OFFENSE TO A RATHER LARGE PARTY THAT WE HELD
Q. WHAT'S YOURS DOING NOW? DO YOU STILL KEEP IN CONTACT WITH PREVIOUS MEMBERS OF
AMEBIX + ALSO THE BANDS YOU'VE WORKED WITH IN DISORDER?

THIS MET VIKS THE OTHER DAY FOR THE FIRST TIME IN AGES + HE SEEMS TO HAVE GOT HIS
ACT TOGETHER, HE'S DOING A COLLEGE COURSE IN PSYCHOLOGY APPARENTLY, GOOD LUCK TO HIM.
WE DON'T REALLY KEEP IN TOUCH WITH ANY OF THE OLD BANDS NEW COS I CAN'T AFFORD THE
BUS FARE TO GOIN + SEE THEM (123 AHHH!)

DO YOU EVER GET THE URGE TO PLAY SOME OF YOUR OLD SONGS LIVE, OR TO HAVE
NEW SONGS IN THE OLD STYLE?

ANY. NOPE! WE'RE HAPPY WITH THE WAY THAT THINGS ARE GOING + LIKE TO SEE TOLERANCE
FOR OUR NEW MATERIAL. MAYBE A TOUCH OF THE OLD STYLE WOULDNT GO AMISS ON OCCASIONS
BUT I STILL THINK THAT WE HAVE OUR OWN SOUND.

GIVE US YOURS! WE'VE GOT TO LOOK SO CRAFTY NOW REDUCING THE ARMY SURVIVAL STIKES WITH
RUBBY LEATHERS, WAD YOU PREFER OFF WITH WEARING THE ARMY GEAR OR IS THE LEATHERY, YOUR
NEW IMAGES?

ANY. MY OLD CLOTHES ROTTED AWAY BUT I KIT OFF MY JACKET + PUT IT ON TOP OF MY LEATHER WHICH
I WEAR BECAUSE I HAVE A BIKE TO RIDE, ALSO I DON'T SEE THAT HAVING SPOKE HOLE MEANS
ANYTHING AT ALL IN THIS DAY + AGE. CHECK OUT THE LOCAL DISCO FOR PROOF.

Q. HAVE YOU NOTICED ANY MUSICAL PROGRESSION WITHIN YOURSELVES IN THE LAST FEW YEARS?
I FEEL YOU'VE RAPIDLY IMPROVED FROM PART LIVE SONGS WHAT DO YOU THINK?

A. YES DEFINITELY, YOU CAN'T HELP BUT IMPROVE REAL, WE'RE PLEASER THAT WE CAN REACH
ANOTHER GROUP OF MASSES + GET FAIRLY TIGHT LIVE.

Q. HOW FIXING TALL IS THE BARON + HAS HE GOT TO GET HIS CLOTHES + BEING MADE FROM
A NR TALL SHOP?

ANY. IN A MORE 6 FOOT 2.5 (LIAR!) I HAVE TO BUY EXTRA SHIRTS CLOTHES TO FIT ME PROPERLY
BUT I DON'T PRESENTLY, PATRONISE THE LARKE PERSONS, THEREFORE ITS BEING A GROWING LAR
YOU SEE

Q. ANYTHING TO ADD, GUY, FUTURE RECORDINGS, ALTHOUGH YOU WOULD BE DYING
WERE GOING FOR A NEW DEAL AT THE MOMENT + HOPE TO HAVE ANOTHER ALBUM OUT BY THE
SUMMER TO COME!



UNDER SIEGE PRESENTS

AMEBIX

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deviated
instinct

CARCASS

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18

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Soon you'll enjoy these shits :

Harkonen 7" (u.s.a.)

Wood 7" (Italy)

Skoll/Gravferd 7" (Italy/Norway)

In the meantime blow your money buying our gilded stuff as OneFineDay 7", lot of Shirts etc..."



Adriano & Luca Fontaneto
via Muratori, 95/b 28060
Lumellogno (NO) Italy
Stefano Bosso via S. Agata
4 Carpignano S. (NO) Italy
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pic. greed

Hi guys, this piece of paper contains "some of the best creative and innovative layout" but I'm gonna tell you what is the purpose of it: here we have everything from the driving power of a band like WOOD with their brand of

post-hc to the manic craziness of HARKONEN right from Seattle, USA. If you like impassionate, raw, chaotic hardcore, you find it in ONEFINEDAY, or you can choose the double attack from GREED and REPRISAL. The more traditionalist will be floored down by Turin's own version of Syracuse-core ABSENCE. You can be the trendiest one by wearing our SHIRTS (2 brand new ones are coming!), or you can change the look of your car with our several STICKERS. You can feed your mind with our fine publications OUTLET and CYCLE (next printed on offset). Finally you can spend all of your hard-gained bucks by buying stuff at our huge mailorder distro that counts more than 250 items: italian, european and american stuff for every taste from old school through punk to emo, from crust through new school to tearing indie pop. All 7" are \$ 250, stickers \$ 1 x 3, t-shirts \$ 7 and fanzines \$ 2. Add some \$\$\$ for postage and be HONEST, please! Call for wholesale rates.



Stefano Bosso - v. S.t' Agata, 4 28064
Carpignano S. (NO) - ITALY. Adriano Fontaneto
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CONSPIRACY IS A STATE OF MIND

MAYA - Biocide LP/CD



15 people worked together for creating this angst-driven ambient-metal. I'm not really sure if you can handle this. BIOCHAOS to mark the end of times.

core 006

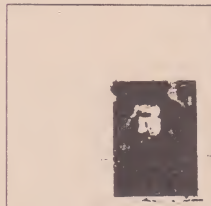
TRIBES OF NEUROT - God of the center 10" inch

Desolate ambient soundscapes with an overwhelming melancholic and desperate feel from Neurosis people.

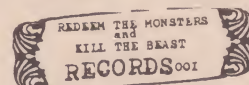


core 007

R a i n - MCD



new school with screaming voice, inside out meets unbroken, eleven straight forward songs with smart lyrics which grab you by the throat and leave you gasping for more.



RUBBISH HEAP - path of lies 7" inch

Four dark and heavy newschool hardcore songs with a crust influence. Compared to Rorschach and Acme. Path of lies now in second press.



core 004

SCALE SHEER SURFACE - speakerkiller 7" inch



Freaky punk rock that never loses the drive to keep it interesting. Creasier than most singalong poppunk bands. Compared to Minutemen.

core 005

AND WE STILL HAVE:

MAYA - "Slow Escape" CD "" KURORT - "Oslo" 7inch
"" KURORT - "Miss Fitness USA" LP/CD

7 inch : 150 BFR/ 7 DM/ 5US\$
10 inch : 300 BFR/ 15 DM/ 10 US\$
MCD : 350 BFR/ 17 DM/ 10 US\$
LP : 350 BFR/ 18 DM/ 12US\$
CD : 450 BFR/ 23 DM/ 15 US\$

All prices postpaid

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Music is at the center of our counterculture. Everything else in hardcore punk revolves around it or originates in it.

What does this mean for us? Some would say that it will prevent us from ever posing a serious threat to the establishment. They would have us believe that our music itself is just another form of entertainment for the adolescent years and the leisure time of the workers who keep the wheels of our system turning, and that the fact that it is a "rebellious" form of entertainment makes it more appealing without making it any more dangerous. According to this line of thinking, we punk rockers and hardcore kids waste all our rebellious energy making and selling music when we could be using it to accomplish far more challenging goals; that is, we have neutralized ourselves by basing our counterculture upon something frivolous.

I don't think that's true. I don't think music is frivolous unless we settle for frivolous music. Music and the arts in general are significant because they speak to people on an emotional level. Music can articulate and clarify emotions that would otherwise be formless, vague, confusing; it can force us to enter chambers of the heart that we would otherwise never acknowledge, and it can whip us out of a passive stupor into a frenzy of emotion. The most powerful music is able to completely transform the world for the listener: it invests things which were once meaningless with an emotional significance that they did not possess before. If we want to transform this world, then, isn't music the most useful tool we could employ?

If we want to change ourselves and the ways we act and interact, nothing could be better than music. Mere weapons won't do it: we've seen violent insurrections fail time and again, and besides, the governments have more firepower than we could ever stock up. Mere theory won't do it: we've seen how overly theoretical discussion not only tends to exclude the very people it seeks to address, but also ends up bogged down in inaction, inertia, and in-fighting. Obviously no amount of money will do it: nothing that can be bought with money can change people unless the people already desire change. But if we could make music so moving that it brought people to life, filled them with passion and desire, made them unwilling to settle for unsatisfying lives, then we would have accomplished the first and most difficult step towards real change:

"The system couldn't care less *what kind of music a man listens to, what kind of clothes he wears, or what religion he believes in as long as he studies in school, holds a respectable job, climbs the status ladder, is a "responsible" parent, is non-violent, and so forth."*
-The Unabomber Manifesto

Editor D-Ablo's top ten reasons why hardcore *is* still dangerous:

1. Catharsis "Ex-Members of the Human Race" 3-month world tour*
2. Gehenna live in Dilsen, Belgium
3. Mormons 7"/Kilara 7"
4. Seein' Red live in Amsterdam/Trial live in New Jersey
5. His Hero Is Gone "Monuments to Thieves" CD
6. Profane Existence "Making Punk a Threat Again" book
7. MÖRSER "Two Hours to Doom" CD
8. Society of Jesus "...Dei Miracoli" 7"
9. Burn Collector #7
10. Fireball #6 (and anything else from Fort Thunder, Providence)

we would have awakened people and made them demand more than they have today.

Not to say that just any music could do this. And not to say that that alone would be enough, by any means... but what could be more important than that? Hardcore music has actually accomplished this already for a lot of us. Most of you who are reading this magazine right now would never have come to it if it were not for the excitement you felt the first time you heard a hardcore band. We've all been significantly shaped by the music we love, each of us is living proof that this music can have a real effect on human life, that it isn't just frivolous. And no, hardcore music isn't for everyone, but music is, and we must see ourselves as part of a wider struggle to reach people, to inspire and ignite them. We can do this with our music if we try hard enough.

I'll share with you a dream I have about music and revolution. Many years ago I read a book by Kurt Vonnegut called Cat's

Cradle. In the book, there is a fictitious substance called "Ice-9." Ice-9 is a different configuration of water molecules that allows water to harden into ice at much higher temperatures. Normal ice, "Ice-1," let's call it, is formed at 32 degrees fahrenheit; but Ice-9, once water molecules have been "taught" how to arrange them-

selves in that pattern, can freeze at 100 degrees fahrenheit. If a cube of Ice-9 touches a body of water that would normally only form Ice-1, it makes them configure themselves into Ice-9 as well: it "teaches" them how to arrange themselves so that they freeze at 100 degrees too. So if you drop a cube of Ice-9 into a normal cup of water at room temperature, all of the water is changed into Ice-9.

At the end of the book, someone drops a tiny piece of Ice-9 into the ocean, and the entire world is changed. The oceans freeze from the poles to the equator, and everything they touch freezes: rivers, clouds, animals and people too. The world undergoes a complete metamorphosis in a matter of minutes.

I can't help thinking that there must be some magical combination of musical notes, of sounds and words, of ideas and emotions that could do the same thing to us. The reason that many people can be affected in the same way by one song is that there are, obviously, certain similarities between us; might there not, then, be some song waiting to be discovered that would reach something fundamental to all of us, a song that would act as a universal catalyst? A song or novel or painting that would move every person who experienced it one thousand times more than any other work of art had

Honorable Mention: Hand to Mouth 12" & 72 page booklet, "Limited Options" 10" compilation & 'zine, "We May Fight a Battle..." compilation CD, Gocce nel Mare demo & 90-page booklet (Italy), Radikalna Promjena demo (Croatia!)

**that is to say: abandoned insane asylums and three mile long train tunnels, black eyes swollen shut, all night drives through the deserts of the wild West, stolen food, riots, guitar smashings, stabbings, Spanish art galleries, New York movie theaters, Italian squats, standing before the Isenheim Altarpiece in Colmar, walking under the star-filled sky outside of Rennes, being followed by homicide detectives, being showered with newspaper in Germany, sharing life with a thousand new and exciting people. I'm not trying to glorify my own adventures, just celebrating how much living is possible in this world!*

ever moved them, that would drive them out into the world, possessed with a brand new, all-surpassing passion, a passion that would spread like wildfire from continent to continent, consuming everything in its path and leaving behind a changed world...

I told my dream to a friend of mine who studies classical music. It reminded him of a story he had heard about an obscure Russian classical composer who was apparently possessed by genius. Once, one of his symphonies was performed at the Sunday public concert that all the bored, middle class men and women attended for the sake of seeming "cultured." When they heard the music, which was unlike anything they had ever experienced, they were suddenly filled with a fury they had never felt before. The entire audience erupted in unison into an enormous riot that spread through the city, absolutely uncontrollable, unprecedented. Imagine the fat bankers and lazy housewives screaming, running through the streets, beating each other with their folding chairs! In an instant they were overwhelmed by wild emotions and instincts they had never even been able to admit they felt.

I imagine it must have been something like that when slamdancing happened for the first time at a punk show. Until that night, people had danced in place or hopped up and down to the music, never imagining that there was anything else they could do. But when the band struck their first chord that evening, some unknown punk kid was moved by an irresistible force and leaped into the people next to him—and suddenly everyone was running around, crashing into each other, doing something they had never imagined before, and the world was a wilder and more exciting place for all of them.

It's true that both the examples I've given are violent ones, but I think this theory holds true more broadly: perhaps every new dance, every new idea, is inspired by a burst of emotion—by, for example, a brand new musical expression. And it's true that slamdancing, like everything else, has largely become just another ritual that people participate in without really being challenged or

transformed. But musicians and artists must keep two steps ahead of the sterilizing, deadening forces of ritual and culture: to fill us with passion and life they must keep inventing new means of expression, keep pushing the limits of art and music, keep creating new ways to break the spells of boredom and inertia that hold us. We human beings depend on artists and musicians to keep us free in our hearts, to keep us alive, to keep us excited about life; they must not rest, but always push harder to expand the territory of the human heart.

"It is up to the artists and musicians to blast through the dead shells that surround our hearts, to being us, the dead, back to life. Only they can teach us again what it is to feel deeply—what it is to want things again. Music sings back to us our hatreds and loves, our own lives, intensified; it can help us make sense out of this absurd world if anything can. One song which makes a human being feel some emotion for an instant is more revolutionary than ten thousand bombs exploding. For that is what we are fighting for—to have emotions again, to be individuals again, to know what it is to be human beings outside the cages of modern life."

-CrimethInc. "In Our Time" liner notes

What does this have to do with the review section, you ask? It should be obvious! Bands, musicians, don't be content to just imitate the music of your predecessors; bring something new into the world. When I'm writing the reviews and I put your record on the turntable, I want to be moved, I want to be shocked and amazed, I want my insides torn into a thousand pieces and put back together in a completely new order. We've all heard too many bands going through the same rituals—make it count, somehow! Aren't you a little desperate too, a little impatient with all the predictable and mediocre shit around and inside us every day? Don't you want to start some trouble, to make a mark upon the world, just a little bit? You have a pretty serious responsibility, mak-

ing music for the rest of us; we depend on you to break us out of our ruts, to inspire us in our lives.

And magazine writers, the same goes for you! Your writing should do the same thing that their music should. If it won't touch people, if it won't do something to us or at least for us, what is it good for? I spend so much time here waiting for something exciting to happen, for something to *really happen*; doing my best myself to make it happen, yes, but waiting also for fresh air from outside, for fresh inspiration. When I receive your record or magazine for review, I want to be affected deeply, I want the earth to shake! Or are we completely satisfied with how much excitement and challenge we already have in our lives? Music and art in general should be a carefree game, yes, like all of life; but a game that you play *hard*, since it is played for the highest stakes!

Andy Dempz's Records and Events Making Hardcore Punk Again

1. Extinction 7", live, and in debates
2. Creation is Crucifixion live and written work
3. Inept 12"
4. Absolution "(in)Complete Discography"
5. Devoid of Faith "Discography"
6. successfully functioning collective
7. bloated institutions collapsing under their own weight
8. being able to tour for \$20-100 a night *and embarrassing every band with a \$400 guarantee*
9. the reorganization of the international hardcore scene into independent, unique local communities

Eric Warner's Top 10 for Lifting and Losing Reviews:

1. Backstabbers CDep
2. Deformity "Misanthrope" CDep
3. Kickback "Forever War" CD
4. Kill Your Idols 12"
5. Inhuman "Evolver" CD
6. Politics of Contraband "Politics Sucks" 7"
7. Regression half of split CD with Breach
8. Shodokan demo
9. Stigmata "Troy Blood Unbeaten" double CD
10. Visual Discrimination "Serial Killer" 7"

RECORD REVIEWS

reviewer key

jug — pot of glue greg bennick
 d — mental patient dan young
 j — college essayist jim walkley
 @ — poet laureate gloria cubana
 b.a. — roommate to the stars brian avery (responsible for a whopping one review!)

b — petty thief editor d.

APOLOGY: All the reviews written by our longtime reviewer Eric Charles Warner were maliciously lost by the postal system the week that this magazine was put together. He spent a great deal of time and effort working on them, only to have them disappear after he mailed them to us. Among the CDs he reviewed were the Inhuman "Evolver" CD, a number of Good Life releases, and the Nine Shocks Terror 7".

A more sordid disaster occurred with Dan Young's reviews. In the course of the weeks leading up to this issue's release, Dan suffered a full-scale mental and psychological breakdown, which, whether real or self-induced (probably the latter), left him completely delusional and unable to interact with others. He has since left his band and become almost unrecognizable to many of his friends. He wrote his reviews for this issue while this breakdown was taking place. Consequently, while a few of the earlier reviews were usable and have been printed here, the rest were not. The reviews Dan turned in read like the book *Flowers for Algernon*: as they progress, they become less and less coherent and contain less and less reference to reality. After about fifteen of them, he began leaving off the addresses, and by the end he was making up his own titles to the CD's (he listed the title of Liar's CD as "Invitation to my tea party"). His reviews began to get off base when he reached the Everything Went Black demo (*"overtly mindless lyrics with plenty of less than subtle references to their own small genitals"*), became progressively worse as he wrote about the Boy Sets Fire CD (*"...I think this is actually an all-girl band with ex-members of the Run-aways in it... to be enjoyed with a glass of warm electronic milk and a polyester cookie"*), and finally hit dementia in his description of the Atom and his Package CD: *"This is really a piece of hair. Noise is for broken toys. What a jive talker man."* Dan's final review, of the Liar "Invictus" CD, reads: *"I'm drowning in possum blood and I see the bloodbrown sea of sky ask that I stay and speak volumes on this peice of music that screams and guitars and drums and basses itself around and around on my walls and tucks me in until I am in a black metal coma of european device. and candy is for demonsuckers so go and be a good boy you fucking ignorant whore."*

Watching one of your friends lose his grip is never fun, and I didn't think it was appropriate to print those reviews here. [If you think I'm making this stuff up, you're obviously not aware of the sort of things that go on here at Inside Front.] To everyone who sent something in that isn't reviewed here, I offer our sincerest apologies. We really are doing our best, and hopefully we'll be able to avoid similar problems next issue.

ABHINANDA "" new 12": I loved Abhinanda a few years ago. Of all the metallic mid-'90s hardcore bands, their sincerity, their positivity, and their energy really came through in the music as well as their lyrics, to really move me. Time has passed, and I've heard less from them, for some reason; I think they are one of those bands that is really popular in Europe but always overlooked in the U.S.A. This record displays the same technical skill that their last recordings had (in fact, even more technical skill), and the same irrepressible hope and human feeling in the lyrics, but it has a much more rock feel than their "Senseless" LP (which is now available on fancy colorful vinyl from Genet, by the way) did. When they cover—fuck, did I say "cover"?!—their song "All of Us" from an older "SXE as Fuck" Swedish hardcore compilation, it doesn't sound like fast hardcore the way it used to, it sounds more like rock music. The fancy guitar flourishes, grooving guitar riffs, super-fancy production, slower tempos, etc. all say "rock" to me more than they say "hardcore," in this context. I mean, it's great rock and roll, better than old Helmet, or Rage Against the Machine, even, but I find myself reacting emotionally to this record in the way that I react to rock bands that I like (read as: find a guilty pleasure in), not in the way that I react to Final Exit. In the song I mentioned, the backing vocals, speed, and dramatic glory near the end remind me of what Strife almost achieved at their peak a few years ago, but that's about as close as this record comes to traditional hardcore, and Strife was well on their way to becoming a fucking pseudohardcore rock band themselves at that point. I don't doubt Abhinanda's sincerity at all, and I'm not at all opposed to going in new directions with our music; I'm just trying to express to you the way I feel about this record as it compares to Abhinanda's older stuff. It's not that much different in style, it's just that they crossed a line somewhere for me... Anyway, I'll briefly recapitulate the ingredients here: uptempo, energetic rock drumming that often ventures into a punk rock doubletime, intricate guitarwork with plenty of flourishes to dress up the anthemic riffs, singing/yelling bleeding-heart vocals, slick yet sincere, with lyrics about fighting to find hope, meaning and happiness in life, fighting bigotry and cruel power (and one song attacking the nihilism implicit in the black metal scene—right on!), major-label quality production. —b

Genet, address above

ABSENCE "From the Bloodshed" 7": The 7" reads "VEGAN POWER," one word on each side... you know, I've never liked that "[fill in the blank] power" thing, it reminds me too much of white power and similar things. I thought we were trying to get away from "power" and towards equality and consideration, isn't that what veganism is about? Anyway, Earth Crisis had one decent record, the "Firestorm" one (I'm talking about their music, not lyrics or anything else), and Absence has pretty much used that record as the blueprint for this one. The singer, and the guitar players, for that matter, have the same monotone approach that Karl and his string section did, and often Absence's singer will come in with exactly the same rhythm and (lack of) inflection that Karl patented on that record. The guitarists play the same metal shrieks to ornament their simple chunky riffs, and the same moments of metal melody appear to make the otherwise monotone music beautiful for brief moments. The lyrics even have the obligatory militant vegan reference to firearms ("one shot, one life is taken")—come on guys, it's been a decade now since Vegan Reich started talking about that shit and not one fucking animal oppressor has been shot down by a hardcore band. Seriously, this

Greg Bennick's Ten Favorite Juggling Tricks, Movies, Thai Entrees, and Live Bands

10. Five ball force bounce
9. Three club single spin backcrosses
8. *The Sweet Hereafter*
7. Seven ball cascade
6. Three clubs while riding a 6" unicycle
5. *Dawn of the Dead*
4. Five club cascade
3. Catharsis
2. Cashew Nut With Tofu
1. Rush

Gloria's Top 10 Things that Make the Heart Beat Faster

1. *Sexing the Cherry* by Jeanette Winterson
2. The Magnetic Fields
3. warm days in January
4. *Waterland* by Graham Swift
5. Catharsis live
6. vintage Russian limousines
7. "All Mine," Portishead
8. Madredecus
9. Dover — *Devil Came to Me* CD
10. *Athena* by John Banville

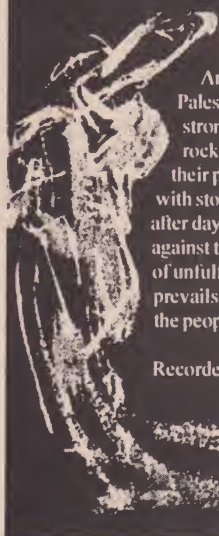
Children of the Stone

And it was once said, that the lands were without existence. And it was once said that the dead are mute. The blood of the dead is within the defenders, endless singing, endless chanting, their revolution has been written by the raped, the tortured and the dead, written by the blood of the holy warriors and by the just, and it was once said...

Although never attainable, the common demand of the people will always be fought for. A war for freedom was waged in the late 40's when Palestine, or Israel to common society, was declared as ownership by the Zionists from Great Britain. And since the Arab-Israeli war in the 60's, the uprising struggle has been met with the harshest wrath of Israel. Uprising after uprising, the Palestinian people were determined to regain what was stolen from them, to uphold and reclaim Palestine. Most recently, since 1987, the strongest of all revolutions, the Intifada, has threatened the sole existence of settlers and murderers alike. People united and armed with rocks and determination fought for their freedom. The Intifada was brushed off as a mere riot of people causing minimum damage. But their persistence proved them as one of the strongest uprisings. Full artillery and tanks lined up against men, women, and children armed with stones, and still the Israeli government could not stop them. The Intifada could not be suppressed, and still cannot. To this moment, day after day, the people's struggle in Palestine goes on. Genocide is being committed against these people, yet the world will not do anything but present peace accords full of unfulfilled promises. This ethnological movement shall never rest until justice prevails. The deaths of all the freedom fighters will not be in vain, and the power of the people will prevail.

Recorded December 1996 at Signal to Noise. Ire was Radwan, Jeff, Eric, Christian, and Patrick when this music was first released.

ire: P.O. Box 902, Station C, Montreal,
Quebec, H2L 4V2 Canada.



CARTHEMOVER

The album will be opposed to the final interpretation. The album will be released on compact disk by +/- Records and vinyl by Genet Records in June 98. We apologize for neglecting to provide the lyrics. If Lenny's Sinatra-esque tones prove to be indecipherable to you, please write and we will be glad to send you a copy of the words. Both songs deal with the outside influences aligned against the individual. Money is not an outright rejection of an exchange based economy or receiving money, rather it is a criticism of the system that promotes economic activity as its own end, rather than work as a means of providing fulfillment or acquiring the resources necessary for survival. The catchy chorus was written so you can sing along when we visit your town on tour this summer, eastern United States in July and Europe in August. These songs are from the final recording session with our original bass player, Nikolai Bristof, and are dedicated in his memory as he was killed after a thirteen day standoff by agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms. His death will be avenged, we will not go silently into the tyrant's grasp. We would also like to thank Herr Dingseldin who we feel is the modern incarnation of the Norse god Loki. His trouble-making efforts have not gone unnoticed and shall not go unrewarded in Valhalla. Be sure to provide healthy fruits and vegetables for him if he ever stays with you, he means that bit about stealing food in dire circumstances as he presently stole one of my roommate's Ho-Ho's in order to fend off starvation for another day. These songs were recorded demo style by Mike at Cloud City Studio and, in addition to the previously mentioned martyred outlaw and soulful crooner, feature Mike and Andy on the top three strings of their guitars and Wes in the basement behind a drumkit. You can write to us at 28718 Elmwood, Garden City, MI 48135 for more of our poor self-centered sense of humor and razor sharp political insight. Certain and 'y' money', here, 'money', and 'Arens and the Hammersmith Odeum for allowing Iron Maiden to record their definitive masterpiece 'Live After Death' there. We are Ernie and his mother's gun, and the Catbirds as a whole. If they stand still, they're well Three thousand some years since the beginning. The album will be released on compact disk by +/- Records and vinyl by Genet Records in June 98. We apologize for neglecting to provide the lyrics. If Lenny's Sinatra-esque tones prove to be indecipherable to you, please write and we will be glad to send you a copy of the words. Both songs deal with the outside influences aligned against the individual. Money is not an outright rejection of an exchange based economy or receiving money, rather it is a criticism of the system that promotes economic activity as its own end, rather than work as a means of providing fulfillment or acquiring the resources necessary for survival. The catchy chorus was written so you can sing along when we visit your town on tour this summer, eastern United States in July and Europe in August. These songs are from the final recording session with our original bass player, Nikolai Bristof, and are dedicated in his memory as he was killed after a thirteen day standoff by agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms. His death will be avenged, we will not go silently into the tyrant's grasp. We would also like to thank Herr Dingseldin who we feel is the modern incarnation of the Norse god Loki. His trouble-making efforts have not gone unnoticed and shall not go unrewarded in Valhalla. Be sure to provide healthy fruits and vegetables for him if he ever stays with you, he means that bit about stealing food in dire circumstances as he presently stole one of my roommate's Ho-Ho's in order to fend off starvation for another day. These songs were recorded demo style by Mike at Cloud City Studio and, in addition to the previously mentioned martyred outlaw and soulful crooner, feature Mike and Andy on the top three strings of their guitars and Wes in the basement behind a drumkit. You can write to us at 28718 Elmwood, Garden City, MI 48135 for more of our poor self-centered sense of humor and razor sharp political insight. Certain and 'y' money', here, 'money', and 'Arens and the Hammersmith Odeum for allowing Iron Maiden to record their definitive masterpiece 'Live After Death' there. We are Ernie and his mother's gun, and the Catbirds as a whole. If they stand still, they're well Three thousand some years since the beginning. The album will be released on compact disk by +/- Records and vinyl by Genet Records in June 98.

RECORD REVIEWS

COALESCE "Give Them Rope" CD: Absolutely monotonous. I'm sure if I were to see this band live right now, they would be really impressive (more so than they were when I did see them a few years ago), because there's definitely some power and electricity in this music; but listening to this here, I feel as if I might as well be listening to radio static. The vocalist's delivery is one of the problems: he enunciates each syllable with the same (lack of) emphasis, which makes him sound like a screaming robot—in this respect he reminds me of Karl from Earth Crisis, and, in fact, at one point in the first song the music pauses and his voice comes in with a rush of backwards echo, just like Karl used to do. I fucking HATE vocals like this—when you scream without emphasizing any of the words, it sounds like you're just trying to make ugly noises, not like you actually care about the words! If you cared about the words, you would emphasize certain ones, just like you do when you get into a screaming argument in real life. Down with fake, ritualized hardcore screaming. Anyway, the production is another problem: it's powerful and heavy as fuck, but it tends to make everything sound the same. Everything is so compressed that there's no room for any sound dynamics. And finally, the songwriting is also a little monotonous: chunk chunk chunk, bang bang bang, groove groove groove, the whole record long. The packaging is cool (restrained and aesthetically pleasing, with a streak of dirty paint across the front and back), except the lyrics are printed so small and in such long strips that it's nearly impossible to read them. They seem to deal largely with abuse, which is an important and always relevant topic, and I get the impression that the writer is talking about things from real life, not just lifeless generalizations, so there's some spirit there at least. I don't want to give the impression that this isn't a perfectly executed record, that there's anything sloppy or second rate about it—there's not. It's just that, for the reasons I've mentioned, it barely touches me emotionally at all. This band clearly has plenty of skill and dedication, I just wish they were using it in a different direction. —b

Edison, at the address of Very distribution

CLOSURE CD: Moody, emo/hardcore crossover music, I'd say. They do the theatrical open-chord thing in places, with the screaming vocals, and (as we all expected) go from that into the acoustic part with quiet melodic singing in the background. The lyrics are pretty vague, addressing personal issues (a friend who seems to have stopped taking the time to "smell the roses") and social issues (how work gobbles up your life). At their best moments, their music is pretty yet melancholy: it's atmospheric rather than intense, even when they are playing at their hardest. Mountain amazes us with beautiful (silver-on-purple cardboard fold-in) packaging, as usual. If only other labels had so much fun experimenting with packaging. My only complaint of the packaging is that the place where it says "available for \$6 postpaid" is covered up when the CD container is closed, thwarting the original purpose of printing information like that, which was to encourage kids who saw the records in overpriced stores to mailorder them. —b

Mountain, address below

CLOUDED "Inheritance" CD: This CD instantly begins with a high shriek, rather than fucking around with intros—good for them. I wish they hadn't ever backed down after that, just pushed the intensity level higher and higher, but that's hard to do, and they don't try it; instead, they break up the faster, shrieking parts with slower, less high-octane parts. The singer doesn't stop shrieking much, except for some speaking parts in the first song (and boy does his English have a funny accent!! What I would give for one of these

Belgian bands to sing in French or Flemish). His voice is distinctive, at least: it's higher and more rough-edged than most bands in this genre. Indeed, Clouded doesn't sound as much like Liar as Spineless, Sektor, and so many other Belgian hardcore bands do, so good for them. They still show some metal influence, but it isn't as geared towards dancing and "evil stuff." The band includes a little writing in the liner notes, which is a welcome sign of sincerity, but it is partly obscured by the photos of breathtaking clouds in that make up the bulk of the layout artwork. —b

Genet, address below

COLLAPSE CD: Self-released 7-song CD with minimal packaging (well, they printed the lyrics, at least, so it's better than some rock star CDs...) by a

newer band. Their music is mostly mid-tempo, possibly danceable straightforward hardcore, with ragged, screaming (occasionally gargling a bit... and, at one ill-advised juncture, attempting to sing) vocals. The songwriting isn't quite smooth yet: some of the transitions between parts are choppy, but there are some moments (the beginning of the sixth song, for example) when the music becomes more complex and it works. The lyricist hasn't really arrived at a voice of his own yet (he sings "society keeps us gagged and bound" at one point). It's cool that these guys were proactive enough to take things into their own hands and release their music on CD, but in the old days this would have been a demo. (Maybe it should be a demo—there are too many CDs around these days, as this review section should demonstrate.) Anyway, it's unfair to judge a band by their demo, so don't write them off for this effort; I'm sure they're going to make plenty of progress. —b

605 New York Avenue, Ogdensburg, NY 13669

CONVERGE 5: Converge's original song begins with those strange, out-of-tune guitar chords they use, the ride cymbal going in the background, and then they leap into the chaotic complexities of the song proper, jerking forward in fits and starts, in typical Converge style. The music breaks into acoustic shards for a moment, the vocalist speaking normally rather than shrieking

in his usual high, possessed screech, before the distortion comes back and the song is over. I must say, Converge is notable for having been able to reinvent themselves quite a few times over the last few years, each time reasserting their place at the cutting edge of hardcore music, but this song reminds me too much of their other work to seem important or special to me. At least the lyrics (about the way the pain of every shattered faith and every failed relationship hangs in the air around us, making it more and more difficult to commit ourselves to anything emotionally) are poetic and touching, as before. The b-side, a Violence thrash metal cover, is much more exciting for me musically. There, Converge seem to be in their element, doing what they're best at this month, having fun with energetic heavy metal thrash music. It's funny how, in 1998, when I hear a hardcore band covering a thrash song I can't even tell that it's a cover. Does that mean we've lost our identity, musically? —b

Ellington, 112 King Street, Northampton, MA 01060

DANCE OF DAYS "6 First Hits" CD: Brazilian hardcore VERY MUCH in the vein of Embrace. Do I smell a coincidence. Ambiguous emo lyrics in their native tongue as well as in American, so we don't have to so much as lift a finger to figure out what these guys are talking about. The music is enjoyable in a "my lover has gone away and I want to die" sort of way. Easily digestible. Blah blah. —d

Teenager in a Box, address nearby

DOMINATRIX "Girl Gathering" CD: Imagine a more pop punk Bikini Kill (i.e.: Team Dresch), just as angry, a little more polished musically, and from Brazil. There's legitimate anger in this music, with legitimate reason, and the lyrics explain and discuss those reasons eloquently. The fourth song offers their precepts: "three things that you should learn: riot grrrl will never die, every grrrl is a riot grrrl, stop boys' violence!" The lyrics stick to topics like sexism and the self-assertion of women, and there's a pride in the singer's voice that commands respect. Most of the lyrics are in English, but some are printed in Portuguese too. The back of the lyric sheet includes a fair bit of information about what this band is up to (an explanation of a controversial lyric, information about benefit shows that "Riot Grrrl Brazil" is putting on, addresses of 'zines, women's collectives, and support groups, etc.) and demonstrates sincerity on their part—some of the members are responsible for one of the 'zines, too. The music is energetic, fast, and still fun, really good if you enjoy this genre. Thumbs up on all counts for this CD. —b

Teenager in a box, Caixa Postal 205, Sao Paulo - SP, CEP 01059970 Brazil

RECORD REVIEWS

DAWNBREED "Aroma" CD: Quirky, genre-bending hardcore/punk/jazz-influenced stuff with quirky sentimental (1950's) packaging to match. The singer goes back and forth between the German, English, and a little Spanish, which is cool, as he alternately whispers, yells, screams with a breaking voice, and sings in a somewhat whiny voice. I can't understand most of the lyrics, but I get the feeling that they're quirky, too, without being mere giddiness and nonsense. The music varies between blurry, sleepy acoustic jazz parts, emo-influenced hardcore/rock parts, and even more weirdly eclectic sections. The fifth song even comes in with a distinctly surf guitar intro. They incorporate a trumpet from time to time, which doesn't sound out of place to me, especially since I'm having a hard time getting my bearings with this anyway. At their best moments (the beginning of the third song, for example: a high trumpet shriek over deep, crunchy guitar chunk, punctuated by nervous drums that sound almost like a hip hop track) they have drama and amazing originality; at the other times, which come more frequently, I'm not sure what to make of them or how to feel about them—you know what it's like to hear something that definitely makes an interesting experiment, but isn't exactly good music, don't you? OK, if only I could make more sense out of this, I could speak highly of it, but I think Dawnbreed was trying to evade comprehension with this record anyway. At least there are bands out there fucking around with new stuff, something great is bound to come of that. —b

Trans Solar, see Acheborn/Systral split 7" review for their address

DEVOLA "Playing the game of Revenge and winning every time" CD: I had to get the first Nations on Fire record out to doublecheck, but now I'm sure of it: remember the singer's high, slightly annoying voice on that record? (You may not, but bear with me here...) This guy's screaming voice is an entire fucking octave above his! The guy sounds like a fucking chipmunk caught in a blender! I'm amazed he can even hit these notes—and not only does he hit them, but he never stops hitting them, which leads me to believe that perhaps he couldn't do anything else if he tried. Not to be jerk [*oh, no, Brian, we know that no Inside Front reviewer would EVER be a jerk!!*] but if my voice sounded like that, I'd seek medical attention. Anyway, it sets them apart from other bands more than their music, which is speedy, energetic hardcore punk, with enough dynamics but not too much variety or innovation. You know, there are open-chord doubletime parts, more rhythmic chunky parts, time-signature changes, but nothing really brand new. Of course, that stuff works for Seein' Red, and it works well enough here too, so OK. This hardly even needs mentioning for this label, but the packaging is fucking gorgeous and

ground-breaking: silver ink on black fold-out cardstock paper. —b
Mountain records, the address must be in here somewhere

DYSPHORIA "Hope Without Reason" CD: Super moshy hatecore a la Hatebreed with streetwise lyrics and danceable guitars and drums. Super aggro vocals as well. Nothing groundbreaking here, just a lot of that Northeastern pent up aggression type thing going on. Decent cover art completely obscured by typical show photo on the back cover. —d
Dysphoria, P.O. Box 590, Buckingham, PA 18912

ECLIPSE "the bona fide" 7": I'm convinced. Eclipse brings this record in with a super-dramatic melody, all the instruments playing together, that sounds like military parade music for Vlad Drakul's arrival. Then, though they were already playing faster than half the bands today dare to, they double the pace, and the singer starts screaming. Before you can get your bearings they sweep up into a sky of melodic, broken beauty, and then plow back into a molten sea of adrenaline. The vocalist isn't afraid to hit high, screeching notes that set him apart from other screamy hardcore singers this decade. The second side opens with a low chunky riff that carries the same drama it would have had if Metallica had played it at their peak. This song is a little more straightforward, midtempo mosh in construction and style, although it's still perfectly executed—they depart from that style at the end to do a grooving piece that sounds like, say, Abhinanda covering a slow riff from a Systral song. Excellent 7"—I'm impressed, considering how young these kids look in the record insert photo. —b

Premonition, Lodjursvagen 50, 906 42 Umea, Sweden

ENDEAVOR "Constructive Semantics" CD: This band certainly seems to be genuine in its approach to music, but the music is infected with the typified sound of the noisy hardcore emo genre. At times this stands head and shoulders above the rest, and they include an encouraging invitation to contact some organizations they must feel some convictions about. The lyrics are powerful and effective and the vocals stand up well to the chaotic music. A diamond in the rough. —d

Trustkill, 23 Farm Edge Lane, Tinton Falls, NJ 07724

ERADICATE "broken" 7": This record comes in suddenly, almost as if the record skipped, with some fast, slightly sloppy hardcore, the mix a little bass-heavy, the players sounding like they are pushing themselves but not quite reaching their aims. Their singer has a slightly hoarse yelling voice that, like the music, sounds like it took an effort, but doesn't quite make magic. The slow parts are actually a bit more interesting, a little less genre-predictable. The music isn't bad, don't get me wrong, and there is some variety in it (mosh

HAND TO MOUTH (and DWGSHT 'zine) "Your Ticket to the New Jerusalem" 12": This record comes with 72 pages of writing related to the music, in which the Dwgsht people, the members of the band, and their friends address a variety of subjects, including how and why to live "low-impact lifestyles," life in prison, some historical pieces on radical political struggle, past attempts at anarchist/"utopian" communal living, why Texaco and Mitsubishi are evil corporations, and what punk itself is good for. The writing is all highly intelligent and well-researched without being off-puttingly academic. My only complaint is about the first essay, which seeks to ground political and social activism in general on "morality" and moral imperatives, without stopping to ask (as we recommend people do in the essay at the beginning of this issue) what exactly gives a "moral imperative" its holy status as such. As for the music, one FUCKING MORON reviewer (I think it was Change 'zine, or maybe Second Nature or something) somehow thought this was a compilation LP called "Hand to Mouth," and [although STUPID AS FUCK and representative of exactly how out of touch today's reviewers often are] that's sort of an understandable mistake when it comes to the music itself: it goes back and forth between a amateurly performed mid-'90's chunk-chunk and metal-guitar-riff thing with screaming vocals, and a more cheerful, more confidently performed melodic, pop-punk-type thing with singing vocals. Neither of them are exactly phenomenal, but Hand to Mouth's music has personality, and this weird split-personality disorder thing makes them original. They have a good explanation of it in the insert, too, explaining why they refuse to limit their music to one emotion any more than they would limit themselves or punk rock in general. The mix is fine (the vocals are a tiny bit low, perhaps), the production and recording a little rough, and not as powerful as they could be. But all the audio stuff here is good enough to be enjoyed and appreciated. Even if you only get this record for the packaging, you'll probably find yourself listening to it as well. A+ for effort, A for delivery on the insert, B for the music itself, giving this record a solid thumbs up as a perfect example of how to do a punk record today. —b

Dwgsht 'zine, address below

RECORD REVIEWS

parts, oi/punk fast parts, faster simple hardcore parts); and there are some great qualities to this 7": it boasts nine fucking songs, in alternating German and English (the last of which is called "Nintendo Youth," which, in old-fashioned straight edge style challenges "break this connection or stay the fuck away!"), and it comes with a nice fold-out insert that includes skeletal x-ray photos and other cool stuff. So the attitude and approach are exactly what I want to see in a hardcore punk record, and the music's pretty good as well. Thus, the verdict: if you have fifteen punk records in your collection, you will really like this. If you have forty, you'll be satisfied enough. If you have one hundred, and you're hoping for something that will take you somewhere new and exciting, try another one. —b

Bad Influence, address below

GAUZE "7": I'd heard a lot about this legendary Japanese hardcore band, but the first time I put this on, I didn't really get much out of it: it just sounded like a mess, a sort of lackluster mess. That's probably because I put on the second side first, which starts with an uncharacteristically slow part. I'm definitely enjoying it more this time—although I have to admit it sounded more threatening and intense before I changed it to the correct r.p.m. of 45. There's definitely no pretensions or wasted time here; Gauze charges forward at a hundred miles an hour, filled with energy, the slightly-mistuned guitars grinding away at simple punk chord progressions and the singer spitting out throaty, incomprehensible (to undereducated American ears, at least), spiteful syllables. Once you get acclimated to the noisy punk of their sound you can easily pick out parts that are catchy, though not exactly anthemic. I didn't get a lyric sheet—maybe there is none—and most of the song titles are in Japanese, which is kind of cool but makes it hard to tell what Gauze is on about. They do get plenty of punk points for their logo (reminiscent of Crass, Conflict, etc.), in which the letters G-A-U-Z-E form an anarchy symbol, and I'd also like to mention that their drummer is one of the most gorgeous, perfectly cut, muscular individuals I have ever seen in my life. A good record, but for maximum effect I listen to it at 33 r.p.m. so the vocalist sounds like a prehistoric beast and the music is a terrifying, sludgy mess. —b

Prank, P.O. Box 410892, San Francisco, CA 94141-0892

GRADE "Separate the Magnets" CD: This CD begins with screaming, tightly wound modern hardcore, like a less intense Converge; but it quickly changes to a singing, melodic approach, and I swear they're trying their fucking hardest to sound like Sunny Day Real Estate. That's pretty much the formula for the rest of the CD: they go back and forth between the two. You know, I really liked these guys when they were a younger band, back when they played their unique brand of highly charged melodic metal and sang about aliens. Back then, their guitar leads and sweet singing parts were original... this really isn't. The lyrics leave something to be desired, too—in one song, which seems to be nothing more than a request for a kiss from some special someone, he croons: "my lips are well, it's my heart

that's recovering... your sweet saliva I prescribe." Did they stop trying, did they lose their drive to be creative and push the limits of music, or did they think this would be a good way to win money and fame? Or, am I just missing the point here? But—as the cute but vacant packaging, lyrics, and music indicate—*what point?* —b

Second Nature, address just a few reviews away

HALLRAKER "The Methods of..." CD: This reminds me of Inquisition. Lite pop sensibility with a straightforward mid eighties hardcore appeal. The CD

artwork looks like something John Yates would have done in kindergarten. Perceptive lyrics and rugged music make this appropriate on a smaller scale to a confined number of people. —d

Sike, 553 Cooly Street, Springfield, MA 01128

HUMANS BEING "My Demons Disagree"

CD: I think this is actually a hardcore workout record. A completely predictable and typically bland record from start to finish. If there was a learner's tape for how to start a generic hardcore band, it wouldn't be much different than this. Is it really possible for there to be a watered down version of Earth Crisis out there. Maybe. —d
Pressure Point, P.O. Box 907, Colchester, VT 05446

INDIGESTI "Osservati Dall'Ingianno" 12":

After the last couple issues of Inside Front, it should be no real secret that I like this band, although I still know nothing about them. I believe this is a repress of an old LP from the mid-'80's. The music begins with a smokescreen of wailing feedback, then charges headfirst into some old fashioned (Bad Brains "Rock for Light"!) hyperspeed hardcore punk. The first two songs stick to this approach, the drummer beating on the snare and cymbals as fast as he can, the guitarists bloodying their knuckles desperately double-picking the strings with him. The third song is slower: the beat has more oi in it... it's reminiscent of the Negative Approach "Tied Down" LP, only less tough. The fourth song has parts as fast as the first two, and a slower part in which the guitars play one particularly high, spooky note—it's the little departures from formula like these that keep this record (or any good record, for that matter) interesting and immediate from the first song to the twelfth. The lead guitarist is actually responsible for a lot of creative stuff here—he has one trick he uses a few times in which he plays a lead and then leaves the last note hanging provocatively in the air as the verse comes back in again, and every once in a while (just as on "Rock for Light") he'll throw in an instant of metal lead or a Jimi Hendrix-esque flourish. The drummer never lets up for one second, and the singer is completely pretentious, yelling and singing and muttering and shouting with no regard for anything but trying to get the lyrics out before the band can outstrip

LASH OUT "The Unloved and Hated" picture disc 7": Leaving behind the haunting, abstract beauty of their last record, Lash Out comes in on this record with an all-out hardcore/metal assault. No time is wasted; the punch of the double bass, the thousand-pound guitars, and the screaming vocals (the new guy's voice is deeper and stronger than the last guy) come together immediately, and yes, it is convincing. As for the songwriting, the easiest song to describe is the second one, because it is mostly made up of two familiar riffs: one, a different version of the chorus to the Integrity song "Systems Overload," and the other, a different version of a riff from (I think it's the last song on the first side of) the Carcass "Heartwork" record. Not to say that this stuff doesn't work, it's fucking well done; it just sounds pretty familiar in those two songs. Actually, I didn't go wrong by mentioning Carcass, the second side comes in with a gorgeous classical metal arrangement that I would have thought was "Heartwork"—Carcass if I'd heard it blind. But, if you ask me, Carcass could have put twenty more songs in that style on that record and it would still all be just as exciting, so I don't mind finding some fragments of it here at all. And it's really amazing for a hardcore band to be able to play that kind of music—I mean, the tightness, the complexity of the guitar lines and rhythms here, take real fucking skill. Lash Out's skill does (and always has) set them apart from almost every other hardcore band. So, thumbs up, it's a good record—sounds excellent for a picture disc, too (really thick vinyl, etc.). Finally, the lyrics: they have that surreal, hallucination-quality that older Lash Out lyrics possessed. I guess they're speaking about personal trials and tribulations, etc. I have read better poetry, even in band lyrics, but not much better, and these lyrics give the music the meaning it needs to be truly extraordinary. —b
Havard Godoy, c/o Norsk Rockforbund, P.B. 8892, Youngstorget, 0028 Oslo, Norway

him. The lyrics themselves (which are translated from the Italian on the lyric sheet) are enigmatic, interesting but difficult to pin down—they were probably more clear in the original. But even without being sure what Indigesti is talking about, I enjoyed this record a lot. It's energetic, fresh, and unpredict-

GEHENNA "The war of the sons of light and the sons of darkness" CD: This is a discography CD, with Gehenna's demo, split 7", and 7" all (drastically) remastered and collected here. I'm part of the record label collective that released this, so I don't get to review it in any normal fashion: that would be pretty frivolous. But I will tell the story of a show I saw Gehenna play in Belgium, which was possibly the most intense performance I have ever seen in my life.

At the end of their set, they played the two songs from their split 7". The band struck one muted chord in unison, the guitarists beating their instruments as if to hammer home a nail, one of them led off with a riff, and they burst into the most vicious aural mess I have ever heard. Mike Cheese immediately charged into the crowd, not pausing at the edge like any other singer would but barreling through it, sending kids sprawling across each other like dominos, all pushing and shoving to escape before he flew off in a different direction, hurling his hulking, massive body against anyone in range. From where I stood atop a wheeled speaker cabinet to the left of the stage I watched a wave of fear and confusion wash through the audience, crashing at the cabinet and shoving it across the floor as I struggled to maintain my balance. The bassist followed Cheese off the stage, frantically striking the strings with his left hand, his other arm hanging limply at his side, not fretting the strings at all, as he swung his body about, the head of the bass first, like a horn, his face slack in an expression of inhuman disinterest in the consequences of any of his actions. Cheese pulled back and roared once, long and guttural, into the microphone, the first time he had deliberately held it to his lips, one guitarist went flying through the air off of the bass drum, and the band left one chord hanging in the air, suddenly slouching into ominous stillness for a moment, long enough for feedback to ring out and the audience draw its breath in terror—before the last song began, Cheese and the bassist crashing against the audience, the guitarists running, falling, staggering across the stage, all swinging their instruments wildly, striking them with one arm and throwing them across their shoulders with no regard for what happened to them or anyone in their path, the grim, fearsome music somehow still ringing out of their battered equipment, the tangible threat of injury thick in the air around every person in the room. There was a final pause, and the second guitarist sounded the last alarm, everyone frozen in place for that instant before the final explosion, guitars fucking flying through the air into crowds of people, Gehenna members chasing after them, striking them as they threw them again at anyone unfortunate enough to be in range, finally not trying to play at all, Cheese leaping onto masses of fleeing, stumbling hardcore kids, the dark air crackling with electricity, fear, and adrenaline, smelling like blood, like nightmares, like murder, like the blackest corners of the human id. Cheese turned and rammed into the body of the crowd, carving a path from the front of it all the way to the back, it parting before and beneath him like the Red Sea, the band hit the final, broken note, and he said into the microphone with an understated sarcasm: "are ya scared?"

And it wasn't just them we were scared of, it was ourselves. Gehenna's performance that night and their recorded music in general bring us into much more than mere physical danger. Their music breathes with spite and malice, with the raw lust for power and destruction that hides somewhere, undeniable, in each of us. They lay bare the contradictions in our moralizing, they tear our skeletons out of the closet, they make it terrifying to be a human being again in a way that it hasn't been since we pushed our unacceptable desires under the rug in childhood. Gehenna tear open the door to the furnace of the human soul and push our heads into the flames. It's a bitter medicine they make, for those who have tried love, tried striving for better things, tried life in this world, and found all to be lacking, all to be imperfect, all unsatisfying and petty. It is the insensitive music of the most sensitive, of those who suffer most from this world: those who cannot accept its shortcomings, its failures, who would rather bring everything to an end (for destruction is easier, we all know) than settle for this. It is the final outcry of life before total despair sets in, before the moment when nothing means anything—when out of bitterness the sufferer rejects everything, regrets and despises all existence, feels no greater wish than that everything be destroyed, that this flawed, humiliating, pathetic world never have existed. For these are still feelings of value, emotions of disgust that refer to something better, something that would be meaningful and valuable if it could exist in this world, something that only through its absence renders the cosmos entirely desolate of worth. In this cruel world, everywhere there once was something

beautiful there now is something ugly. Where the most beauty was, now the most ugliness is to be found; for the most fragile, sensitive things break first, and are replaced with the most callous. When I feel that, when I am absolutely exhausted and disgusted with life, but still too much alive to accept everything and not want anything any more or any less than anything else, I listen to Gehenna: for this is the ugliest, most monstrous music in the world. —b

CrimethInc. recordings, shamelessly promoting ourselves at any expense

HIS HERO IS GONE "Monuments to Thieves" CD: This CD has been hyped and hyped and hyped from every corner of the punk world, so there's no reason for me to just write about how good it is. It's good, it's very good. So instead, I'll try to speak, unlike the other reviewers, on *why* it's so good. First: the production. His Hero has had top notch production on all of their releases, almost the same top notch production on each one (I would argue, in fact, that they need to experiment a bit next time, so their records don't start to sound too similar): perhaps the heaviest, most aggressive production the punk world has yet heard, and yet with an amazing clarity that permits us to appreciate what the (very proficient) individual musicians are doing. Second, the songwriting: their songs are perfectly constructed, nothing extraneous, taking each musical idea to the furthest limits it can be pushed. They are, of course, drawing upon a tradition of bands from Discharge to Doom that have paved the way for them with this kind of gruff, filthy punk, but they take that heritage and push it to an unprecedented level of impact. Their fast parts have all the energy and drive of the fastest grindcore bands, and their slow parts have the hypnotizing groove of Systral's best moments (although the seventh song ends with a riff more reminiscent of the Misfits "London Dungeon"). The vocals betray all the resentment and grim determination that a life of physical suffering breeds, all the vehemence that comes of cold nights, empty stomachs, and open wounds. The only elements here that could be improved are the lyrics (which are anthemic at some points, but occasionally a little cliché: "when will the madness end?") and the packaging (the restraint in the simple images increases their force, but we only get a couple of them, and the lyrics, whereas with their last record we got a little painting to go with each song). And—be wary, His Hero: you have now made the very best record possible with the equation you invented. It is time now to dare to take new risks and challenges with your music, or else your future records will only be second rate imitations of this one.

Technicalities aside, let me finish this review with the first song. It begins with a desperate wail of suffering guitar, and the music crashes upon the listener like a mine caving in, the hiss of approaching annihilation drawing closer and closer until... Suddenly everything cuts out and there is only one solitary guitar, like a lonely chirping cricket in the sad morning, singing a little song to itself. *Bang* A short round of machine gun fire from the drums and the song tears across the landscape like a derailed freight train, destroying everything in its path, ripping up the soil, crashing to a flaming halt in a flaming wreck, and *bang* a four-count on the drum sticks and the verse begins. What is absolutely agonizing about this song, and all the best moments of this CD, is the contrast between the low notes and high notes in the guitars. The guitars play the deep riffs with the drums and bass, together creating an engine of destruction, a thirty ton monster that leaves nothing but sawdust in its wake and violence in the listener's heart. But in between each deep chord, the guitarists pull up two octaves to play these desperate, pleading high notes that cry out over the devastation like a Greek chorus of brokenhearted angels, forcing me to remember in every instant of this hate-choked, blood-soaked holocaust of a CD just how much we have all lost in this world, just how much forfeited beauty is missing in every instant of our suffering, in every moment of my impossible war against the forces of inhuman power and cruel fate. And when they reach the chorus, I'm almost crying, teeth clenched, wanting to strike out at anything, myself first of all for becoming so beaten and twisted that destruction seems more natural than creation to me, too, now. That chorus will sing in my head for the rest of my tormented life, until I die or kill the very heart in my chest. And at the end, when the singer roars out "*Like weeds we will grow!*", it's a bitter vindication of our hate-infected, vicious lives, that we who can no longer love with pure hearts will at least fight to our deaths against the hate-infected, vile world that bore and bred us. —b

Prank, address above

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able in ways that very little punk music has been since the mid-'80's. —b

Vacation House, Via San Michele, 56, 13069 Vigliano Biellese (Biella)

ISOLATION "7": The singer of this band died before this record came out, and it is sort of a tribute to him, but I have to review it according to what it is, all the same. It starts with a silly sample about getting beat up in Wisconsin, which sets a different mood than the one I think this very serious (straight edge, I believe) hardcore band wanted to create. The music is textbook mid-'90's hardcore, with the danceable midtempo riffs with snare drum fills, the Snapcase harmonic high notes, the slow, crunchy parts, and screaming vocals. The vocalist wasn't bad, he sounded like he cared about what he was doing, even if he doesn't sound too much different from the next guy... his voice reminds me of the vocalists in Jesuit. The first song is about dedicating your life to vindictively pursuing someone who went wrong (not usually the most positive use of a life), and the second is about being stabbed in the back (although it doesn't use those words). There's a third song, for which the lyrics have been lost, as a result of his untimely death. The music has some energy in it, it's not absolutely lifeless; but there are a number of records I would recommend before this one, even a couple in this genre. —b

Underestimated, P.O. Box 13274, Chicago, IL 60613

The JABS "Time of Negligence" CD: This is probably the second record I've heard from Singapore, ever, but I get the impression that it is a sign of a quickly growing hardcore scene there. This begins with a long, slow intro, reminiscent of the days of Judge and Point Blank. When the vocals come in, they're not bad—the guy is definitely screaming, definitely into it, pushing himself, and the backing vocal chorus doesn't sound as clichéd as it does in New Jersey these days. Think Side By Side, Straight Ahead, etc. The vocals are a little quiet in the mix (better than too loud!), and the drum sound isn't very effective, but I'm not really looking for fancy production here. If they get the drums just a little more powerful (and quieter in the mix) next time, they'll have an effective old-fashioned rugged sound. The lyrics are pretty standard late-'80's straight edge fare, but they work just fine. Anyway, they got me to compare them to Side By Side, so they didn't do too badly! —b

Straits, Blk 225, #02-58, Pasir Ris, St. 21, Singapore, 510225

KILL SADIE "7": Kilara actually named themselves after a girl (Lara) they didn't like, so I guess the same sort of thing is going on here. The music has a refreshing lack of pretensions, it's rough and gritty, has fast parts, sudden changes to much more melodic, slower parts that still maintain some attitude, ragged vocals

MAYDAY "Staplegun" 10": Mayday was one of the most important bands of the early 1990's—their innovations in lyrics, vocals, and music completely transformed hardcore as we know it and paved the way for bands like Bloodlet, Disembodied, and even Catharsis and Gehenna. Before their "Underdark" 7", only Integrity had successfully experimented with applying abstract metal noise, inhuman screaming, and dark poetry in a hardcore context. Since those days, Mayday has become more and more difficult to track down, playing fewer and fewer shows, waiting longer and longer between records, rearing their heads less and less often... so it is probably appropriate that this record come out on the equally evasive Stormstrike label. As they've become less and less active, they seem to have lost some of their focus and inspiration as well, although even the rotting carcass of a band like Mayday holds more interest than any band like Disembodied could in the pink of health. On this record they walk a thin line between recapturing their past glory and falling sloppily short, and I'm not sure on which side they finally end up. The guitars sometimes sound like they're out of tune, the delivery of the growling vocals is less solid than it once was, and the lyrics are less compelling. But there are moments when Mayday manages to transcend these flaws and shake the listener free of any awareness that this is just music being [imperfectly] played by human beings. In these moments they can still create the alien, haunted atmosphere of their older work. Then, the most important elements of the music are the invisible ones—the tortured souls caught in the bent guitar chords, the black, poisonous clouds rolling in from the horizon, the roaring beasts and buzzing flies that, at times, can practically be made out behind the music. The packaging of this record is fucking perfect in every respect, even down to the thick paper record sleeve and the fact that the jacket is black *inside*. Speaking of the jacket, it's embossed with the name of the band on the front, and the lyrics on the back, over the rotten, pockmarked flesh of Grunewald's christ (from the Isenheim altarpiece, near the Stormstrike secret bunker). The vinyl is black and fog blue, swirled, beautiful and alien like Mayday's best work was. —b

the ever elusive Stormstrike, Kollmarsreuterstr. 12, 79312 Emmendingen, Germany

that (at the highest-energy moments) scream back and forth at each other or (at the other end of the spectrum) sing along with the music in a more pop punk style (although this is too rough-hewn to sound like pop punk)... the lyrics are also pretentious and witty ("we kill spies traitor watch your back name dropping lies that won't be read all over when you discover that we kill spies..."), and their little essay about why they sometimes sing about resentful breakups and other relationship stuff instead of hard politics is convincing enough. I don't think any of the songs are classics, but if you like the irrepressible way bands like Cave In go about their business of enjoying making music, and think you could handle something less metal but with the same attitude, I'm sure you could find yourself listening to this. Gorgeous, gorgeous packaging, too: embossed front cover, color photos on matte finish on the back, fancy foldaround cover. —b

One Percent, P.O. Box 141048, Minneapolis, MN 55414

KING FOR A DAY "7": This band sounds like Seaweed [major label corporate rock whores]... only even worse, in the words of a Seaweed fan present right now. The music is fairly fast melodic pop, with high rock singing over it—the singer actually begins the chorus of the first song by singing "here I go again." I'm not impressed, it's weak in every respect—no energy and no emotional content either. In fact, we just put on Seaweed, it sounds good compared to this 7". Inane, clumsy lyrics, no worthy intentions as far as I can tell, no, nothing good about this at all, except the cute cut-out picture on the packaging. Sorry guys. —b

Initial, P.O. Box 17131, Louisville, KY 40217

KOSJER D "12": The homemade-looking record folder (rugged cardboard with white and brown screenprinting) is gorgeous: it's not just a refreshing departure from slick, glossy, professional-style record packaging, it's near the top of it's class, as nice as any D.I.Y./emo packaging I've seen. If only there was some insert material: the lyrics are printed on the back of the sleeve, but you know how greedy I am when it comes to packaging. I opened up the cardboard flap, held the sleeve upside down, and shook, hoping to find a little explanation/artwork booklet, a propaganda pamphlet raving against Belgian gasoline prices, a lock of the singer's hair, something. All that fell out was a simple piece of black plastic. I put it on the turntable, and this is what I got: very well-done emo/indie rock stuff. Pretty soft and gentle, slow tempo throughout, complex guitar work that makes use of open and muted chords, occasional single notes, a distinctively indie rock (quiet, near-acoustic) guitar sound, skillful slow drumming with plenty

more melodic, slower parts that still maintain some attitude, ragged vocals of fills (in a jazz sense), lengthy songs (at this tempo they're bound to take a

KILARA "175 millimeters" 7": I don't know if Kilara is still around—I know their drummer left to concentrate on his other band (Avail)—but at their peak (and this 7" captures them at their peak) they were fucking incredible. I'm including nearby a fragment from a letter I wrote about one of their shows just to share my amazement at the intensity of their performance. No recording, no matter how carefully preserved on little vinyl discs, could possibly rival that intensity... but as recordings go, this one is something special, something that stands apart from the hordes forgettable songs and passionless performances clogging the arteries of our bloated music "industry." This one has heart and soul.

First song. The growling of an engine starting up, then coming to full pounding, hammering strength, the vocalists riding the heavy groove like a bucking wild horse, holding on for dear life, desperately yelling out their lines over the thundering hoofbeats. They pause for three seconds of grimy bass, and plunge into a battering sea of crashing waves, drums shivering and splintering—and just when it seems that the ante could not possibly be pushed any higher, they pull the carpet out from under the rhythm they have constructed, sending the listener reeling and spinning into the grip of an even more powerful rhythm. Second song. Shot—broken shriek—shot—broken shriek—shot—takeoff, in a matter of milliseconds, and they're plummeting down a steep cliff face at a thousand miles an hour, colliding with branches and rock outcroppings and ripping them off as they descend. Instants before they start to lose momentum, shot—shriek—shot—shriek—shot again, and they rocket into the sky, swerving and stalling and finally nose-diving back to earth, ultimately coming to rest in a twisted mess of tangled guitar strings and broken noise. But even as the flames die down, the hiss of a burning fuse becomes audible from within the wreckage, and the song ends with one final all-consuming explosion. Third song. Dawn breaks over a silent dreamscape, hoarse notes of alien birdsong bending and breaking in the charged air. As the pale sun ascends, the distant drums gather speed and tree branches begin to shake in the wind... then the instruments and vocalist come together to form a theme for a few measures, before separating again to wander the wasteland individually. When they come together again, they stay together, building force and power until they have beaten flat every tree and hill to the horizon and rebuilt them according to a new order. What I would give to see this band play together one more time. —b
Thunder Lizard, P.O. Box 171, Hopatcong, NJ 07843

KILARA

Birmingham, Alabama: January 3, 1997

(taken verbatim from a letter to Gloria, on the 12/96-1/97 Catharsis tour)

"... Friday night we arrived (late, lost) at the club, a kid-owned punk/hardcore warehouse venue with clipboard-sporting cops crawling it like fleas, doing their best to get it shut down (which they did accomplish, three songs into our set). But there were some good people there, and Kilara played again, so incredible. They pound out this bluesy, devastating groove that thunders off the stage and ricochets through the audience like tidal wave after tidal wave of cannonballs. I watched from behind the stage, which is the best way to see them, because each member has such a hilarious, distinctive personality. They all scream, with Southern accents, each in their own weird way, and—well..."

Erik: The heart of Kilara: the drums. Hunched low behind the beaten drumkit, eyes like smoldering coals peering out from under his bristling eyebrows and over his Steppenwolf beard, Erik is a Norse god in overalls. When he plays his skin glistens saltily as if he had just crawled out of the North Sea, his long hair flying like seaweed in a maelstrom, his monstrous arms, cut into superhuman muscles and wrapped in tattoos, pounding out the final roll call for judgment day with baseball-bat-drumsticks on the shivering, splintering drums. His two cymbals, each easily two and a half feet in diameter, ring and fly in circles, cracks and chips widening—his face, eyes, entire body become inhuman, focused on the task as only a lightning storm, an earthquake, a typhoon can be focused, mercilessly, unflinchingly. *Soul*, he has it to

leave behind the banalities of mundane everyday life and tap into fundamental forces, to become a force of nature, an act of god, a juggernaut of primordial rhythms that have always been and always will be. **Sam:** Their bassist is a huge, corpulent guy, who lumbers and bounces across the stage like an engine of destruction, belly swinging like a wrecking ball in time with his floor-shaking grooves, long matted hair curling and uncurling, swinging in frenzied circles around his head. His biker-blues basslines construct the low-end platform upon which the torn, trebly Kilara guitars perform their cacaphonic dance.

CB: The guitarist looks like he wandered out of a flower-child commune and into a steroid shop, with his perfect complexion and long, perfectly straight, pretty hair, big teenage-fantasy farmer-boy muscles on his tanned arms and chest, dazed lost dreamy eyes, confused slow surfer voice like he's not entirely with us, slightly cro-magnon good looks. He waves his guitar around like an enormous phallus, leaps off of speakers over the other musicians, stamps around like he's doing a rain dance.

Brandon: As crucial an element of Kilara as Erik, this little lost blond boy plays (loosely speaking) the other guitar. He has a perpetual vulnerable, frightened, sensitive, manic look in his piercing blue eyes. Peeking out through his long, thin, stringy blond hair, Brandon looks like a smaller, thinner, more adolescent Kurt Cobaine, both in his facial features and his spare build, in his nervous bearing and his worn clothes. Nothing he says makes any sense, and he's always looking around at the world with these expressions on his face that make you wonder what he's thinking about. When he smiles, he looks so child-like, mischievous and maniacal that you want to try to locate the institution he escaped from, if only to discover how long he's been without his medication. When he plays guitar he shakes himself around wildly, thrashing about until he drops his pick and falls on the floor, where he continues to bang his guitar with his fingers and shake epileptically until he breaks a string—upon which he always looks heartbroken, which is amazing, considering that he does this at least every other song. Between songs he picks himself up sheepishly and tries to repair and reorganize his equipment, only to destroy everything again a few seconds later when the next song starts. Whenever it is his turn to sing with his high, breaking baby's shriek, he crashes into the microphone, knocking it over as soon as he opens his mouth, and then does the same thing to the other microphones, until everyone in Kilara must just scream into the air. His veins stick up off of his body like nightcrawlers the whole time, as if ready to crawl off of his body and set off in search of tranquilizer needles.

At an earlier show, the first one we played with Kilara, I costed Brandon afterwards to tell him I enjoyed his band, especially the drummer—that there were no words to express how excited I was about his playing. **He:** "Oh yes, I'll tell him you didn't like it." **I:** "No, I *did* like it, he was great. I couldn't even begin to express..." **He:** "OK, good, I'll tell him you thought he was awful." **I:** (seeing Erik walking up, carrying his equipment) "No, I mean..." **He:** "I think he's awful, too, really. Quite awful." **I:** (getting my bearings) "OK, you tell him that." **He:** "You know, you and I have talked now. Next time I see you, I'm going to come up to you and talk to you... I mean, is that OK? Is it all right if I talk to you next time I see you? You won't mind?" **I:** "No, of course not..." **He:** "Or how about we just eat. Won't talk, just eat together, every time we see each other. It'll be like we're married." **I:** "Sounds great, if you bring the food."

You would think that with the entire string section leaping, stamping, falling all across the stage, Brandon's broken strings whipping through the air past flying shards of Erik's cymbals, that Kilara wouldn't be able to make much more than an aggressive audio mess, and it's true that there are moments of that. But when it counts, as I've said, they come together like a machine (probably a machine manufactured by Harley-Davidson) to beat the audience between the hammer and anvil of the most blistering, gritty blues rock you can imagine. And they'll break into some great fast parts (one song is constructed like a grindcore-punk version of "Wipeout!", if you use your imagination) to spice up their set.

So, the evening was far from a complete disaster, compared to the next night in New Orleans . . .

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while) that don't become boring insofar as they manage to create a mood and benefit from unpredictable, abstract songwriting. It's the music of rainy autumn loneliness, of forgiving regret. The vocalist sings, usually in a mild, soothing voice, occasionally with a little less restraint, and sometimes speaks a bit. His lyrics are what makes this record work; they are mature, sensitive, informed by literature and poetry here and there, and full of feeling. Usually he sings about the gaps between people trying to reach each other (or themselves) in relationships, occasionally touching on the human search for meaning in a vast, threatening world. —b

Genet records, address elsewhere

KRITICKA SITUACE "Forgiveness" 7": This is the departed Kriticka Situace's

final release, no less heartfelt or refined than their full length was. The recording is as clear and strong as the LP recording, although the drums seem to be a little louder in the mix. The music is a little more restrained, a little more melancholy beauty and a little less rage and velocity: the acoustic parts last longer, and the vocals have more melody in them. The band doesn't seem tired on this record, just older, a little more patient and mature, a little more world-weary. While they captured outrage, fear, and tension best on the last record, this one is strongest in its quietest moments, above all the last song: in which the singer begs forgiveness for the same hurtful tendencies within himself that he has always criticized in the world around him. The rest of the lyrics, which are still in Czech with English translations; deal with the military and the lust for power, in the same touchingly human way that characterized the lyrics on their last record. I do keep mentioning their LP in this review, but that record was really significant to me, and this one isn't enough of a departure from it to stand as an entirely separate entity. Still, that one was good enough that even a mere afterward to it would be welcome, and this is far more than that. —b

Day After, Horska 20, 352 01 As, Czech Republic

LEBENSREFORM "Retor" 7": Take some Acme, some Rorschach, and some Fugazi, and mix them together, if you can imagine that, to create Lebensreform. This is still music, unlike Acme, which transcended music to become sheer abrasive power incarnate. Still, the sound is more full and even more frenzied than most of Rorschach's music was, so to stop with that comparison would be insufficient. When they really get going, torn-out-throated

screaming, snare-drum-pummeling, guitars-turning-into-just-noise-being, they approach maximum electric band intensity. And at the edges of this music, rather than weaker versions of the same musical idea, are more subtle constructions, more melody, more texture. That's where the Fugazi comparison comes in. So this is hardly a one-dimensional band; indeed, Lebensreform is the thinking man's crazy brutal hardcore band, as their multi-faceted music and irreverent-to-hardcore-tradition lyrics indicate. There's an experimental noise song at the end, for you arty Europeans. I have to say it's too bad this band has apparently broken up, since this music was at its best being performed in person by four German guys, their maniacal performances seeming teutonically programmed, their disorder almost regimented, led by tall, hook-nosed, black-haired Sven, his one white-streaked eyebrow raised. —b

Per Koro, Markus Haas, Fehrfeld 26, 28203 Bremen, Germany

MAYA "Biocide" CD: This is an interesting phenomenon: it's apparently a

collective project between a number of musicians from different musical backgrounds. As such, the music wanders far and wide between different styles, genres, and instruments across the course of the CD. There are breakbeat parts, experimental industrial noise parts, horn solos, and then slightly more conventional, Neurosis-esque parts with guitars/drums/yelling vocals/etc., and all these mix together indiscriminately at different points. It's like most musical experiments: when it works, it's really interesting, but much of the time it falls just short of working. In this case, the general problem is that actively listening to this CD, waiting for them to stumble onto another exciting moment, can get boring. That doesn't mean this isn't a good CD to have, though, since it makes for excellent atmospheric background music (perhaps that's more what it's designed for?).

The variety of the music helps make it a good CD to play in the background because it will be doing something new and unusual at any moment you turn your attention to it. I'm also a sucker for old-fashioned political punk collage covers like this one has with images of guns, politicians, skulls, Christ on the cross, etc. These all relate indirectly to the political theme of Maya, which is our destruction of the environment. —b

Conspiracy, Lange Leemstraat 388, 2018 Antwerp, Belgium

MILEMARKER "7": I saw these guys play, and at times they managed to push through the thick veneer of the predictable and habitual that stands between any band and genuine emotional expression. Gloria pointed out the unusual amount of emotion poured out with no apparent regard for efficiency: screams into air, almost wasted, gestures of strain and pain directed away from the audience, almost invisible to them. On this 7", however, they don't quite capture that. The emo/indie rock notes and chord progressions they play sound suitably mournful and angsty, as do the lyrics: angsty angsty. But that moment when the rest of the band stopped playing and the bassist, for the first and only time during the show, looked directly into the eyes of the audience, striking one note over and over on his instrument, making all the emotion of their performance suddenly, confrontationally personal, isn't to be found here. The two songs on the first side have more energy and life than the one on the second side, which seems to be meant as a lament. Those first two songs do work well enough as heartsick emo rock songs, so maybe I'm asking too much of this record that it hold, trapped in

vinyl grooves, all the invisible, intangible power of a good live performance. Still, it has been accomplished before. —b

Clocked Out, 3817 Sweeten Creek Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27514

MISKATONIC UNIVERSITY "There will be only one" CD: This is a hardcore record. It comes from Italy, a place where hardcore is still new and fresh and exciting and it really pushes its ugly head through on this record. I liken this to Trial here in America, very energetic and very genuine in their approach. Very elaborate packaging, with fearsome comic-book-like artwork on the cover. Still a bit limited in dynamics, but a much better than a lot of lazy, spoiled American hardcore bands. —d

Boundless, P.O. Box 1, 48020 Savio (ra), Italy

MOURN 7": This record is packaged with images that recall the brutality and suffering of the Jewish holocaust during the second world war, and the lyrics address that issue and similar ones. They're printed in English and Italian,

MILHOUSE "Obscenity in the Milk" CD: Yes, aggressive, sandpaper-abrasive so-called "music"! Yes, short, to-the-point songs like blitzkrieg attacks, no time wasted, no tendencies towards "rocking out" indulged! Yes, bitterness, selfishness, obnoxiousness, incomprehensible rage and self-disgusted angst, incoherent self-righteous ranting, all in the voice of singer Artie! His near-nonsensical lyrics would be a bore in the mouth of any other singer, but he screams them with so much bile that it's clear to me that they must mean *something*, at least to him. I can even forgive the distortion on his vocals, which is one of my pet peeves, when he shrieks "I don't care how many friends I lose!" It sounds like he means, it, and when I hear this, I mean it too: play mind-games, play word-games (these lyrics, for example), play fucking games with your emotions and everyone else's, play to lose, I don't care how many friends I lose! Maybe I'm misinterpreting Milhouse's goal when I characterize them as champions of strife and misery, but this music doesn't offer me any reason to reconsider: the rough-edged, deliberately disjointed songs are harsh enough to give an oyster epilepsy, and they're punctuated with some of the most disquieting samples I've heard. "When the meat is master then who is the butcher?" By the way, Artie, when you ripped off Bauhaus in the lyrics of the tenth song, you didn't sneak it past me. —b

Exit, look around in this issue and you'll find their address

The MORMONS "7": I wonder if Inside Front can singlehandedly make a record collectable. This record is the defining record of the obnoxious punk rock genre, as far as I'm concerned, but I don't think anybody else has even noticed it. So good fucking luck tracking it down, if you trust my taste!

This is the kind of music that you could *never* explain to your parents why you like it, probably not even to your friends. It sounds like it was recorded on a boom box left in a garbage can outside their practice space on which someone had accidentally pushed the "record" button, and when the band found the tape after practice they decided to release it. The songwriting epitomizes the simple, British drunken oi/punk style, with twenty second open chord and tom drumming intros, leading to three chord riffs that go through only a couple changes before the song is over. Everything is played as sloppily as possible, the band members yelling out profanity and nonsense in the background; the bargain-bin guitar amps sound more like static than anything else, and the drummer sounds like he's beating on soggy cardboard boxes with his fists. What could possibly be good about this, you ask? Trust me, it's fucking great. It has all the obnoxious energy, all the repulsive, repugnant, offensive glory that attracted most of us to bands like the Exploited in the first place. There's more attitude on this little piece of garbage-brown vinyl than there has been in the last six years of hardcore records. The vocalist screams, rants, howls, leaves English, sobriety, propriety and sanity behind him, bellowing and screeching at the top of his lungs, with zero regard for precedents or intelligence or anything else, and, along with the upstart "musicians" around him, manages to bring an irresistible, undeniable spirit to this music. When everyone is shouting along at the oi-pub singalong parts, shouting the wrong words or no words at all, this record is more fun than any fucking pop punk record; and when they're smashing shit, making terrible out-of-tune noises, and the singer is yelling the same meaningless, insulting phrase until his voice blurs into a mess of broken microphones and bloody vocal cords, I want to smash everything in my reach too, in the sheer joy of mindless, senseless destruction.

My band once played with these guys in Cleveland. The show was in the basement of a punk record store in the center of the worst neighborhood in the city, and was attended entirely by G.G. Allin kids. Before any bands had played, these kids found a trash can filled with glass bottles for recycling, dragged it to the stairs and kicked it over, covering the floor with broken glass. In between bands, a drunken fourteen year old runaway grabbed the microphone and started shouting G.G. lyrics into it, upon which some other shit-covered, half-naked drunk punks began taunting him, yelling something to the effect that G.G. Allin was a sissy. By the end of the night, the runaway kid and the other scum were in the back of the room, screaming incoherently and spitting at each other: the kid had pulled down his pants and was challenging the others to kick him in the balls (apparently to

demonstrate that neither he nor his dead idol G.G. was a "pansy"), and they were obliging him. That night, at the beginning of the Mormons performance, the singer ran out of the bathroom, his face painted black, and threw his cigarette directly into the eye of a punk kid in the front row before grabbing the microphone and launching into an indecipherable song. They didn't actually get through it or any other song that night: their bassist's amplifier broke on the first one, and after that they began songs over and over, playing them for only a few measures before one member of the band stopped playing, started playing another song, or threw his instrument off and started yelling obscenities and shoving people. All this may sound sordid to you, and it is: it's as sordid as human life fucking gets, it's sordid, base, degrading, shameful, stupid, ugly, coarse, worthless music. But, for all of you righteous, upright citizens: if the things a "positive" band like Youth of Today sang about are true of humanity, this stuff is equally true of humanity. If you're going to tell any of the truth and have it mean something, you have to tell the whole truth. I listen to this record at least as much as I listen to Kriticka Situace or Trial. —b

"Gristmilling Records," P.O. Box 771402, Lakewood, OH 44107

MÖRSER "Two Hours to Doom" CD: Evil, evil black metal artwork and a back cover that reads only "Twenty Two Songs" are not enough to prepare any listener for this. This is Systral's depoliticized, amphetamine-riddled, Carcass and Slayer-addicted, even-better-recorded younger brother. With four singers, ranging from nuclear-blast deep to blow-torch high, and apparently two bassists to their one guitarist, they destroy every preconception left in the world of metal/hardcore/noise that Acme created. Their songs dash back and forth maniacally between bursts of triple time dementia, grooves that pound like cannonfire across slaughter-strewn battlegrounds, and moments of musical carnage that are absolutely beyond description. At their best moments (the ninth song, which begins with a Carcass version of Carmen Burana, the monks shrieking their invocations over the ringing ride cymbal as swords fall upon bodies in the background, and the first song, which concludes with what sounds like the end of the world itself), they transcend music itself and enter a new realm altogether. I know I'm not giving a clear idea of exactly what it is they do, but that's impossible under the circumstances. The recording has the same monumental weight and force that carried the Systral 10" to such incredible nightmarescapes, and the music has the same deranged originality, with more metal and similar precision. I wouldn't say this is quite as spectacular, all told, as the Systral record was (it lacks the reference to real-world emotions and tragedies that made that one unforgettably compelling), but it's something that must be heard: it takes music to new places, to scary, unthinkable places, and we must follow, if we are not too afraid. —b

Per Koro, address above

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and are eloquent enough to make it clear that this band is serious about what they're doing. The music, however, is a little less solid. It comes in with some horribly executed melodic emo music, which alternates for about a minute with lackluster bursts of fast hardcore. But just when you think this record will be entirely mediocre, everything becomes more chaotic, and, in fact, a few measures later, there's a great part with a chunky guitar line that is complimented by guitar shrieks. That part doesn't last too long, but, aside from a very short return to that horrible acoustic emo stuff, the song closes well enough. The second song on this side is much quicker and shorter, and sticks to the more abrasive hardcore that saved the first song. The singer's voice is scratchy, and he screams the same way everybody does these days (Acme-influenced), convincing enough but not really better or worse than the next guy. The song on the second side is better than either of the songs on the first side, it seems more confident musically, more heartfelt, and takes more risks (for example, a sample of a woman's voice in the background during a screaming part in the middle of the song). It's also generally slower. There's some good stuff in it near the end where they pull out the structure, leaving just noise and dramatic pounding on the toms that finally build to a speedy, chaotic crescendo. —b

Insociale, Mario Luppi, via D'Avia Nord n.54, 41100 Modena, Italy

NIPPER "Psalms of Purification" CD: Melodic, fairly fast, punk rock music with singing vocals that derive some bite from their clear enunciation. At the best moments, the guitars add layers of melody that can be beautiful. At the worst moments (like the distorted vocals at the beginning of the fourth song) this manages to be pretty nondescript. They should push harder: play faster, play harder, pour more emotion into everything until it bleeds from the vocals and guitar lines like only does occasionally right now. It's clear they can do it, but they have to do it to an unprecedented degree if they want to stick out in the ocean of bands that exists today. It's so easy to play this kind of melodic punk rock, but so hard to play it well, that you have to have real guts to take on the challenge of being a band in this genre that does more than tread water. Give it a shot, Nipper. Their live track at the end sounds impassioned enough. I'd like to conclude by mentioning that this label is cool for clearly expressing their goals in the liner notes, so we don't have to wonder if they're another would-be Victory... —b

Bad Influence, Stefan Fuchs, Ludwig Thoma Str. 14, D-93051 Regensburg, Germany

ONE FINE DAY "vladimir ilich ulianov's failure" 7": This record sits at the border between being a really exciting, forward-looking, progressive record in the genre exemplified by bands like Acme, and just being another decent record in that style. The riffs are catchy and the playing is confident, and the shredded vocals are convincing too, but I just can't bring myself to embrace this record wholeheartedly. I think what this band needs to do to reach the mark is to tighten up their songs—the songs sprawl a bit, and with more focus, perhaps brevity, they might hit harder. Hey, if they played faster, that might help too! The midtempo, pounding drum thing can get tiresome after a whole record. There are some creative moments of noise or unusual transition where they really shine, and most of the music is well-constructed, but there's just something missing. The lyrics are in English with explanations in

both English and Italian. Sometimes they are a little confusing—I'd say the most off-putting lines are the first ones: "Sugarcoated by the snazzy one, nothing but excellent, great melange with sparkling eyes to take sureness." If I remember my Russian history right, the title of this 7" is a reference to the fellow who tried to kill Rasputin, but I'm not sure. It's not explained anywhere in the liner notes. —b

Cycle, Stefano Bosso, V. S.ta Agata 4, 28064 Carpignano S. (NO) Italy

OVERCAST "Fight Ambition to Kill" CD: I hadn't really been impressed with this band's earlier music: emotionless, sterile, highly technical metal, it seemed to me, and not too compelling as such. So when I put on this CD, I was amazed by how excited I was about what I heard. The Slayer-esque metal

assaults are actually catchy enough that I found my neck twitching, the complicated transitions increased my interest rather than losing it, the metal flourishes and gratuitous displays of musical proficiency made my heart beat faster. Every time I thought I had a grip on what Overcast was up to, they twisted out from under me, amazing me again with another completely unpredictable change in direction. Sudden tempo changes, pounding metal grooves, hallucinatory acoustic breaks, guitar solos and noise, superhuman drumwork, all followed in head-spinning succession. I decided that this is one of the most thrilling, perfectly constructed metal records I'd heard in a while. There's one catch: I was listening to it on a piece of shit CD player through \$2 headphones. That seems to be the optimal way to experience this CD: it gives the otherwise predictably clean production the dirty, distorted force it needs to really inspire fear, it gives the otherwise too perfect (that is, sterile and inhuman) music some gruff personality, it obscures the weaker parts of the vocals (their singer actually does some good growling and roaring here, but his more melodic singing still annoys me a little). And, it distracts from the lyrics. Not to say that the lyrics are bad; they're well-crafted, multisyllabic metal lyrics, but metal lyrics have always been somewhat silly in their artificial drama, their adolescent fantasies of power, their embarrassingly stupid self-importance. By the way, the multi-layered, heavily textured layout is quite a masterpiece, too: the band members and scarrrrrrry, evvvvvvvil images really look like they're wrapped in medical gauze. —b

Edison recordings

RAIN CD: This CD begins with a back-

wards track (an unusual choice for an opener), but it's gorgeous: among all the hisses of the bass plucks and the sucking sound of drums playing backwards, which create a high-energy atmosphere, there is a sort of sad beauty in the melodies that lies beneath the aggressive exterior of the music. After that, the CD proper begins: it's modern metallic European hardcore, clearly from the Belgian tradition, but with more a more unique personality than most of those bands have. The mix is a little sharp and unbalanced (the drums have too much prominence, for example), but doesn't hold them back at all. Rain's strength, which we glimpsed in the tragic beauty hidden in the first track, is the melodies they use in their hardcore: though they are playing belligerent music, there is a drama and touching sweetness in some of their guitar lines that involves me emotionally. The singer has a good enough screaming voice: it doesn't do anything unusual, but he sounds sincere enough to reach me the way the music does, and his lyrics are moving in their simplicity. They speak regretfully of the unlivable capitalist/authoritar-

NATIONS ON FIRE "Acenda a Chama" CD: Nations on Fire put out a couple great records—really different records, but both inspirational in their sincere approach to hardcore, politics, and life in general. The first LP was a little faster, a little harder, and featured high, yelling vocals that some people found an acquired taste, while the second one incorporated a bit more melody in the music and vocals, and somehow managed to get a worse recording. I liked the music on both records, for different reasons, and the ideas on both records for the same reasons—here are some lyrics: "put down that flag, put it away, whatever it says, no matter the color, you will always be used by another" "I'll put my nation on fire, that's my aim and desire" "they want me to be on their side, join their party and then hide behind the ugliness of politics; but left or right, a wing is only part of a body, a corrupted thing, don't want to be a part of any such entity." So anyway, now both LPs are available together on one CD from this Brazilian label, with all the lyrics and liner notes, some of the notes in Portuguese too. These are great records, with great lyrics, as I said, and the fact that they are now available together on one CD from a cool d.i.y. label in Brazil makes this a pretty desirable release in my book. It's a bargain, and it has everything from historical value to novelty value to "supporting hardcore labels in faraway places" value to recommend it.. —b
Liberation, Brazil—address below

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ian society we have made for ourselves, and, without overreaching themselves, incorporate enough poetry to give these subjects the emotional weight they need: the lyrics to their song "Rise" implore the masses to "rise like lions after slumber, movements in unvanquishable number, rise, like lions, rise. Rise." Their inclusion of an "intermetzo" (a sample of politician motherfuckers talking over classical music) as an intermission in the middle of the full length, and the backwards track at the beginning, demonstrate the necessary willingness to take risks and play with clichéd formats. Hey—good work, guys. —b

Redeem the monsters and kill the beast, Mark van Immerseels, Hendriklei 161, 2660 Hoboken, Belgium

REDEMPTION "7": This is fairly fast, simple hardcore in the tradition of the bands that appeared a couple years after the late '80's U.S. straight edge bands. There are some breakdowns, and they sometimes bring a little more interest to the music. The vocalist has one of those late-'80's revival yelling voices where it sounds like he's trying to sound a little more deep-voiced than is natural for him and it's hampering his delivery. I'm trying to find more descriptive words for this, or at least to think of a particular band to compare this to, but I can't. That's probably because all the bands that this reminds me of are the derivative bands, the bands that are imitating others and can't quite get their music to come out well enough to make themselves memorable. This isn't completely old-fashioned, it has a bit of a metallic quality to it, like many bands at the beginning of this decade. I guess the Die-hard LP is the best comparison I can think of, but who the fuck remembers that anymore? They experiment a bit more on the last song, with plenty of acoustic guitars, a more atmospheric approach, and spoken words behind the screaming, but it still doesn't quite work. There are a number of great hardcore bands in Italy right now, so these guys are in an environment where it shouldn't be hard for them to progress and improve. —b

Surrounded, Via Oderisi da Gubbio, 67/69, 00146

RENDER USELESS 7": I love Mountain records; their packaging, "business" practices, and general D.I.Y. sincerity are a relief these days. That doesn't mean I have to like everything they release, of course. So I don't feel too bad about admitting that this music doesn't do much for me by itself. The first note on the 7", a grating drone, sounded like it might foreshadow great things, but the midtempo, slightly groovy, rock/emo-influenced music doesn't move me, and the singer's voice, which ranges between breaking, squeaking melodrama (remember Atlas Shrugged?) and snotty singing, doesn't really touch me

SOCIETY OF JESUS "...Dei Miracoli" 7": Fuck yeah, Italian D.I.Y. hardcore... some of my favorite stuff is coming from there right now. When I put this 7" on, it came on with some very simple, slow, pounding ugly groove—but when I looked up from typing a minute later, suddenly they were playing at 150 miles per hour (OK, kilometers in this case), with some of the tightest most precision double bass I've ever heard and some fucking fierce deep vocals. Bang, that song ends and another comes in with the same explosive fury, and then another, which alternates these bursts of machine gun fire with a slow, doleful melody that is wrung out of the guitars like coagulating blood from a squatter's ragged shirt. The first song on the b-side is slower, again, with grim spoken parts, and then the pace is increased with another fast one before the record is closed out with one more (six songs here!) vicious assault. I can't describe to you how much better than almost every other "grindcore"-style band Society of Jesus is, I can't describe to you the way their music makes me feel—at the end of the first song when they suddenly pull out the triple-time snare and guitar grind, leaving only a hanging chord and the double bass speeding past you like a freight train, I shiver with awe. Everything is here: clear but not-too-glossy mix, dynamic and aggressive drumming, unpredictable songwriting, deep roaring vocals, furious fucking delivery. And just in case you're worried about their name, never fear, this is an antireligious band with a taste for irony. The English name of the record is "...about miracles," and in the liner explanations they rail against those who accept hierarchical power with passive inaction, who are "waiting for some kind of miracle" rather than risking everything to seize the fucking day. The writing is articulate and emotional enough to almost be poetic. The lyrics, too, are fucking classic. I'll reprint one song here to show you: "*Forever Loyal*": *Loyal when you beat people with a bludgeon, loyal when you torture handcuffed people. Loyal when you keep the situation under control. Loyal when you're loyal to your country. But you're just the slaves of slaves. Obey your master, your father, but for you too the end will come.* Getting a record this powerful, this articulate, this fresh in 1997 makes me fucking scoff at the failures and fools who say hardcore is dead. It even makes me feel more confident about the coming months and years of struggle I must face as a permanent deserter from the "system." —b

Matteo Verri, via Nonantolana, 726/1, 41100 Modena, Italy

either. It's not too bad, but, if you've read Inside Front before, you'll remember that I like to be violently affected by the music I listen to, whatever emotions it is expressing. What is exemplary about this record is the insert—they go into pages of detail about the lyrics to every song, and after reading it I not only have a better feel for their goals and personality, I even have learned a few interesting facts from their statistical analysis of the present conditions of living for people across the world. So if you're looking for music, I can't really recommend this to you, but if you're in a band, pick up this record and see if it gives you any ideas of how to put together the insert for your next release. —b

Mountain, P.O. Box 220320, Greenpoint Post Office, Brooklyn, NY 11222

SCALPLOCK "Broken History" CD: This band seems more specifically and politically focused than almost any other written about in this issue. The entire CD, from the explicit liner notes to every line of the lyrics, is an attack on the destruction wrought on indigenous peoples and their cultures by Western capitalist imperialism. The music is played with a fair bit of anger and intensity: the slower parts have a simple, old-fashioned sound (oi-influenced: mid-tempo, open chords being strummed in major key progressions) and are broken up with grindcore blasts. I feel like the blastbeat parts aren't really integrated into the songs perfectly; that's my one complaint about the songwriting. The vocalist has a deep, gritty roaring voice that goes well with the music, although he sometimes sounds a little forced as he tries to make his way through words like "ameliorate" and "commensurate obligation." Again, this record is most significant for the educated, eloquent, and uncompromising focus on cultural genocide: they have a song called "Shining Path," for christ's sake! And the music goes well with this theme. I am a little put off by their song against miscegenation (I'll fall in love with and reproduce with anyone, of any culture, if it pleases us, thank you!) but in general this is a good fucking example of politicized, first rate hardcore punk. I definitely get the impression that these guys are for real. —b

Eastview, Bridge Street, Writtle, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 3EX England

SEKTOR "Human Spots of Rust" CD: This CD starts with a long, long atmospheric sound effects piece, which consists of distant thumps, grumbles, and scratches. I'm glad bands are experimenting a bit, but they could have accomplished the same thing in twenty seconds: waiting four minutes for the hardcore music to begin just doesn't seem justified, especially since I can't really figure out what the connection between the sound effects and their music is. OK, what we have here is more

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Belgian metal, mid-tempo, some double bass, lots of chunky guitar parts, nothing really unpredictable. They lack the top-notch recording and moments of brilliance that I heard on the Spineless CD, but their lyrics are more interesting (if equally overdone): "let me hang over the abyss so my punctured heart becomes weightless..." I hear a lot of Liar influence in the third song ("baptized in a new born fire," I want to sing along), especially in the transition in the verse. The fourth song starts more originally than the others, with a drum roll and a high, eerie guitar line—oh no, that's black metal influence I hear! I guess it was inevitable... Similarly, the insert features pictures of scary castles, etc., including the band members themselves standing around in an abandoned, broken down building. For an instant, I wish I was reviewing some dirty punk record; then, the band would be squatting in a smashed up old building like this, not just visiting one for the photo shoot. (If Sektor actually do squat in the building pictured, I apologize profusely for underestimating them.) —b

Sober Mind, P.O. Box 206, 8500 Kortrijk, Belgium

SEVENTY EIGHT DAYS "Canvas" CD: Furious noise and well orchestrated music make this a flower in a field of weeds somehow. But I'm also wondering if these noisy bands have somehow figured out how to forgo talent in light of just beating the shit out of their instruments in crazy timing. Oh well, whatever it is, it works. I can't tell if the cover art is supposed to be graffiti or a real piece of artwork. Nevertheless no matter what this is like fifty records before it so make of it what you will. —d

Goodfellow, 762 Upper James Street, Suite 275, Hamilton, ON L9C 3A2 Canada

SNOWFALL "7": I'm a sucker for nice packaging, and this record comes in a green sleeve embossed with a white snowflake that reminds me of children's books I would have read around Christmastime as a child about two decades ago, so I have to mention that. I can't say I'm really a big fan of emo/rock music, but for the genre, this doesn't sound too bad. The vocalist sings melodically, although not without any bite in his voice, and the guitars play melodic lines, although, again, not without any bite. The song on the second side comes in with a guitar riff that I think Rage Against the Machine actually used on their first record, although it's not too recognizable. [I guess there are only so many possible ways to combine notes on a guitar, so it's not really fair for me to point out every familiar riff on these records, but I can't resist sometimes.] There's not much variation in the midtempo speed, and the songwriting provides only a small degree of dynamics in the atmosphere and intensity. The lyrics express the autumnal angst of fragile, moody adolescence. I think that's about the extent of what we have here. I might enjoy watching them perform, if I hadn't seen any bands play for a while, but I probably won't listen to this again. You might enjoy it more if you go for this moody emo/rock stuff, though there are probably some bands in that genre better than Snowfall. —b

Twilight, MBE 120, V. Della Grada, 4/F 40122 Bologna, Italy

SONS OF ABRAHAM "Termites in His Smile" CD: The first song on this CD is a different version of their song on the "Definitely Not the Majors" CD, and that was a better version—this one just doesn't have the maniacal abandon, and somehow the mix doesn't sound as forceful either (the double bass drumming, so prevalent on this record, sounds a little like a team of monkeys hammering away at typewriters). Suffice to say my attention could wander from this version, but I couldn't ignore a moment of the recording on that CD compilation if I tried with both hands over my ears. Anyway, not to say that this CD lacks intensity, it's got enough of that: hyperdynamic songs, technically adept performances, high shrieking vocals, chunky guitar parts, squeaky guitar leads, metal metal metal! But, just as the first song does in comparison to the other version, after a while it does sound a tiny bit monotonous. The lyrics, and, more notably, the song titles and quotes that accompany them (for example: "the revolutionary idea of living at home with your parents" "some of us may never see Paris") are playful and show that they're not just trying to push themselves into a mold. And, their friendly and personable little essay about meeting new friends, which comprises most of the liner notes, makes them seem like nice kids. One question—what is this about termites, and what do all the little pictures of them and skulls in the artwork mean? —b

Exit, address nearby

SPINELESS "Painfields" CD: This CD comes in with irresistible metal dramatics: *thump thump thump*, go the bass and toms together. *Thump thump*

thump—and the lead guitar strikes a single note of lonely splendor, like a hawk crying out overhead. The rhythm guitars join the bass and drums, and another lead comes in, singing back to the first one, alternating with it. This kind of stuff makes my heart soar. That was the highest point of the CD for me, though there are many other high points: this is musically one of the very best CDs I've heard from Belgium this year. Drawbacks: the vocalist's scary growls sound a little overdone, and the transitions in the songwriting aren't always the most sensible. Both these characteristics strike me as being common to the latest generation of Belgian metal/hardcore bands; at least Spineless also benefits from the excellent recordings bands in that area often get. In places, the lyrics are as overdramatic as the vocals themselves, so that's another place for improvement. There are some more great moments on the rest of the CD (the hanging single notes the lead guitar plays to complement the other instruments in the second song, for example, and the Slayer ripoff in that same song), although, as I said, it is a metal CD, above all, in that it lacks the grip on reality that hardcore music usually has. Spineless, the highest points of this CD demonstrate that you're capable of great things... turn out a CD of nothing but high points, and you'll be the next Carcass. But work on those vocals and lyrics, work on that songwriting, so we'll be able to take you seriously! —b

Sober Mind, at the Genet address

STRENGTH APPROACH "7": The vocals are too loud in the mix, and the drums are louder than the guitars, too, so you can barely hear the string section here. But plenty of good records have had bad mixes before, and in fact it doesn't hold this band back here either—because they have a good singer and good songwriting. Their singer has a great fucking yelling voice, just like the guy from Side By Side: the kind of voice that made those late '80's straightedge bands so much more exciting than most of their would-be imitators today. Listening to him yell, it's hard not to picture this guy leaping about, waving his arms, really getting into the music. The music itself is worthy, too: catchy, fresh old-fashioned guitar lines in a major key, fast, hyperactive drumming, and nice short, tight song structures. This is actually one of the better European "old-school" records to come my way in the last year... I'd compare them to Mainstrike, they do the same Youth of Today-style breakdowns and backing vocals, and with the same uncanny ability to keep it convincing a decade later. Fuck, even the singalong choruses sound like fun, rather than just overplayed. The lyrics, on the other hand, I have to admit, are nothing but overplayed: some song titles should give you an idea of what to expect: "Still Remain," "Looking Back," "True Friends," and... "Can't Close My Eyes"! That's OK, I don't mind, the music makes up for it. One more note before we go... on the back cover, it reads "Roma Hardcore 1997"—over the same crossed baseball bat logo that, a decade ago, was invented by the Cleveland hardcore scene as an imitation of Judge's crossed hammers. —b

Surrounded, Via Oderisi Da Gubbio 67/69, 00147 Roma, Italy

TEAR ME DOWN "Piu' sbirri morti" 7": The music here doesn't do much for me—at worst, it's badly recorded early Circle Jerks-era punk, complete with snotty speaking/singing vocals, and at best, it sounds a bit like Operation Ivy without the ska (the song "Jaded," perhaps). The moments when the backing vocals go "aaaaaah" work, but the songwriting isn't too smooth or interesting, and there's not too much else here to draw me in. The last song on the first side is different, it has deeper vocals and an oi music sound, and they experiment a tiny bit more with other genre clichés on the second side, but it still doesn't do much for me. Most of the liner notes are in Italian, which leaves me confused, but there is enough English for me to tell that they are anti-music business, anti-copyright and anti-cop. At least if I can't enjoy their music, I can agree with them about some things. —b

Applequince, Via di Mezzo, 12, 01100, Viterbo, Italy

TREPAN NATION "sx" 7": This record begins like a badly mixed Earth Crisis imitation, with a second-rate metal lead and some e-crunch on the guitars—but then the vocals (which are mixed too high, by the way) come in, and it becomes something more interesting. Much more interesting. The music becomes fast and simple, reminiscent of older punk/hardcore (late '80's stuff, pre-metal), and vocalist is singing over it with a rough, gruff voice that still carries a little melody. And the lyrics—the lyrics are fucking right on, some of the most straight up, honest, pretensionless and insightful lyrics I've seen in years. The singer explains in the first song why he's still willing to call himself straight edge in his mid-20's, and there's exactly the same mix of

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determination, troubled regret, and pride in both the words and his voice that I used to feel when I was trying to work through the same difficult question. The second song is fast and short, and in it the singer asserts that he has enough confidence in his ideas to be, well, assertive about them. The third song is the most interesting: he talks about bisexuality, and the way that it is demonized by both the oppressive "heterosexual" mainstream and the gay community. I think he's dead on right about that—sexuality isn't something that can or should be boxed up and labeled, and both the "straight" and gay subcultures are guilty of this. It is time for everybody to grow up and stop trying to restrict themselves and each other to preconceived notions of sex and self, as Trepan Nation's singer suggests. I'd be fucking happy to never hear the terms "straight" or "gay" again. Anyway, it's the lyrics and vocals that make this a great fucking record, one that recaptures the same relevance and sincerity that made Operation Ivy and Minor Threat so fucking good. Clear out all the singers from all the other bands in this review section (most of them couldn't write good, relevant lyrics to save their lives, let alone the world, which some of them have the audacity to claim they're going to do) and replace them with talented lyricists and heartfelt singers like this guy. —b

Thug Life (???), 49 Circle Avenue, Forest Park, IL 60130

TRÉPHINE "Reprogram... Recondition" 7": The morbid burgundy and black marbled vinyl caught my eye before I got to the turntable, as did the nearly unreadably dark packaging (one side of the insert, pitch black, reads only, in tiny black-red letters at the center, "a threat to your society") and artwork. The music is midtempo, really crispy guitars concentrating on a couple notes of crunch punctuated by a punchy bass drum and popping snare. The three singers shriek, roar, and grunt together (or against each other, it's hard to tell), and occasionally join forces to create some real aural chaos. The second side begins with more power than the first side: where the first side was monotonous at points (since the songwriting isn't broken up by too much variety), this song opens with alternating high notes and all-out guitar crunch, which makes the crunch more aggressive by providing a counterpoint. If there was more contrast in the songs, more variety, that would help... the last song has more of this than the others (it features more tempo changes and an unusual squeaking guitar lead) and works better as a result. But I think the focus here is above all on dancing, leaping about, and breaking equipment against the ceiling, not on trying to make history with the songwriting... and this music is just fine for that. —b

plus minus, P.O. Box 7096, Ann Arbor, MI 48107

TRIBES OF NEUROT "God of the Center" 10": This is the soundtrack to a slow, spooky, subtly terrifying movie: a movie like *Eraserhead*, in brittle, otherworldly black and white, with nightmare scenes that come in and out of focus, leaving you unsure of what is real or where you stand in relation to fiction and fact. The broad spectrum of sounds, from entrail-shuddering rumbles to barely audible dog-whistles, creates a vast space in which beasts of the unconscious can spread their prehistoric wings and embark on flights of chilling fancy. The best movie-soundtrack CD I have is "Passion," which really was the soundtrack to *The Last Temptation of Christ*; that CD could be played in a thousand different contexts (sex, fear, violence, beauty, solitude) and lend a solemn drama to each one. This record doesn't have the power that one did to effortlessly suffuse any scene with its haunted horror and wonder, but in the right situation it would probably be perfect. Appropriately beautiful, hallucinatory packaging, too. —b

Conspiracy, Lange Leemstraat 388, 2018 Antwerp, Belgium

UNDERGROUND SOCIETY "The other side" 7": I just reviewed the *Society Of Jesus 7"*, and I guess I was hoping to have the same amazing luck here, but this falls a little short. The music is straightforward, older fashioned hardcore, clearly influenced by older NYC hardcore, in the vein of the stuff descended from the old Breakdown. The speed is just above midtempo, with dance-breakdowns, and a couple moments of double-time drumming too to throw in (not quite enough) variety. The vocals are notable for being particularly deep, the singer does have a strong voice; there are backing vocals here and there that don't stick out as being bad but also don't stray enough from the NYC tradition to be interesting. Hold on, the second side just came in with three times as much energy as any of the lackluster first side. What a relief. Here there's more influence from metallic bands like, say, Congress from Belgium, and it definitely makes this more interesting. They're using more texturing and layering with the guitar sounds and ar-

rangements here too... in fact, a lead guitar just came in! My advice to this band is to evolve in the direction of this last song, as fast as they can, so they can escape from the doldrums of predictable backward-looking NYC-style hardcore. —b

Hardside, Le Patis des Friches, 35310 Chavagne, France

UPSET "Second Try to Burn the System" 7": The title is hilarious: yes, indeed, haven't we punk kids claimed to be trying to burn down the system a thousand times before? And it still hasn't worked, but at least we're still trying, I guess. This little attempt on Upset's part may not succeed either, but at least it sounds fucking good—plenty of fast parts, powerful screaming vocals, skilled guitarwork. Sure, there are lots of records that sound like this, but this is confident and competent enough to be worth noticing, even in the midst of the sea of excellent bands of this style that seems to exist in Germany today. The first few seconds of the record, a hyperspeed punch of doubletime drumming and screaming, are probably the best—they warrant comparison with Acme at that point. And later, the guitars throw in some high notes and jarring melody, as Acme would have. The mix and production are clear and bright, which helps. The second side begins sounding a little like Earth Crisis (deep vocals, slower music, chunky guitars)... it manages to escape being derivative, though I'd say the first side is much better. I think this is a repress of a record released by another label; that's fine, but they should have included the lyrics with it! Anyway, it's good music. Perhaps it will inspire others to keep trying to "burn down the system" (ha ha), and if that doesn't work, at least we'll have another decent record to keep us inspired in our resistance. —b

Smith and nephew company, Daniel Mueller, grosse diesdorfer str. 64, 39110 magdeburg, germany

WISE UP "On the Brink of Ruin" 7": Combined with the title, the cover picture, an image of construction cranes on a city horizon, presents the irony of the fate of modern man: destruction by construction. Damn, these kids look young in their band photos. The record starts with feedback and tom drumming, then a pickslide down the guitar strings—of course it works, it's been tried, tested and perfected a million times before. From there, they introduce some more variety. The singer has an unusually high, sort of crying/screaming voice, which is original enough. The music is typical enough of modern European hardcore, with metal riffs, fast and slow parts, and occasional high notes on the lead guitar, but it incorporates dynamics between acoustic and electric parts more than would be expected, which gives it some personality. The moments (third song) when Wise Up tries to do what every other band does are actually their weakest and least interesting ones. The most interesting part of this 7" is the second song, which incorporates a woman's singing vocals with the boy's screaming ones: at first, when she sings by herself, she lacks the confidence to completely pull it off, but as the song goes on, she does some backing humming behind the vocalist that works, and then begins singing as he screams, which also works well. They should ask to her to become a full time member of the band, work out all the wrinkles in their sound, wait for her confidence as a singer to improve with experience, and record another record. That might be something special, or at least original. And, the lyrics: it's good they're concerned about materialism and, more uniquely, about the fate of child soldiers in wars, but they still have room to improve there, as well: less simplicity, more evocation of emotion, less predictability, less clichés! —b

RPP c/o Alain, Av. V. Olivier 10A/67, 1070 Brussels, Belgium

WORD SALAD "" 7": Completely dismembered, epileptic, hyperkinetic, frantic, disorienting, nauseating, mental-patient hardcore punk. OK, it's not so unpredictable that no guitar line or rhythms ever repeats itself, but between the sudden changes of pace and direction, the vocals (which sound like they are sung by a tongue which has been twisted on a stick and cooked over a fire), and the complete lack of regard for order that the musicians demonstrate in their delivery, you've got some pretty sickening music here. I guess I'm paying them a compliment. I will say, though, that while I love many bands who do this kind of stuff effectively (I just reviewed the Botch split 7", and that was a good example), there's something missing from this for me in an emotional sense. It makes me feel battered about and confused the same way those other bands do, but this time, my heart is just sitting in my chest waiting to actually feel some emotion, and it's not happening. Still, if I was stuck on a desert island, and couldn't take any records by Rorschach or Acme, this would probably work well enough as a substitute. In fact, I'm in

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the middle of the second side now, and I'm starting to appreciate the music more... it might be a little more straightforward in this part, and that makes it easier to sink my teeth into it. The packaging is fucking exemplary, a great big fold out four color double sided poster with appropriately discomfiting artwork on one side and lyrics, etc. on the other—every 7" should be packaged with this effort and creativity. The lyrics strike me as being on the melodramatic side, along the lines of "oppression—exploitation—slaughter and knife-stabbing cretins run through the streets—death, death, death!" —b

Prank, address somewhere else in here, go look for it if you want, you foolish and unfortunate victims of Inside Front laziness! (jerks, aren't we)

YOU AND I "7": This record really surprised me. It's packaged in a little square of envelope with cursive writing on it, and I was afraid that it was going to be unbearably pretentious emo shit. So when, after the first three acoustic chords, a hyperspeed assault of distortion and shrieking ensued, I thought that something must be wrong with the record player. But no, this is their music: remorselessly discordant, nearly incomprehensible through the rough distortion, shot through with brief flashes of melodic metal beauty, their first song swerves and shakes, speeding fast enough to be out of control but not quite fast enough to crash. There's a gorgeous, transcendent moment when one guitar plays a single high note over and over, like a siren, above the rest of the instruments, that really fucking got me. The singer spends enough of his time screaming in a pretentious, impassioned voice that the melodic singing he throws in (which, incidentally, is more confident and effective than most melodic singing I hear in hardcore and related music) doesn't bother me at all. When they get going, the band beat away at their instruments like they are hammering out iron, and yet, their gentler parts work just as well. The second song has more acoustic parts and a little less speed, but it still works to cement their place at the forefront of this genre for me. The best thing I can think of to compare this to was the Grade/Believe CD (which was fucking incredible, a really undercredited classic) with more chaos in the music and more noise in the production. The lyrics are the one shortcoming, they fall into the predictable pitfalls of talking about "personal" relationship stuff without offering anything new on the subject. By the way, the label included a little insert about their intentions—I really appreciate that sort of thing, it helps me to know that they are focused on the ideas and artwork they are presenting, not just on making money and "moving units." —b

Sage, 55 Waker Avenue, Allentown, NJ 08501

BOTCH/NineIronSpitFire split 7": NineIronSpitFire has gone to great lengths to make it difficult to tell that they're on this record at all—their name doesn't even appear on the sleeve, and is barely scribbled on the lyric sheet (maybe they wanted everyone to think this was just a Botch record?). So, out of typical Inside Front malice, we'll talk about their side of the record first. Their music has more abrasive parts, where they play the kind of groove-based hardcore stuff that some would say is descended from Deadguy (throw in some Acme too, maybe?), and during these parts their singer yells in a sort of torn voice that isn't extremely powerful but isn't unconvincing either; this stuff is a little harsh but doesn't exactly bite the listener like the music made by some of the better bands of this persuasion can. There are also parts, where their music becomes more abstract, quieting down to an acoustic whisper or losing all rhythm entirely to become a mess of jazz drumming. Those parts don't really do much for me emotionally but they do bring a little originality to these songs, and perhaps that shows that NineIronEtc.Etc. has promise. BUT—stop being so fucking emo with the insert and give us some fucking lyrics next time, if you have any! OK, now Botch. Their side comes in with a fucking blast, what a relief—they knock you about, battering you with their unpredictable brand of post-Deadguy/Acme assault, disorienting you by changing gears every few seconds so you can never quite catch up to pin down what they're doing. Their songs are really exciting, too, in their use of dynamics: they go all over the place, dragging you into a moment of threatening calm, kicking you back into chaos, coming together tight and hard to deliver a stiff punch and then backing off again to rub balm in your wounds with a moment of unexpected beauty. Good for them. This band has taken the (fairly recent) musical tradition they draw from in a new direction, and for this they should be commended. Their lyrics are pretty vague, they don't do much for me, but if they can enable Botch's singer to sound like he means it when he screams, which they do, then that's good enough for me this time. (Next time, though, I'm counting on lyrics that outdo T.S. Eliot, so they will

live up to the music!) —b

Indecision, P.O. Box 5781, Huntington Beach, CA 92615

CAROL/STACK split 7": Carol's side is a ripoff of the old Venom logo ("welcome to Bremen," it reads—clever considering how Bremen has become famous for this kind of metallic music) while Stack opts for a Slayer ripoff ("South of Hessen"). You know, this obsession with metal is starting to make us hardcore kids look pathetic; stealing artwork like this no longer constitutes parody or even creative appropriation, it just makes us seem like we wish we could be real metal bands but cannot. Stack's side comes in with a long sample in German, and then plunges into some very contemporary German hardcore—fast parts with chaotic drumming, grooving slower parts, shredded Acme-influenced vocals which sit low in the mix, disorienting guitar riffs. Near the end of that song there's a good part where the guitars cut out for a second to come in and out with bursts of incoherent noise before the music begins again in earnest. The second song is a Hirax (?) cover that is particularly short (grindcore, almost) and to the point. Their lyrics are printed in German and English, but the English is clumsy enough that it fails to communicate their point (which is something about people who get behind a political cause for reasons of self-aggrandization). Carol brings their side in with some muted, high guitar chords which adequately set the stage for the burst of chaos that follows. They come off as being much more qualified to play this kind of hardcore (German late '90's Acme-influenced stuff) than Stack is at this point—their chaotic, haphazard, furious parts really are chaotic, haphazard, and furious, and when they're not doing that, their droning groove parts are effectively droning and, uh, groovy. Their vocalist has a stronger voice, too, and seems genuinely worked up. They have some weird sudden pauses near the end of their (only) song. Carol's lyrics seem to be absolutely meaningless in their pseudo-heavy metal melodrama. As for the label, this seems to have been released (or at least distributed) by Summersault, a radical books and 'zines mailorder... that's definitely good to see. I wonder what radical books have to do with heavy metal. —b

Summersault, St. Paul Str. 10-12, D-28203 Bremen, Germany

COALESCE/GET UP KIDS split 7": Another of those cute, clever records where two dissimilar bands cover each other's songs. The Get Up Kids make a convincing pop ditty out of Coalesce's "harvest of maturity," it actually sounds pretty, cute, catchy, and radio-friendly, nothing like the original. Their singer delivers it with typical pop melodrama in the sung vocals, etc. and I doubt I'll be listening to it again. Coalesce has a slightly more difficult time bending the Get Up Kids' music to their own ends... there are spots where you can tell that this song must have been written by a more melodic, polite band, although they definitely make it into something uglier, more pounding, more repugnant than the Get Uppers could imagine in their worst nightmares. The vocals sound a little weaker than I expected from Coalesce, as if the singer had a cold when they recorded or something. There's a good moment on their side where the entire band is just hitting one note, three times, over and over; that sounds like it could inspire a little craziness. But that part, and their side of the record itself, are both over before they can really go anywhere. The packaging for this 7" is glossy and professional as fuck, but doesn't include lyrics, much information, or even clever photos of Coalesce and the Get Upsters dressing up in each others' clothes or something. That's all there is to be said, I guess. —b

Second Nature, address in your general vicinity, probably even in this magazine somewhere

GREED/REPRISAL split 7": After long, painstaking consideration, I decided (without all that much help from the packaging) that this was a split 7". I should have just played it first, since the two bands are different enough. Reprisal is really metal, with Slayer riffs over tight mid-tempo drumming, a sharp trebly guitar sound, and deep deathmetal vocals that come in two varieties: deep (which still has some force, and so isn't impossible to take seriously), and, occasionally, super-deep (which just sounds so fake that it is impossible to take seriously). I've been listening to their side for a while now, and their songs seem to go on forever: the guitar chunk and steady-paced drums just drag on. It's possible for something to be well played (which this certainly is), and boring. The deep (not the super-deep) vocals have more heart than most deathmetal-sounding vocals, and the band clearly consists of accomplished musicians, so let's see them use these attributes better next time. Greed has all the energy and excitement Reprisal lacked: screaming, shrieking vocals, music that uses a few different tempos and

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approaches (droning groove, mostly, but flashes of speed as well) to maintain interest, and a good, grainy, organic recording. Just when they've done the same groove thing for too long, they cut it off, leaving the drums sounding surprisingly powerful in the void, and bring the music back in with a high, simple guitar line played on one string. And the way the singer's voice breaks on the last note/scream makes them sound real. —b

Stefano Bosso, v. S. Agata, 4, 28064 Carpignano S. (NO) Italy

HELLKRUSHER/PRAPARATION H split 7": I really get a kick out of the covers of the split 7" series Wicked Witch does: they always have a name like "Cincinnati meets Newcastle" (this one's title) above an image of two cartoon skeletons, each bearing distinctive marks of the featured cities. Hellkrusher has the textbook dirty punk sound: gruff vocals (I swear the guy actually says "fuck authority" at one point), simple, straightforward guitar lines played on roughed up old guitars, occasional '80's blues-punk solos, fast and simple (bass-snare-bass-snare) drumming, short, tight song structure (at the important transitions, everything else stops and the guitar or drums lead in with the next part). They're good enough at this stuff that it doesn't seem fake or derivative, but I'd still rather listen to Extreme Noise Terror, Discharge, or the "Troops of Tomorrow" LP. PrapARATION H is obnoxious as hell, professional wrestling art for their insert page, attitude out of L.A. in the early '80's or something, genuinely puerile and reprobate. The samples between their songs (disco music, drunk people sputtering nonsense about sex and Michael Jackson, etc.) are enough to make it clear what we're dealing with here. Their music isn't quite as retro as I expected—the deep, grunting vocals wouldn't have been paired with this approach in the early '80's—but it's nothing too complex, either. Punk rock. —b

Wicked Witch, P.O. Box 3835, 1001 AP Amsterdam, Netherlands

INDECISION/SONS OF ABRAHAM split 7": This is Indecision's best work that I've heard yet. Their simple, modern NYC hardcore has energy, enough speed, and punch; the melodic guitar line in the chorus is not really well-integrated, it sounds too happy in the middle of such a serious, aggressive sound, but other than that, everything's great. Even the traditional "mosh" part in the middle of the song works, despite having been done a thousand times before, because of their flawless and straight-faced delivery. The singer sounds better here than he has before; his yelling voice is still high and thin, but it doesn't sound like he's struggling so much. The decision to rip off the lyrics from Siouxsie and the Banshees was a wise one, too: it shows that Indecision is willing to break hardcore rules, defy expectations, and go to any lengths to make music however they want. Plus, stealing Siouxsie's lyrics guarantees that this song will have better lyrics than 95% of other hardcore songs! So they get ten points

for effort, for trying to expand our agoraphobic hardcore horizons a little. Plus, the writing on their side of the insert (about living life to the fullest rather than accepting traditional standards of achievement) is articulate and relevant. To sum up, I'm surprised and impressed with Indecision's work here, and I look forward to borrowing their equipment all over Europe on our

next tour too. [Just checking to see if they're reading this..!] Sons of Abraham have a lot to live up to, what with their incredible song on the "Definitely Not the Majors" CD compilation, and they don't do badly. Plenty of metal complexity, random metal flourishes, tight double bass bursts, a guitar line in the verse that sounds like Snapcase on steroids (harmonics and guitar chunks, etc., but actually *good*...), and convincingly angry vocals work together to make this a good song, though not as good as the one on that CD compilation. And hey, the lyrics and explanation are fucking great—they argue that the modern American celebration of Christmas is just a capitalist catalyst for consumerism, and accuse corporate America of trying to seduce everyone into joining in this "spirit of giving" (i.e. spirit of *buying*), destroying the cultural heritage of non-Christians along the way by inundating everyone with advertising propaganda. According to them, Christianity has become the religion of the marketplace, and its efforts to make others feel welcome to join in should be seen as insidious attempts to replace their religious/spiritual values with merely financial ones. I can see where they're coming from. —b

Exit records put this out, so it's probably better distributed than Inside Front, and out of resentment for that I won't print the address. I'm joking, relax. It's in this issue somewhere!

PINK COLLAR JOBS/RUSTWEILER split 7": The mastering on this 7" seems to have made the volume low on it. I guess most of you have volume knobs on your stereos, though, so that's not a real concern. Pink Collar Jobs is a great live band, they make their sort of pop punk thing really compelling by putting plenty of energy and abandon into it. Some of that comes across here, which helps them to overcome their snare drum sound, which sounds sort of like a bad record skip. Another thing they have going for them, especially in the first song, is that their songs are catchy as fuck, perfectly written, the kind of songs that seem like they've always existed, just waiting for a band like P.C.J.'s to come along and discover them. They do a sort of Hellbender melodic indie rock thing most of the time, but also have parts where they let loose, screaming and raging. That gives them the emotional depth and variety they need to make really memorable music; and the sadly beautiful high notes they play near the end of their second song (very, very indie rock, by the way) add another

emotional dimension. Their squeaky, impassioned voices and rough-edged, impassioned playing also count in their favor, as do the simple, provocative

SYSTRAL/ACHEBORN split 7": Systral had a LOT to live up to with this new song, and they haven't really let us down... although I'm not entirely satisfied either, this being Systral, and I hoping to have my expectations far exceeded. Their song opens with a motorcycle being revved up, and blasts into one of those completely overloaded, Systral fast parts, which attains maximum velocity before crashing into a slow grind. They pause, leaving a hanging note, and enter one of the catchiest, most haunting melodies I've ever heard—nightmare music. Missing here is the high vocalist; we only have the earth-shaking deep roaring guy, and although he carries the day by himself, it was the double-vocalist assault that put Systral over the top. Missing also are lyrics—their side of the insert reads only: "save gas, burn nitro—diesel dust and tons of bullets." Systral's lyrics really did something for me, and it's a shame they list none here (that's also a telltale sign that a band is becoming washed up...). Acheborn play fairly fast, fairly straightforward post-Unbroken metallic hardcore. [I mention Unbroken mostly because when I saw them play in Germany, it was clear to me from their hipster clothes and the affected way they threw themselves about that they draw a fair bit influence from those San Diego bands.] Their singer's voice doesn't quite work for me, it sounds like he's trying to yell a little deeper than is natural for him. The drumming is energetic and unconventional enough to set them apart; there is some immediacy, even a little willingness to take risks, in their music, but I'd like to hear them push a little harder at the limits of the predictable modern hardcore formula. It sounds like they have what it takes to do it. Towards the end of their second song they build enough energy and tension to rise to the challenge for a moment, and for that moment they're great. They do give lyrics; nothing earthshattering, in my humble opinion. The packaging and graphics for this split 7" are so fancy that it seems almost as if the label was trying to parody major label layouts. —b
trans solar, bismarckstrasse 6, 56068 koblenz, Germany

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lyrics of their first song, about sexist men. Rustweiler has energy too, and they take advantage of the already-thoroughly-explored genre of indie rock/punk stuff to make some well-crafted songs, but they ultimately don't have enough going for them to set them apart from the three million other bands that have played this stuff before. They get points for having lyrics against bad poetry, but their lyrics are hardly more than a step above. —b

P.C.J., P.O. Box 611-DTS, Boone, NC 28607-0611

PURITAN/OFFICER DOWN split 7": Puritan's singer does the Acme screaming thing, but he sounds like his voice is genuinely fucked up, which I guess is to his credit... although I am a little concerned about him. He sounds like he needs a throat transplant at some points. Their music is worth paying attention to, as well—the chaos and tension in it are real, not affected, and it escapes predictability with sudden shots of noise, unexpected acoustic breaks, and general disorder. Their side of the insert is messy, but I can make out some discussion of patriarchy, sexism, and gender roles that seems worthwhile. Officer Down have some really fast parts, some grindy doubletime parts, some mosh parts, plenty of sudden transitions, and a tinny metal guitar sound, which, put together, sound a little reminiscent of political hardcore from a few years back. Their singer's screaming vocals sound a little more contemporary than the music, and all together, it's good stuff. The record sleeve features a color reproduction of a drawing in crayon, giving the whole thing a real kindergarten feel—that reminds me of Richard Allen's article "Don't Call Me 'Kid'" in *Things Fall Apart*, which I wish these 'kids' had read, because the serious issues they are addressing are hard to take seriously in such a childish package. —b

GoodFellow, 762 Upper James Street, Suite 275, Hamilton, ON L9C 3A2 Canada
SEPARATION/SERENE split CD: Separation is snotty, fast, yelling punk. The singer (whose voice might be a little bit loud in the mix? or is that standard for punk like this?) has personality and presence, he pushes his rough voice to the point that it sounds like it's about to break. Their music is simple (when I call them punk, I don't mean the Exploited, I mean melodic late-'80's type stuff), and could stand a little something to distinguish it from the other ten thousand bands that play this kind of music. Their third song is a departure from the other two, it takes a more emo approach (distortion on the vocals, quiet acoustic parts, those trademark emo broken open guitar chords). The entire lyrics are "hey, there must be a thousand ways of killing yourself without taking someone with you." The energy level suddenly doubled when Serene's first song came in. More complexity in their music, more tension, more variety, more melody, much clearer recording, just more energy overall. They use more guitar chunk, and this works well (I mean, it's not the most original thing in the world at this point, but they do it well), especially during a break in their second song when the guitar is left hanging by itself to lead in the next part with a haunting line... —b

Genet, address in your general vicinity

SOCIETY OF JESUS/SUBSTANCE split 7": Great packaging, a few pages of writing (in Italian, which I haven't mastered yet). Society of Jesus' recording here isn't quite as clear as their 7" recording is, but it's just as powerful. It has a rough, thick, older punk sound to it, but you can still hear the double bass, etc. (and their drummer is as fucking tight and talented as he is on

their other recordings, too). In between songs, they have what sounds like a recording of a catholic mass: it's a clever idea, but it gets a little repetitive by the end of the 7", since the songs are so short (no complaints here about *that*, mind you) that the samples seem to take up almost as much time as they do. The first song is fairly lengthy for them, probably a good two minutes long, and goes through a few different transitions. The second one starts out scary as fuck, alternating a snare drum machine gun roll with a deep, completely distorted roar; it takes off and is over in a few seconds, leaving me reaching for the record player arm in amazement. The third one begins with the singer yelling "Liberta, liberta" (freedom, freedom) over and over; it's a song about ending animal oppression, and easily qualifies as an anthem. Their fourth song begins with a catchy pounding part, excellent, and between it and the last song I think they have a three second song where they just shout "Society of Jesus!" The music is fucking great, filled with energy, as are the deep vocals. Their lyrics are printed in Italian and English, with one song in Spanish as well. Substance's recording is a little rougher, and their music a little less energetic: it uses more guitar chunk and less velocity, and their singer's screaming voice is less deep, more conventional. But their songwriting is tight and interesting, and their music makes a good enough match for S.O.J. to make this another top notch grindcore/hardcore 7" from Italy. —b

Matteo Verri, address above at Society of Jesus 7"
"All About Friends" CD compilation: Also known as "Hardcore Maniacs" issue #5. This is a lot of fun, and cool to see, because it's a departure from the typical predictable CD compilation format. Bound and stapled in cardboard, the booklet features a few pages of photos of each band (not bad photos, either), with the CD tucked in a flap at the end. Most bands do covers, which is entertaining too. C.R. starts off with a screaming, rough original, followed by Botch playing a screaming, rough cover of "Rock Lobster" by the B-52's. Hilarious! Next up are Impel, followed by Nineironspitfire, covering a two second song by Napalm Death (and believe me, this is not only Nineironspitfire's finest hour, but Napalm Death's as well... uh, did I say "hour"?). Then a song by Screwjack, Threabare covering Beyond, Coalesce covering Undertow (this really brings out the limitations of their singer's voice), Indecision playing one of their own songs, and Trial covering the same Iron Cross

song that Agnostic Front used to play (if you like Trial, this is priceless: the backing vocals shout "straight edge warrior!" at the chorus). State Route 522 and Jough Dawn Baker (whoever those bands are...? is the latter even a band?) finish the CD out with, respectively, a Cure cover, and what sounds to me like someone singing karaoke to everyone's favorite major label communist funk rock band... or is it a demo recording by said band, with another guy singing? Or what? Hm. Anyway, like I said, this CD is a lot of fun, so there you go. —b

Hardcore Maniacs, P.O. Box 11543, Kansas City, MO 64138

H8000 Hardcore Compilation CD: Spineless begins this with a hilarious song: the production is major label metal quality, the verse guitar line is haunting and catchy, the Slayer ripoff riffs at the end are fun, and the fucking lyrics: it's a song about summoning the devil by reading an unholy book! This Belgium metal thing has gone too far, the bands are no longer singing about real life

In Our Time - Compilation LP - A true work of art coming straight at your ears and at your mind from the mysterious CrimethInc crew. An odd bunch they are, CrimethInc. In a world standardized in thought and feeling, they dare to suggest through this release that we, as significant individuals, might ask for and work towards something more. How dare they? I am perfectly happy in my safe, comfortable life. I need not question. Thus, the theme of this record, represented both in sound (from its seven excellent bands) and also in sight (from its brilliant layout with no labels but including informative inserts) continues to leave me dismayed every time I look at it or listen to it. I am beginning to think that some thought actually went into this release. I didn't think people actually DID that anymore. Evidently people still do, and here, some person or persons, dissatisfied by the daily routine manifesting itself unfettered by protest in our country and around the world, is profoundly dissatisfied. This recording is their way of lashing out. Somehow I feel challenged... Find, buy, read and live the ideas here. Bands on this comp are Congress, Timebomb, Systral, Final Exit, Damad, Jesuit, Gehenna, each of whom puts in a solid performance pushing the world of musicality beyond simply applied definitions of "metal" or "heavy" or "ugly."

I like to think of each of these bands, and of this compilation as a whole, as "dangerous." CrimethInc merciless profiteers, address near you

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shit. But their song is great. I actually like it more than the next song, which is Congress, a band I've always loved; maybe the latter has peaked, because next to their younger imitators Congress doesn't sound quite as intense as they used to. The only thing they have to offer us here that Spineless didn't is a couple Integrity-style guitar solos. I guess when you pioneer new styles, like Congress did in Belgium, your progeny are bound to catch up to you one day. Life Cycle, the next band, has a terrible four track recording for their not-too-polished Belgian metal stuff, but they're the only band on here where we hear a woman's voice (too bad). Liar offer us one of their full-scale mosh-metal-murder straight edge anthems, "Invictus." It seems that Liar have been more influential than Congress on the latest wave of Belgian hardcore bands (Vitality, Sektor, and others that appear on this CD), as their slower, more danceable approach is now most prevalent. Blindfold has the same annoying, distorted, overdone melodic vocals that bothered me about them before, but at least they offer some variety next to all that metal (they have a saxophone solo, for example!). ODK Crew and Spirit of Youth are a little faster and more straightforward, but are still more like Congress than they are like any oldschool bands. Instinct actually sound oldschool, partly due to a terrible live recording. Deformity and Regression represent the really heavy metal side of things, while Hitch is more rock and roll. Firestone is the silly side of Spineless distilled and made pure: ridiculous whispering evil vocals, dimstore Slayer guitar lines, double bass mixed louder than the guitars. Fake is the last band, a much rougher, punker take on Belgium hardcore, but with the trademark metal influence still audible here and there. Anyway, this CD is a good introduction to some of the bands at the forefront of Belgian hardcore today; although, if you haven't heard a single band from Belgium yet, the best introduction would probably be the latest Congress or Liar full-length. —b

Sober Mind, at Genet address

Pasta Power Violence 7" compilation: Thus little 7" is an excellent introduction to the Italian grindcore scene, and features some fucking good bands. I recommend it wholeheartedly. Society of Jesus start this off with a fucking classic song: it begins with a pounding, old NYC hardcore part (if you can, imagine a Breakdown song being played by an apocalyptic Italian grindcore band—better yet, remember the Point Blank song "Turning Back"? This uses one of those riffs, but the terrifying vocals make it even more powerful than that was...) and ends with a couple merciless blasts of machine gun fire. Their second song is more

"Limited Options Sold As Noble Endeavors" 10" compilation (includes Contrascience #5.5): This comes with a thick little 'zine with a number of characteristically in-depth and well-researched Contrascience articles on why army recruiters are selling kids a bad deal. It's important information for everyone to read and think about, especially young people trying to choose what to do with their lives. It also includes a page for each of the bands on the 10". Let's go through the music. MK-Ultra do the high, hoarse screaming thing with chaotic music, a little Coalesce in the music perhaps, but faster. Their recording holds them back a bit, it's bass heavy at the very bottom end but lacks power. Man Afraid remind me a little of Born Against: explicitly, articulately anti-patriotic lyrics, simple, rough-edged punk music (it begins with an anthemic slow screaming part, then picks up speed), throaty, hoarse yelling and screaming, with a little sad melody added by the bass from time to time. Their song is the one that best represents the theme of this record, musically and lyrically. The Q-Factor's song is next, a messy, uppity little punk song about big business and the corporate music industry. It doesn't have the energy, catchiness, or skilled execution it would need to command attention. The Dillinger Four follow with a song that reminds me of Propagandhi (snotty singing vocals, anti-authority/religion lyrics—although not as explicit as Propagandhi's would be, pop punk music)—they're a popular band these days in some of the circles I travel (that is, with two of my six friends!), and I suppose their music is talented and exciting enough here to warrant that, if you like pop punk. Those Unknown finish out the first side of the record with a similarly pop punk song, although the overdramatic vocals put me off. Their lyrics and song explanation (question authority, decide what you want and get it, etc.) are right on, at least. The second side begins with another political, melodic pop punk/mod song from the Strike, which sings the praises of union supporters. Press Gang's song rails against selling time for money, but it suffers, as do all the less exciting tracks on this 10", from a weak recording and delivery. Thenceforward's song begins much more aggressively than the other bands thus far have, and they have a more hardcore sound in general: fast beats, moshable verse riffs, shrieking vocals, fuller recording. No lyrics in the insert, though! I can't complain too hard, because their singer sounds clear enough when he shouts "don't wave your flag at me." Swallowing Shit is the penultimate band on this record, and boy are their three vicious, abrasive grindcore songs a breath of fresh air for me after all that fucking melodic shit! DeadStoolPigeon finish this with a fast, class conscious song from their last CD. So the music here is spotty in quality, and will probably appeal to you more if you like rough-edged pop punk than if you prefer malicious, violent hardcore. But the undertaking as a whole is laudable for being so focused on its worthy goal, and thus warrants anyone's time and attention. —b

Contrascience, P.O. Box 8344, Minneapolis, MN 55408-0344

grindy, with their trademark deep vocals. Their songs have real energy, the mix is clear and forceful, and on the lyric sheet they quote author Milan Kundera, so they get a perfect score for their work here. The Obtrude songs feature a hysterically bad mix: the singer shrieking squeakily in your ear, the drums inside of a dumpster down the street, and the lead guitar far away across the hills. It's actually a lot of fun. Cripple Bastards have something similar going on (OK, I know they practically started the genre, so I can't actually say they imitated Obtrude; I'm just saying that I heard Obtrude first when I put on this record to review it...) with a ridiculous mix, absurdly jarring tempo changes, and a cacophony of screaming, grunting, hissing, and growling vocals. Their lyrics are inspiring—they speak at length (that is to say: the singer doesn't actually sing all of them) about the struggle of the individual to keep his head clear and his perspective fresh, in the midst of such a disheartening, oppressing world, so that he will be able to enjoy life and make the best of it. The last band, Nagant 1895, have a better mix than those two bands, but the actual recording is less clear, which holds them back a bit. They sound a little less confident than the other bands, too, but they still manage to make the kind of ugly noise that is music to my ears... and the lyrics to their first song are "Jesus Christ, your sacrifice was not useless, not for the ones who built your temple with bricks of blood, and turned it into their castle." So, is there anything lacking from this 7"? Not really—although the cover art (a bowl of pasta) could have been more exciting! —b

S.O.A., Paolo Petralia, Via Oderisi da Gubbio 67/69, 00146 Roma, Italy

Voices: A Portrait of Sao Paulo hardcore 4-band split CD: This is the sort of thing I get excited about: a well-done, well-presented CD offering insight into hardcore in a part of the world I haven't heard anything from until this year. The insert has information on all the bands, plus all the lyrics in both English and Portuguese, and the CD has four songs by each band. Newspeak, the first band, has an excellent recording, up to par with any U.S. hardcore band. Their music is mostly fast, straightforward, clearly influenced by late-'80's U.S. bands in places (yelling vocals, backup choruses, etc.), but with plenty of details that set it apart (slower parts, guitar flourishes and leads, etc.). It's spirited and well-executed, good stuff. Self Conviction is next, with a less varied, more moshy sound and hip hoppy vocals (circa NYC eight years ago?). Sight For Sore Eyes are more melodic, still fast, but with a more pop sound. Their vocalist sings in

"Definitely Not the Majors" CD compilation: For a CD compilation, this has a remarkably high number of good songs. Of course, there are bad songs, too, some of them from the bigger name bands on here. Bloodlet begins this with one of their rock and roll groove songs, really not bad as far as the shit they're doing these days goes, but still pretty heartless and brainless. Next is Coalesce with some wah-wah guitar (!?) and their trademark brand of monotonous sandpaper-grinding groove. The guitars actually do a couple leads, which prevent this from being as bad as their new LP. I.D.K. present a cute pop ditty that's sweet and catchy without being weak or soft, if you can stand that stuff. Ascension is the first band worthy of note; their heavy metal take on hardcore has always come across better live, but this is the best I've heard it yet on record. It comes in with the echoes of distant drumming, and the drums themselves approach ominously, until the song proper hits. The guitar flourishes come across well, and the drums continue to be exciting throughout all the transitions and changes the song goes through. Only the vocals lack the craziness and power they have live. Next is the first incredible track, Sons of Abraham in their finest hour, with their subtly titled song "What Brings May Flowers?" about the Jewish holocaust. It begins with singing in Hebrew, and reaches epic proportions of drama immediately when the open guitar chord and double bass crash down. The song maintains its high energy and passion all the way through, with metal complexity and guitar leads over the rhythm chunks, but doesn't reach its heart-stopping climax until the end, when the music stops and vocalist, spitting venom, shrieks *"we sit in the death camps to sort out the past"* before the double bass explodes one more time. Gehenna is next, with a new song, not recorded or played quite as well as their older material (it just can't compare to their live performance of the same song), but Gehenna all the same, and with their best lyrics yet (like William Burroughs writing about the lowest of pariahs in their darkest fever dreams of world domination). At their best moment, everything stops but one guitar, firing away like the pounding heart of a thief running from pursuing police cars. After this, the next few bands blur together (Backlash, Buzzkill, Nora, Pay Neuter, Indecision, Pacifier, As Darkness Falls, Compression), with the exception of Earthmover, whose song about internal struggles shows their characteristic authenticity and energy. The Catharsis song on here is the same recording that is on the Samsara CD. But the most important song on here, the one that makes this CD remarkable, is the last one: a new song by Starkweather. On this song, they finally realize all their potential, potential we all thought wasted after the swore to stop playing shows and disappeared. This fucking hurts to listen to, it's so pained, so bloody with emotion, with despair, soiled in the dirt of the very furthest extreme of human existence. Singer Rennie roars, shrieks, cries out until his throat is hanging out his mouth in strips, the cataclysmic guitars and drums performing a dirge that burns with all-devouring fire as he snarls *"find me the heaviest stones to fill my pockets, I thought it for the best that I should drown while I have this thirst to quench, I hike to the river with a nervous shudder..."*. At the edges of his singing, a lead guitar of classical training and skill dances over the abyss, spinning and turning in solos of terrible grace and splendor, all the more sublime for their proximity to such ugliness and disgust, and, more, to nonexistence itself. When all goes wrong, all is for nothing, this is the song to drown your bile and regret; cast all your failed hopes into its black pit, let yourself go into the black night of its nausea, and hope that that provides enough of a respite from your pain to live until daybreak. —b
Bush League, P.O. Box 10165, New Brunswick, NJ 08906-9998

"We May Fight a Battle That Can't Be Won" CD compilation: This is an exciting, horizon-broadening record, for a few different rea-

sons. It is an introduction to seven hardcore bands from different corners of the globe, and as such it offers widely varied perspectives upon our counterculture. It is a record with political/social goals, that makes them explicit and attempts to educate people about them. And it is extensively packaged, with a thick booklet that includes a mission statement (and budget, to explain how the price was determined! very sincere—) from the label, practical information for home sanitation without using synthetic chemicals (fucking awesome thing to find in a record!), a reprint of a Felix von Havoc article from HeartattaCk #8, and other pieces of writing about straight edge, hardcore, human relations, and life in general. Right on. Each band plays between three and five songs, and has a few pages of lyrics, explanations, and other writing in the packaging, so the listener is able to get to know each one well. The first band, X-Acto from Portugal, sounds alot like Ignite, with high energy, high velocity medollic hardcore and high singing over it; the vocalist has a good command of English grammar and pronunciation, and his voice has plenty of emotion in it. His lyrics are great, they're straightforward and positive, and come across as being really sincere. The explanations that follow them in the packaging are equally compelling, especially the last one, in which they quote the Tao Te Ching in support of their assertion that the best way to achieve your goals is to be patient and yielding, like water. X-Acto also benefits from a top notch recording. Personal Choice (Brazil) is next, and their music suffers a little from loose playing, but the recording is still clear enough. They too play melodic, energetic hardcore, with singing vocals and a look over the shoulder at simple late '80's stuff. Overall, they lack the things that made X-Acto really special. Next, Autocontrol (Argentina) has a really exciting guitar sound: it has been very carefully engineered to create a really haunting atmosphere, with wailing feedback, reverberating harmonics and leads, and echoing acoustic parts, unlike anything I've heard recently from a hardcore band. The rest of their mix doesn't come across as well, but it's worth wading through to get to the thrilling, unique guitars. Their singer has a sort of whining, high voice, a little reminiscent of H.R. from Bad Brains, which works well enough, and the people shouting the group choruses sound like they really mean it. Their songwriting is interesting, nontraditional without wandering at all, and I love their lyrics (*"sacrifices and work, everything was in vain, suffering and death, everything was in vain, obedience and hate, everything in vain—I don't want to see this around me, only see death and devastation..."*). So they beat a slightly murky mix to create some exhilarating music. Meanstream (Bulgaria) has a more powerful production than the earlier bands, to complement their slower, more powerful NYC-style moshy hardcore. Their vocalist holds them back, with an uninspired delivery of his deep vocals. By All Means, the high point of the CD, is next. The mastering of their music could have been better, but their music is fucking great: deep roaring vocals, filled with fervor and rage, equally raging music, unpredictable songs (the first one begins with an all-out hardcore assault and ends with an improvisation for drum-circle and guitar), it recalls all the power of Rorschach and Citizen's Arrest. The lyrics and lengthy accompanying essays all demonstrate high intelligence, highly informed political/social analysis, and deep-running convictions. It's no surprise to me that the same people who do Society of Jesus are involved in this. Finishing out the CD are Serbia's Stonewall (who have an unusual funk bass thing going on that doesn't really work with their simple, late '80's NYC-style hardcore) and Lithuania's SC (whose poorly recorded, roughly written and played, old-fashioned midtempo punk rock needs some practise, although their use of a trumpet and irrepressable lyrics warrant some attention). —b
Boisleve y, BP 7523, 35075 Rennes cedex 3, France

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a high voice, he sounds like he's straining a bit, like he's not entirely comfortable with what he's doing yet. Point of No Return finishes out the CD. They have more metal in their music than the other bands, and a good recording, like Newspeak. Their first song starts with a spoken piece about the political repression and murder in Brazil thirty years ago. That's serious stuff, and by writing a song demanding that the ones responsible justice be brought to justice now, this band is really sticking their necks out. The anger in their singer's voice is clear as he screams, in their third song (about child labor exploitation), "a counterforce must be formed to set us free." This is the kind of music that really counts, music about real issues that affect human lives; that's what I loved about Kriticka Situace, and that's what I love about this. —b

Liberation, Caixa Postal 4193, Sao Paulo -SP, 01061-970 Brazil

"Die Zahne Zeigt Wer Das Maul Aufmacht Vol. 1 Benefiz für die RADIKAL" 12" compilation: Fucking shit, I would give anything to read German right now. If any of you can read German, you must track down this record, at any cost, if for no other reason than to avenge my honor: I'm sitting here in desperation, looking through page after page of insert material, all in German, at all the professed goals of CrimethInc. and a dozen other would-be radical U.S. revolutionary punk groups made flesh in this German record—and I can't fucking understand most of it at all! As far as I can pick out, this is a benefit for German activists, publishers of a radical, anti-government, anti-fascist newspaper (Radikal Zeiten), who have been incarcerated by the government. There's a Bertold Brecht quote on the cover and photos of German activists and terrorists engaged in real all-out war with the authorities, the kind of war we U.S. punks only fantasize and preach about. In Germany and Europe in general there is a tradition (including, in the last few decades, the Situationist International, the Paris uprising in 1968, and terrorist groups like the R.A.F.) of actively fighting the powers that be, by any possible means, rather than just complaining about them. The record comes with a copy of the radical newspaper in question, plus a full-size, 20 page 'zine with a page from each of the fourteen bands and plenty of writing about the goals of the radical group under fire (and the goals of this record as a benefit for them). It even includes an introduction to anarchist thinking, with biographies of some of the major thinkers in the tradition. Not only all this, but it's done with energy and interest, not the sort of boring drivel that you get from American politicians. The sound level on the record is a little low, because there are so many bands on each side, but other than that the mastering is fine. The bands play a variety of energetic, gruff, rough, screaming brands of European hardcore punk, that makes for good listening (names includes Rawside, Amok, Circus of Hate, Zack Ahoi, Kulta Dementia, A.A.K., many more). This is exactly what a revolutionary/political hardcore punk record should be: filled with subversive and dangerous ideas and exciting music, with any profits going to support a genuinely anti-establishment project, rather than just to maintain the lifestyle of some "professional revolutionary" or, worse, fucking capitalist record label. —b

Fuckin' People Records, Timo Nehmtow, Neustadt 80, D-25813 Husum, Germany

featuring the heroism of Greg Bennick, wading through an ocean of shit

ALL IS SUFFERING demo: This is quite a big production for a demo, maybe

all these other bands should take their demos as seriously. The cover is full-color, the recording and the mix of a high quality many of these metallic (Pantera-sounding?) hardcore bands can't even get for their CDs: thick, heavy, clear, bright. The tough, grainy yelling vocals and grooving guitar lines are what remind me of Pantera, but they could as easily remind me of Belgian metal bands like Liar (there's a guitar part in the first song that reminds me of the first song on the Liar full length: a single note, struck on the offbeat over and over in rapid succession, like a fire alarm). The double-bass drumming is somewhat over-used, they sometimes use it in places that it doesn't exactly fit and they emphasize it enough that it's hard to ignore. There are some signs of deathmetal/black metal influence here: in the fast parts (ridiculously fast blastbeats), for example. The playing and musicianship in general are both top notch, and there's plenty of variety in the songwriting and eclectic intros. Still, for all the precision and skill in this music, it doesn't touch me that deeply; technical metal often fails to reach my heart, no matter how much the details impress me—there's such a thing as being too slick. The lyrics and song explanations are right on, though: the speak eloquently enough about technology, capitalism, the destruction of our world and ourselves, human bitterness and domination. The first track is even named after the book *Things Fall Apart*, a personal account of the social breakdown and human suffering caused by European imperialism in Africa. —b

Leonard Likas, 4220 Solomons Island Road, St. Leonard, MD 20685

BLOODSTRING - With Bloodstained Hands demo - Four songs from somewhere in Europe. This is a metal tough sounding band which unfortunately features muddy production far too heavy on the bass end. The music is slow tempo (a la NYC stomp) at times with throaty

screamed vocals and more brooding and heavy like death metal at other times. Lyrically they touch upon despair in four different ways. This did remind me of Integrity a bit at times when they started to play mid tempo...especially with the particular vocal patterns the vocalist chose and the way he goes from deep growls almost to full out screams. Dwid would be proud. The last song is a live track and even though the production here is only audience quality it is easily the most raging track on the record. A dance part explosion at the end has more heaviness to it than most bands I have heard of late. A high black-eye-in-the-pit potential on this one. I would like to see these guys live sometime myself. A good tape to check out if you

AUTOMATON - demo - Easily the best demo I got to review this issue. Ten songs, all raging and intense super political thrash punk with blast beats and screamed vocals over them. Check out these song titles and topics (and I am going to simplify them if only to save on some space - get the demo and find out the rest of what they have to say for yourself): "Pope Gregory" is about a papal decree in 1752 which removed 12 days from the calendar and how that loss of time is parallel to time wasted in jobs today (right on!); "Second Serving" is about how environmental groups pinpoint unique or cute animals for saving and forget about cows eaten at the dinner table (a good point, but in defense of a group I largely support - the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society - my involvement in the group does not exclude from my morality the ability to live as a vegan...the two are not mutually exclusive. I only mention Sea Shepherd because the two animals mentioned in the song are those most often associated with Sea Shepherd, namely whales and seals. And ultimately, since it is impossible to address all battles and topics, isn't this demo inherently doing exactly what this song accuses particular segments of the animal rights movement of doing, in accusing the groups of not doing enough for all causes and only pinpointing some? I support both the groups and this band: at least both are doing something!); "Fortress Economy" is about the prison systems' use of essentially slave labor conditions under racist policy in order to reap financial gain; "Grapes of Wrath" is about Israel and its reign of terror against neighboring countries, specifically Lebanon. A great demo: thought inspiring and fun to listen to. —jug
AUTOMATON, c/o Jason, 1121 Disalvo St., Toms River NJ 08735

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like Integrity and if you can figure out what country they are from. —jug
BLOODSTRING, c/o Bodo, eintrachstr. 20c, somewhere in Europe.
CATBURGLAR demo: Begins with some piano playing, probably by the band rather than a sample, good for them. The recording is really powerful for a

demo, maybe a bit bass-heavy, but better than many of the 7" or even CD recordings I've reviewed this issue (since it's much too easy to put out a 7" or CD these days...). The vocals aren't well integrated into the music when they come in—the two singers roaring together just creates a sort of muddy mess—but when they alternate after that (as they do for most of the record), it works much better. They don't have bad voices, they just don't harmonize well. The music is on the faster side of midtempo, energetic, mosh-danceable simple chunky stuff for the most part, but dressed up with snatches of metal: the first song has a Napalm Death part (complete with double-picked classical guitar riff, blastbeat, and vocalist going OOOOOOUUGH!), the second song a Metallica part (from the song "One"), and the third song starts with an Iron Maiden rhapsody. This definitely adds interest to the music, which already has enough energy to work. BUT: they don't have the mastery to always pull off these parts with the grace they need, and they don't fit well into the rest of the music. One gets the impression that Catburglar just threw these parts in for fun, which is fine: the fun comes across in the music. Cool name; I wonder if they really are thieves. —b

Tom, P.O. Box 186, Lake Villa, IL 60046
CLANDESTINE - demo: Check out this line in the first song (about veganism as a means to end animal oppression): "Termination of anthropocentric disrespect - purification of the self - liberation of the earth". Wow...these guys could teach English classes to American bands and make a fortune. Sometimes I feel like an idiot for only being able to speak one language... Anyway, I am a bit wary when vegan bands use purity as a concept to describe how the earth will be lifted from oppression. I am especially apprehensive when those bands go on to say (like this band does) things like "forced forward to the light of compassion." Maybe I am missing something in the language barrier, but when I combine purity and force, I imagine a hierarchical structure of oppression all over again in which a self proclaimed "pure" force demands action from an identified "unpure" segment. Sounds like eugenics to me, but I won't call these guys fascists...I am vegan too...I identify with their frustration with the world...but I would say that there are better ways to get people to do something than forcing them. The music on these three songs is metal/grind with demonic screamed vocals. The recording is passable except for the drums which sound like they actually aren't drums but rather pieces of paper being slapped with spoons. I imagine big kick boxing sessions at their shows. —jug
CLANDESTINE, c/o Sven Claussen, Barenhod 4, D-30916 Isernhagen,

Scandinavia

CLOSE CALL - demo: Whoo boy, Close Call...today is your unlucky day. Of all the people in the world who could have gotten your demo for review, the demo which starts out with the song "Trend" which includes the line "This

is not a trend", is Greg Bennick, singer of Trial, whose "Foundation" CD, released two months before your demo was recorded has a song on it called "This Is Not A Trend". HA HA! I have caught you! You rip-off-the-Seattle-band-jerkies! Caught! Aw...shucks...I'm just kidding. I will side with you and assume that you never heard of Trial. Ok...fuck it. I like your demo actually. It, for those readers who have never heard of Close Call, is a cross between hardcore/punk at times and more rockin' styles at other times. Do you remember how Naked Raygun wasn't quite hardcore sometimes, but wasn't quite rock at other times? This is what this demo reminds me of occasionally, when it is not being fast and hardcore, and in that I respect their creativity. Lyrics involve a number of different topics: "Trend" (grrr...enough said); "Insight" is about keeping an open mind; "Paper Thin" is rad (it talks about people who lie to themselves and others. A great line: "there are better forms of therapy than the ones you know about") Good work, good recording, and good looking packaging (red tape shells with printing on them!). —jug

CLOSE CALL, c/o Nick, 95 Standish Avenue, Plymouth MA 02360, USA

CONSTRITO "Nem Ordem Nem Progresso" demo: The production on this demo is a little unclear, and it makes the songs sound a little flat, a little uninspired: it's not nearly as good as the production on the "Voices" CD compilation, for example. All this hardcore from Brazil (just from Sao Paulo, actually) has me curious... the bands I've heard from there seem to take political subjects more seriously than most U.S. and European bands; I suspect it's more pressing, more relevant to their daily lives. The best song here is the title track ("neither order nor progress"), a reply to the slogan on Brazil's flag, about the suppression of free speech in Brazil by police terror. Other songs attack media brainwashing, pernicious consumerism, and prejudice. There are speedy songs and slower, more "moshy" ones, all of them pretty simplistic and straightforward. The singer has a deep, gruff voice, but he doesn't really let loose as much as he should. So overall, I'm not really impressed with this musically, but their ideas are right on, so hopefully they'll keep at it and improve. —b

Pierre deKerchove, lua Baculo, 44, 04748-050, St. Amaro, Sao Paulo/SP, Brazil

DEADLOCK - Keepin' It Positive Demo

1997 - A nine song demo! I have been aware of these guys for awhile now as they are located here in Washington state, and while I have never seen them live, I have seen the promo work they do with sending out tapes and videos even of themselves to people in order to spread their band over a

GOCCE NEL MARE demo '97: This demo comes with a 90-page booklet. Yes... A 90 PAGE BOOKLET!! It contains plenty of reading material, in both Italian and English. First come the lyrics and further song explanations (songs about despair and hope in today's world, sexism/objectification and ownership, the commodification and suppression of desire and the human body, refusing to regret choices made in your life, not accepting the self-destructive lifestyles that are portrayed as rebellious, the brutality of soldiers in war, the relationship of the individual to the undifferentiated mass...); these not only show intelligence but also heart and soul: there's a moving poetry in the way that they speak against the limits our civilization places on our spirits. They even quote Nietzsche as they extol "erotic games" and rage against guilt and conditioning. The second half of the booklet is a long piece on the Animal Liberation Front, which is in Italian. This booklet is the most exciting thing that's happened to me during all these demo reviews. It's really a wonderful thing that it's so important to these guys to communicate all these ideas to others, with others... and I'm also thrilled to see animal rights activists who are not puritanical or anti-sex, that's unfortunately a rare thing in the U.S., for some reason. The music is a sprawling, noisy, improvisational mess, but an interesting one: the aesthetic here is in the spirit of Crass, with the vocalist shouting out the lyrics over a background of chaotic jazz-punk. She has a compelling, impassioned speaking/shouting voice, and occasionally lets loose with some terrifying roars when the music speeds up to a snare-drum-rolling crescendo. This music might strike some listeners as off-puttingly formless, but there's an inspired method to its madness; and I firmly believe we should have brand new, experimental music and art forms to go with our brand new, experimental ways of thinking and living, so I have to commend them for this challenging music as well as the incredible booklet. —b

Cane records, c/o Jacopo Volpe, Via S. Marco n 17, 36100 Vicenza, Italy

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wider area. Impressive. This demo has Fat Records sounding vocals in an almost NOFX vein along with good quality recording overall and positive lyrics dealing with friendship, unity, and change. One song is an instrumental. I would love to see more bands explain their concept of change now that I am thinking about it, and while Deadlock doesn't do that, they definitely did get me thinking in another way. In referring to themselves as a hardcore band, yet sounding more like a punk band Deadlock has actually played a clever trick on me: I found myself pondering the dividing lines between punk and hardcore, remembering a time when those lines were far less identifiable than they are now. I think that what will remain with me most from this demo was that train of thought, and that in itself makes this demo a successful venture in my mind. I have heard their newer stuff and it is far catchier and has even better recording production. Check them both out. —jug
DEADLOCK, c/o Sam, W. 4 Regina, Spokane WA 99218

DEPRESSOR - demo - Another great tape! I am getting lucky this issue. Five songs here: four originals and a cover song. Great sound even if the sound quality itself is a bit muddy. Great tape even though the packaging is a folded single sheet of paper: it doesn't matter if the music and lyrics are strong. Sort of death metal at times but for the most part it is heavy sounding punk at a slow tempo...reminded me of the Meatmen to tell you the truth! Lyrically really strong. "Class War" is about how class war is a ridiculous idea and will not solve anything, but only serve to create more problems. "Wake Up" is a self-critical call to arise from apathy and become caring citizens rather than continuing as scenesters. The song starts with one of the best lines I have heard in a long time: "Spreading scabies at Neurosis shows / 'non-conformist' but we look like clones". Excellent and intelligent throughout. Definitely get in touch with them and see if they have anything else to say above and beyond this tape. —jug
DEPRESSOR, PO Box 472007, San Francisco CA 94147

DRIFT - The Luxury of Demise Demo - Just a question which popped into my head just now, maybe unrelated to this demo: Why do European bands always sing in English? I guess it allows people to access the lyrics who might not have been able to otherwise, but when bands might feel more comfortable singing in another language, I would much rather have them do that and then (if they wanted to) provide translations. I feel strange listening to English all the time. It is the standardizing language of the world if we allow it to be. This four song demo has a death metal feel at times with holy terror screamed vocals over

RADIKALNA PROMJENA (Radical Change) demo:

One of the best things about doing this magazine is the music and 'zines we get sent to us from all over the world—there is no way I would have come across this band any other way, let alone been able to tell other people about them. Radikalna Promjena was formed when the members were forced by the bloody war in ex-Yugoslavia to flee from their homes. They met as refugees and decided that they had to work together to spread a message of anarchist positive change against the forces of nationalist ignorance, industrial/technological destruction, and war that threaten the lives of hundreds of thousands of human beings in their homeland and around the world. Now that's a good reason to start a band! You'd think that with all that madness going on around them, they'd have a hard time learning to play well or getting a good recording, but this amazed me in both respects: the recording is top notch, bright and clear and powerful, and it adapts easily to the many and varied directions they take their music. And the music is excellent. Their mastery really shows in the moments when they throw in other styles to spice up their hardcore punk: they can play a minute of reggae, an Eastern European folk music intro, or a heavy metal guitar solo as comfortably as they can charge ahead playing their fast, energetic punk rock. At their best moments, which come frequently, their style draws heavily from late '80's crust metal/hardcore bands like Hellbastard (the missing link between Antisect and Nausea): eerie moments of metal drama, desperate yelling vocals, haunting guitar solos. At other, less common moments, they have a more metal/rock influence to their hardcore, but they don't suffer from this: it doesn't make them sound ridiculous, like it would so many other bands, because they're so at home playing any kind of music. The two vocalists are equally comfortable screaming back and forth at each other, singing with voices that bleed with emotion (a little reminiscent of Kriticka Situace? I'm not sure), or yelling choruses over and over in unison. The band was kind enough to send me English translations of the lyrics, as well, which deal with the subjects I mentioned above. This is the sort of thing I would recommend to any Inside Front reader, just for the sake of encountering something entirely different; but it's not just good for novelty value, it's intriguing, impassioned, and educational as well. —b

ladranko Kerekovic, Savska 155 b, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia

metallic hardcore. Lots of changes and different patterns other than remaining with a standard straightforward approach. It reminded me of a slowed down Catharsis with less intricacy. (That's Catharsis from America, kids) The fourth song is a live track which was recorded off a soundboard... good to hear that the vocalist keeps his intensity up all the time. Lyrically interesting overall: one song is about technology and its effect on the earth, another is a really poetic attack on religion with a great line "where benediction is damnation - I carve my sins in stone." My only complaint is the mix: not the recording, but the mix. Some parts got lost which could have been further up front to add power (namely the guitars) and some parts could have been further back in order to be less distracting (the occasional high guitar leads). DRIFT, no address with country given: just send your money to different European addresses from time to time and eventually you will hit on the right one, or maybe just throw \$4 into a bottle and let it drift out to sea...maybe the DRIFT demo will drift back your way someday. Good luck. —jug

ENDURE "Chicago Hardcore" demo: Everything about the presentation of this demo is exemplary: the layout is computer-perfect, and it includes not only lyrics and the usual stuff but also a mission statement by each member of the band. In these statements, they speak about straight edge and revolution, and prove themselves to be very focused and intelligent young men. The dubbing quality (they seem to have replicated these at home) could have been a little better, that might have flattered the recording more (it's good enough, but there's room for improvement). The music and vocals remind me of Mayday: the metallic music aims to haunt and threaten, and the vocalist sings in a throaty growl. The gritty guitars are tuned down low (they seem to be a tiny bit out of tune, in fact), and play together with the drums at a uniformly slow, grinding pace that eventually begins to drag. I'd say that what Mayday's music accomplishes, even on their latest 10" record (reviewed in this issue), Endure's music fails to, at least on this demo. There's one more subject to address here, the lyrics: and these are excellent, refreshingly honest and challenging in their willingness to address topics many bands never think to consider. They deal with topics from the real lives of human beings, like masochism (that's the sort of thing no hardcore kid wants to talk about out loud, and yet it's a more deep-running and universally relevant topic than straight edge ever could be), and the ways that personal qualities like curiosity and lust for control relate to broader issues like homophobia and the human domination of the natural world. Most of today's hardcore

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lyricists could learn a really important lesson from this demo: that we must always be addressing subjects that we feel touch (or, better, push and shove) us personally, in order to be inspired to write lyrics that will touch others (push and shove others??!). Even if you're talking about important things like capitalism, the media, etc., if you just regurgitate slogans that we're already used to, you won't be able to get anyone to think twice about (let alone feel) anything. —b

James Wei-hsin Liu, 4875 North Magnolia Avenue, apartment 308, Chicago, IL 60640
FALLING DOWN demo: "We are the Japanese band," read the letter that came with this demo. Good, I was wondering where they were. No lyrics in the insert, but plenty of speed (and, consequently, adrenaline) in the music. Yes, indeed, this demo never slows down, full speed ahead the whole way, with only two-second pauses for the guitar to lead in the next part. There's a double bass part on the last song which leads into a dance breakdown, but other than that, whenever the drummer is playing he's beating his kit at maximum intensity, maximum velocity, bass-snare-bass-snare-bass-snare-bass-snare. It works great, keeps their straightforward music rushing forward tirelessly (with only a single backward glance, at late '80's bands like Side By Side). The singer has a strong voice, and he's pushing himself as hard as he can, never letting up either. His twisted enunciation reminds me of Roger Miret in Agnostic Front. Four short, quick songs. The verdict: excellent demo, ten times as good as Ten Yard Fight or any other lackluster American revival band. —b

1-28-17 Kitahara Tanasi, Tokyo Japan, Shigeru Okuda

FATAL JUSTICE - Severed Forever Demo
 - No lyric sheet equals essentially no review as far as I am concerned. These songs could be about anything and I won't recommend something based on music alone because who knows what the fuck I could be sending people towards. I will give them the benefit of the doubt for a little while here: sharp edged crunchy metal guitar riffs with lots of brooding stomp parts within an overall vein of new Earth Crisis-ish music blended with New York tough guy hardcore and a dose of Slayer's eerie guitar hooks. I actually liked the music a lot. The vocals are throaty and screamed over the whole thing. I have a feeling that if these guys get into an even better studio than the one this demo was recorded in and put out another release with good lyrics, that they could be in my regular play rotation. —jug
FATAL JUSTICE, Keep it Alive Distro, expansielaan 20, 8411 TB Jubbega, 0516-462529, country???

FIDELIS - demo - No lyric sheet. No tape

NEGATE - Demo '97 - Please forgive me Negate, but no demo ever has inspired as much of an immediate reaction from so many people as this one has. This wins the award. This absolutely wins the goddamn award. What award? Well, for those who have encountered European bands singing in English before, this wins the "Most Completely Fucked Up Use of The English Language" Award for their first song "Down For A Smile" and their second song, the straight edge anthem "Bored". I opened this demo an hour ago and put it in my tape recorder...I never got to listen to it though. Upon reading the lyrics, I exploded into non stop laughter and had to call Brian from Inside Front and read them to him and his girlfriend [editor's note: she's my mistress, not my girlfriend.]. We almost wet our pants. The first song makes absolutely no sense whatsoever. I have asked five people in the last hour and no one has been able to figure out at all what "Down For A Smile" means. I asked specific people, two of those five speak French, thinking that maybe in translating the lyrics back into French that we would find something in them that made sense. No luck. As for the second song "Bored" Brian has promised to print the lyrics somewhere in here so I won't retype all of them. The following passage can not be ignored. It is the ultimate. The best of the best: "Bored! About effect of drink / straight edge comes as fuck / we have learn something / the reality / BAD DRINK". Amazing. As for the other four songs...they are more clear: two topics include keeping your body clean and poison free to the best of your ability, and animal rights. One is about hardcore as a family I think, and the last one is either an anti-racism song or a racist song, I really can't tell ("you have not UNDERSTOOD / anything FROM OUR LIFE / the color OF YOUR FACE / is your blame") I will give them the benefit of the doubt. Musically they play hardcore, with a terrible mix. The bass drum sounds like a little man is tapping a pencil directly on the cones of my speakers, and that is the one thing which stands out in the mix. Screamed frantic vocal stylings with back ups too. My head is spinning from the stress of it all. This demo is far bigger than my mental or emotional capacity can handle. —jug

NEGATE, c/o Arnaud, 23 av. du sud, 6001 Marcinelle, Belgium.

cover. Eleven songs. Noisy all over the place hardcore with screamed vocals. —jug [Editor's note: sorry about this one Punk Planet/MRR-style review, we're not lowering our standards, I promise.]
FIDELIS, Scott Stobbe, 310 Park Avenue, Capitola CA 95010 USA

GANDIVA - demo - Strange that a Krishna influenced band would send their demo to an anti-deity zine like Inside Front. Good for them that I got a hold of it, because I am not going to tear it apart simply on the merit that it is Krsna conscious. Others might have. I will say this about it: Krishna influenced emo-thrash metal. Sort of rad sounding. High sung vocals mixed with terrorizing screams over emo melody which bridges into fuzz box guitar craziness. Damn...these guys are complex in their approach. Maybe they are going through prasadam withdrawal after being in the studio for long enough to record this tape. Just kidding, kids. It has a studio sound to it, and the mix is good. Definitely interesting and different. Big points to them for that. I am not fully aware of what some of the terms means which they use, so I will tell you to approach this with caution, but don't be afraid altogether. I kinda liked it. Four songs. This is one is a keeper, meaning that I give about 95% of the demos I review in this magazine away to friends after I am done with them, but this one I will hold onto and pop in from time to time. Send them your \$\$\$ rather than buying the new Shelter record. —jug
GANDIVA, c/o Glen, 124 Colony Drive, East Longmeadow MA 01028

HUMAN WARMTH - demo 96 - Due to the date on this one, I am wondering if it is a bit dated. Write to them and find out. I actually learned two new words with this tape, and I am wondering if both of them are actual English words or if they are words which somehow got lost in translation: "slaverists" used in the context of bosses in the workplace forcing allegiance from their workers; and "ankilozed" meaning apathetic. Okay. Song topics about workers rights and solidarity: right on! The music is a strange hybrid of poorly played punk and late 80's northeast hardcore. They sound like a mosh core posi band of the late eighties who had their Bold and Chain of Strength records taken away and replaced with the Misfits all of a sudden. The singer has accents occasionally which reminded me of Glenn Danzig. I had to listen to it twice to decide if I liked it or not. It didn't catch my ear, but maybe it will catch yours. —jug

HUMAN WARMTH, c/o Eric Wurbel, 15 rue les jardins de france, 13 270 Fos s/ mer, France

RALLY CAP Demo: Mid-'80's stuff rough, overloaded mix, mid-'80's simple, simple straightedge hardcore music, mid-'80's punk vocals (that speaking/yelling thing

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that bands who listened to the Angry Samoans and the Circle Jerks did). In fact, that's what the music and vocals remind me of: early Circle Jerks stuff. The approach in general and, specifically, the lyrics are pure straight edge cliché, though: there are songs with names like "Friends Till the End," "Think Twice," and "Thinking Straight"—and at one point the vocalist actually yells "my answer to this is the X on my fist!" The performances aren't much smoother than the recording, nor are the riffs as catchy as they must be for this kind of music to work, but at least the songs are short. —b

Rally Cap, c/o Greg Polard, 111 Bonnet Ln., Hatboro, PA 19040

RELENTLESS - Demo - Five songs which are unlike anything you have heard in a long time. Take the vocals out and you have simple tuned down heavy hardcore. Take the music out and you have Rage Against the Machine styled rhyming spoken vocals. No screams to be had here though which makes the energy level on this one pretty much non-existent. Very strange. In a way I am intrigued because the blend of the two aspects is so bizarre, but I don't like the way it sounds overall. In other words: points for originality go out to them, but it just isn't to my personal taste. But why should what I like matter to you? Check this out if you are down with the rap/hardcore crossover scene, as it definitely falls into that realm. I certainly don't feel inspired by it, and maybe if the vocalist sounded like he was more into it that attitude in me would be different. Some of the choices made lyrically made me do double takes, and not necessarily good ones. Lyrically I am with them on the line "we must believe in ourselves" but they lose me on "strapped and it's no joke - watch your back it might get broke." Best line is "step it up or give it up" before the last dance part of the last song at the end. More emotion from these guys and I might have been more stoked on this. —jug

RELENTLESS, c/o Marty, 353 N. Kentucky Avenue, N. Massapequa NY 11758

RIGHTS OF HUMANITY - Demo - No lyric sheet. What the fuck? I let my friend Aaron review this one. Here's what he said about it: "Pantera meets Korn meets Snapcase with interesting parts which aren't predictable. Cool back up vocal effects and a poppy snare sound." Ok, so maybe Aaron will never be a reviewer...anyway, he did touch upon some accurate points which highlight this demo, the first and foremost of which is the vocal style. There are two vocal tracks going on here with these four songs: the first being a Philip Anselmo/Pantera like on as the main line, and then there is this other track which punctuates from time to time in the style of Decide (a high choked scream mimicking the words). Definitely

the complete Negate lyrics to "Down For a Smile" and "Bored"

DOWN FOR A SMILE

I am so cool with everybody
I know its bad
select your friends
I'm sometimes a clot
no just naive
What can I do?
BE ANOTHER ONE!
DOWN FOR A SMILE!
We must destroy suckers on earth
These fuckin' guys must die one day
I am too nice
You're down for a smile
I'm so guilty
You're down for a smile
I am so abused
You're down for a smile
I'll try to change
DOWN FOR A SMILE!

BORED

Bored! About effect of drink
How many killed by car?
How many abused wife?
How many boring men?
TOO MUCH!
I tell alcohol effect
Can you deny
If you deny it
YOU'RE WRONG
Bored! About effect of drink
Straight edge comes as fuck
We have learn something
The reality
BAD DRINK!
In my head it's right
Can you speak like that?
AH! AH!
So it's your life
but try to drop me when you suck
Bored! About effect of drink
You who are so young
And fucking up your health
Think about your parents
RESPECT!
For some way of life
Is just drinking alcohol
Some are not agreeing
STRAIGHT EDGE!

something you don't hear in hardcore very often. I think this reminded me more of Vision of Disorder than anything else. It walks that line between metal and hardcore, dipping into each side from time to time. —jug with special guest appearance by aaron

RIGHTS OF HUMANITY, 105 Tarpon Drive, Grafton VA 23692

THE RULE OF NINES - demo - This is a band which I want to see live for sure. Not because this demo doesn't do them justice, because it is really good, but rather because I can't imagine seeing what they must do live, and if they are still this good. Excellent recording quality and solid packaging, though I do wish the bass drum was a bit pushed back in the mix as it distracted me from time to time when I noticed it punching out. The layout utilizes Kinko's Macintosh computer rentals to their fullest extent. If you took the innovation of Botch and the energy of Dead Stool Pigeon and mixed in a character and style all their own, you get Rule of Nines. They rock. I listened to this tape about three or four times right off the bat from beginning to end. That Mike Phyte guy is beginning to piss me off. First he puts out Botch, who are great...and now Rule of Nines...what makes him so good at choosing bands? Now if only Brian D— could acquire the same skill. Anyway...write to them at this address... **RULE OF NINES**, 15460 Hollis St., Hacienda Heights CA 91745 or for copies of the tape, write:

PHYTE Records and Tapes, PO BOX 14228, Santa Barbara CA 93107. —jug

SKY CAME FALLING "A penny for your confessions" demo: This begins with a guy speaking in an overdramatic, almost affected voice: "to touch... the wings of an angel... doesn't mean... that you can (inhaling gasp:)" and everything hits in unison, vocalist roaring, double bass going, guitarists flailing away. They pull back for a more abstract noise part, before going at it again, and finally leaving the song in to conclude in more messy, abstract noise. In the rest of the songs, there's more double bass, more alternation between screaming and speaking on the part of the vocalist (he's got a good screaming voice, but the speaking parts just sound too forced to me), more alternation between straightforward onslaughts and more subtle, abstract parts in the songwriting. This demo does have its own personality, but drips of artiness in places (song titles like "of adornment and disgust" and "the fall of Cain's countenance," for example). That artiness turned me off to the lyrics at first, but eventually I came to see some value in lines like "last night I dreamt of her jaundice discolorations and how she sheltered me from damnation." I've seen better, but they get points for writing about jaundice discolorations. If they can figure

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out how to use those big words, speak at the beginnings of their songs, and play such "crazy" music without seeming so self-consciously arty, they'll be in good shape. —b

96 Shinnecock Avenue, Massapequa, NY 11758

STANDARD ISSUE - 1997 Demo: I wish I had gotten into hardcore a few years earlier than I did. For me, hardcore started being a vital part of my life around 1987 or so and there wasn't enough time between when I first got into it and when the Judge "Bringing It Down" LP came out to protect me from being influenced by the incredible production that record had. It changed EVERYTHING and up until then, was the most extensively "produced" record in the history of hardcore. The effect was twofold: it set new standards for what hardcore records could sound like. On the other hand, it almost forced new standard for what hardcore records should sound like. After all: why regress? And so with that record, I, like many others of the time, was tainted forever: listening for the quality of the mix as well as the quality of the songs themselves in whatever came along next. This leads us to the Standard Issue demo. It sounds like it was recorded on a four track by someone who had never recorded for before. While I praise whoever that was for their attempt, I have to say that many of the levels are so high as to make most of the tape come across fuzzy and distorted. Maybe I am listening too hard for quality, but there were some times over the course of this that I had a hard time getting into it because of the distortions. Demos like this were a dime a dozen ten years ago: the east coast was FLOODED with cookie cutter straight edge bands singing cloned songs: not just with the same

topics, but with the same words. With that in mind, I wonder about the use of the lines "wake up and live", "true 'til death" and a song titled "No More". Perhaps one of two things is true: either these guys have never heard Youth of Today or Chain of Strength and are imagining themselves as innovators, or maybe the entire project has been created sort of tongue-in-cheek as their name implies. A joke? It doesn't have that feel. Straight edge lyrics with shouted back up vocals and a few "Go!"s here and there. Each band member thanks "God" first and foremost, so perhaps there is some Biblical reason why this should be in your tape collection. This atheist says wait until they record a 7" and then check them out from there. —jug

STANDARD ISSUE, 165 Mayapple Drive, Elizabethtown KY 42701

TRIPHAMMER - Demo. No lyrics sheet. Damn those Triphammer fellows. Six songs here from Salt Lake City which are well recorded and played. The music is tight and blends crunch with harmonics (not "harmonica," you idiots, harmonics) on the guitars to keep things interesting. This is reminiscent of the slow ultra heavy hardcore coming out of Salt Lake City these days but it has these melodic lines throughout which really make it memorable. There are enough dance parts to make for more than a few Mormon black eyes when they play in SLC. I have seen these guys in SLC when Trial has toured through and the kids there are super stoked on them. I haven't heard anything from them in a while but I will be looking forward to whatever follows this demo, unless of course the band breaking up is what follows this demo! A seven inch would be good from these guys. —jug

TRIPHAMMER, 6265 W. 3670 S., West Valley UT 84128

area making an effort to have our voices heard and to take control of our own lives.



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BURNING INSIDE "Light" cassette: When my band was on tour in Europe, we played one show in Hungary, and discovered a whole new world of hardcore. The Hungarian scene is pretty isolated from the rest of the European community, and has developed into a fascinating variation on the theme of hardcore punk. Everywhere else we've been, "hardcore unity" is just a meaningless slogan, an empty cliché: but in Hungary, it is something fresh and vital, it means something. Among the kids at that show was an atmosphere of camaraderie and brotherhood/sisterhood that I thought was only a myth that existed in Crippled Youth songs. Apparently these kids took the late '80's "positive youth" and "unity" stuff at face value and made it a reality in their young, exciting scene. Being around them for that evening was one of the most inspiring experiences I had last year. It's extremely difficult to make CDs and vinyl in Hungary, so even the most established bands (like the four reviewed here) make cassettes—but the sound quality on all of these recordings is top notch, competitive with recordings from anywhere else on the planet. I'd really like to see is some label outside of Hungary release a compilation CD of all the bands there, to attract more international attention to this thriving community—a community that could teach the rest of us something about hardcore.

The new Burning Inside cassette represents a bit of progressive experimentation with the traditional Hungarian sound, which is in its pure form fast, simple, late '80's NYC influenced heartfelt hardcore. The songs on this tape have that speed and simplicity, with the shouted backing vocal choruses, but there's a little more melody in the guitars here, and the vocalist uses a little more singing melody in his voice than the guy from, say, Liberal Youth does. The first song is in Italian, and the other two in English, addressing working through personal crises and standing by the others in your community come what may. Like I said, the recording is clear and powerful; the playing is energetic, and the lyrics sincere, as well. Great stuff. —b

Tama Leiner, Budapest Vitkovics M.U.9, 1052, Hungary

DAWNCORE "Soulburner Times" cassette: This has a more metallic guitar sound than Burning Inside, and the music is a little more metal in general: chunky guitar riffs, gruffer roaring lead vocals, less Chain of Strength speed and more midtempo Breakdown mosh tempos. It doesn't sound like it's from Belgium, by any means, though: there are still a bunch of guys yelling together in the background of every chorus, no high notes are played on the lead guitar, and the song structure doesn't wander off into the land of crazy metal acrobatics. When Dawncore plays this music, it sounds fresh and new, like something they've just invented and are really excited about. That's amazing, since there hasn't been a band from the U.S. in at least six years who could do this stuff and make it sound lively and new. This demonstrates my belief that whenever hardcore music gets too stale and played out in our nation, we must look overseas to see how the same seeds of older ideas and influences have been sown in other soil, and brought forth different fruit. New Jersey tough guy bands should try listening to these to see if they get any new ideas from it ("uh, 'ideas'?" I can hear them grunting...). All the lyrics are in decent English, which makes them easy for me to understand; but I wonder if this makes it harder for local kids to follow them, since I know there aren't that many people in Hungary who speak English fluently. English should not be the only language in hardcore: the more languages we use, the more we will be able to learn from each other. —b

Bozo Attila, 1125 Budapest, Szarvas Gabor u. 23/b Hungary

LIBERAL YOUTH "Korlat Nélkül" cassette: The music here uses Warzone as a starting point, but ends by sounding less silly than Warzone often did. The constricted, yelling vocals, the speed, the slamdancing breakdowns, the short, fast songs with sudden stops are all reminiscent of that band, but they work more smoothly here. Liberal Youth's music never lets up, never loses a drop of adrenaline, it's filled with energy from the beginning to the end. The lyrics are all in Hungarian, which is great, although I wish there were some way I could get translations so I could understand them. Their name is pretty funny to me, but it's probably a pretty radical thing to name

your band in Hungary, I guess. Especially worthy of note here is the second to last song, "S.C.H.C." ("Savaria Colonia Hardcore—that's the hardcore scene that all these bands come from). It's not just Liberal Youth's song, this song belongs to everyone in Hungary and it's an example of the sort of communal atmosphere that I loved so much there. The night we played there, every one of the bands that played that night played this song at some point in their set; and each time one did every fucking hardcore kid would get together around the stage and sing along—because it is a song that doesn't belong to any one person or band. Communally owned songs are the sort of idea that hasn't even occurred to us in our much more uptight, hostile U.S. hardcore scene. When everyone at the show was singing along, they were singing, in effect, "this song belongs to us just as our community belongs to us—we're changing the world by working together, for each other and with each other, not against each other. Hardcore!" Seeing something like that was really exciting for me. That night, each of the bands there gave us a copy of their demo for every member of our band, and most of the demos had recordings of this song on them. —b

Horvath Norbert, Szombathely 9700, Baratsag u. 12. 1/6., Hungary
UNITED SIDE cassette: The night after the show in Hungary, which was the third to last show of what had been a three month tour (and yes, we were fucking exhausted, we were at the end of our rope), we had a thirteen hour drive to our next show. A few hours into it, our rented van broke down. Ernie (our band mechanic**) got out and had a look, and informed us a few minutes later that the transmission (or the gears, or something really important like that... I can't remember) was completely destroyed. We managed to get the van towed (by a guy who spoke no English, since we were in southern Germany) to a used car dealership. We went in and sat in their showroom, drinking their free coffee, as their employees surveyed us nervously from a distance. I found the stereo that was broadcasting elevator music over their speakers, took that tape out, and put in this tape, which my new friends in Hungary had given me the night before. So there we sat, believing our tour to be over, stuck in the backcountry of rural Germany with a destroyed van, listening to Hungarian hardcore in a lobby. Thanks to this music, it didn't feel so bad. (In fact, Ernie and Alexei were so moved by the experience that they have adopted the verse of the first song on this cassette as their motto: "Don't let them killing the life!") As it turned out, the staff there were so anxious to be rid of us that they offered to lend us another rental van in trade for ours, to get us moving out of there. We made it to the show just before we were supposed to play, and finished out the tour, only to be showered with newspaper confetti up to our knees at the last show. We never did find out what happened to the old van. I can't imagine the rental company was thrilled when they got it back: not only was the engine destroyed and trash smeared all over it inside, but our German eighteen-year-old driver-guy Sven had driven it into a pole, smashing off the side-view mirror, and the guys from Gehenna had cut all of the seatbelts out of the back seats.

Anyway, listening to this again: the music here sounds something like Youth of Today with deeper vocals; at the best moments it has just as much excitement and energy, just as much punch and speed. There are group vocals on the choruses, fast parts, and only slightly slower breakdowns. And they also have the song S.C.H.C. on this demo (the song I wrote about in the Liberal Youth review). —b

Bertalan Andras, Szombathely, 9700, Vorosmarty u. 3., Hungary

***Here's another story about Ernie: we broke down in the middle of Wyoming, and Ernie took off most of his clothes, got down under the hood up to his waist, and worked there for about three hours. When he emerged, his arms, head, and torso were absolutely black with oil, and he held clutched in his hand what appeared to be the van's still-beating heart. He threw this piece of the engine, which was about the size of a large video camera, into the ditch, where it lay still whirring and pulsing and doing whatever it had been doing inside the van, and told us the van was repaired.*

Cara a Cara #1: Este 'zine, publicado en España, me interesa mucho porque pretende, como lo expresan ellos mismos. "difundir v

Spanish Language Magazines

Cara a Cara #1: Este 'zine, publicado en España, me interesa mucho porque pretende, como lo expresan ellos mismos, "difundir y engrandecer el movimiento Hardcore en nuestro país." un país que, hasta ahora, no ha sido muy conocido por su Hardcore. Sin embargo, también me hace sentir un poco nerviosa por su actitud hacia la cuestión del sello multinacional. Según el editorial, el 'zine se interesa por bandas en multinacionales, porque esas pueden aprovechar su posición (si se lo puede llamar así) para extender el alcance del Hardcore. Por eso, dicen, "nos interesa más un grupo como Sick Of It All en Warner [la banda en la portada], que cualquier grupo alternativo que grabe en un sello independiente sólo porque si [y aquí sale una media línea en blanco] (aunque nos parece respetable)." Bueno, no me han convencido, ¡quizá porque la parte más crucial de sus ideas ha sido olvidado! Dejaremos al lado mis gustos y la pregunta de si yo sí o no creo que Sick Of It All sea un grupo Hardcore en estos días. Puede ser que con un multinacional una banda alcance un público más extenso — o puede ser que el cambio del independiente al multinacional enfade al público leal, mientras el multinacional ni promueva ni apoye el grupo, el cual muere sin más. Un problema con un sello multinacional es que ese sello no tiene en cuenta los intereses del grupo, lo cual se dice mucho, y queda bastante obvio. Pero un problema aun más grave es que el sello, más que ser una corporación opresiva capitalista que abusa y oprime y todo para el dinero, no tiene una ideología básica que influye en su escoger y promover grupos musicales. Esto significa que el sello puede usar los beneficios que gana de un grupo más pequeño y menos importante (porque no atrae suficientes millones de pesetas del público) para promover otro grupo más grande que expresa una ideología totalmente contradictoria a la del más pequeño (como, por ejemplo, una banda sXe que firma con un mayor que también promueve a Dr. Dre o Cypress Hill). Y, claro, también hay el problema de la libertad artística, él de participar en el sistema capitalista, él de olvidar las ideas y las emociones sinceras para la fama y el dinero. Me extraña que todos los grupos americanos que menciona son enormes, pero, dado su editorial, no me sorprende. Entiendo que quizás para comunicar con más gente, y así sembrar el semillo del hardcore por España, han escogido los grupos con un público más amplio, y que éstos están, más que nunca, bajo un sello multinacional, pero todavía me preocupa que lo que estén difundiendo es la idea de que un grupo debe hacerse esclavo de una corporación para engrandecer el mundo del hardcore. Al final de la entrevista con los madrileños Like Peter At Home (que, para empezar, parece consistir de una gran parte de los que escriben y publican el 'zine, y que, segundo, habla con energía contra los multinacionales — aquí me confundí otra vez y me pregunto, ¿para qué ese editorial?, y sólo puedo explicarlo por decirme que están muy preocupados con contactar con tanta gente como sea posible, si esas personas tengan interés en el hardcore o no) dice, "Contratación, contacto con el grupo, venta de material [nos. de teléfono, etc.]." ¿Contratación? ¿Esperan que el Sr. Warner les vaya a llamar? Las entrevistas (con Sick Of It All, los alemanes Ryker's, y varios grupos españoles) son mediocres o peor, y utilizan las mismas preguntas para casi todas, aunque preguntan a los Sick Of It All cuáles son las desventajas de trabajar con un sello multinacional. La mala calidad de la mayoría de las fotos para mí es calmante: proviene un alivio de la bonita y profesional (¿demasiado bonita?) apariencia del resto del 'zine. Los artículos son, por lo general, bien escritos y expresados, pero hay demasiado espíritu fraternal y sentimientos del estilo (el Hardcore, por ejemplo, se distingue del Punk por "la honestidad, la amistad, la colaboración, unidad y el respeto por ti y por los demás" — no digo que no sea verdad (¿qué sé yo?), pero su rah rah rah puede cansar a uno). Como es el primer número de un 'zine de introducción al Hardcore, puedo excusar su enfoque en la historia del movimiento, el esqueleto básico de un complejo pasado. Pero olvidados eso, lo de los multinacionales, y el sentimentalismo sXe, y considerando el movimiento, el esqueleto básico de un complejo pasado. Pero olvidados eso, lo de los multinacionales, y el sentimentalismo sXe,

y considerando el hecho de que hay pocos grupos independientes americanos que se interesan por Europa (y sobre todo por España, un hermanito

hecho de que hay pocos grupos independientes americanos que se interesan por Europa (y sobre todo por España, un hermanito mocoso en la familia Hardcore europea), y así intentando justificar su enfoque en los grupos Hardcore más separados del espíritu DIY y combativo, más ligados al mainstream, yo diré: Si estos chavales son realmente sinceros, si no son solamente más publicidad para WEA (o, ¿puede ser?, para Soulfur Records, Madrid), sus esfuerzos pueden ser importantes. Quizás puedan escapar del comercialismo para introducir al mundo el hardcore español en un foro equilibrado e inteligente. --@ Andres Casas T., Apartado de Correos N. 18.083, 28080 Madrid, Spain

Corazón de Chanchó #5: Este 'zine chileno es superinteligente e interesante. Trata varios temas, los cuales incluyen unos problemas con el movimiento straight edge, un festival local de "punk" patrocinado por un candidato político, la abstención electoral, la falta de creatividad en el activismo político, y (gracias a Dios) una explicación del nombre del 'zine (pero yo no revelo secretos...). Las entrevistas con Donfango (Chile) y Fotofobia (Argentina) no son nada especial, pero tienen un espíritu divertido que no se ve muy a menudo con tanta sinceridad. Las reseñas de discos son demasiadas cortas para ser útiles, pero también hay reseñas de libros (situacionismo, ginecología, organización laboral, y punk) que son más completos y educativos. El 'zine también incluye traducciones de dos artículos de MRR, uno por el gurú de CrimethInc. (¡no sé si puedo soportar tanta emoción!); las traducciones son excelentes: parecen captar todo el detalle ideológico de los originales, que se trataban de la monotonía activista y el escepticismo hacia la nueva moda cultural del "new age" y de la ciencia ficción. Hay una fotocopia de un artículo de un periódico que discute ataques neonazistas a latinoamericanos en Moscú; nota el editor, Julio, que Rusia puede parecer muy lejana pero que toda manifestación del racismo fascista en el mundo tiene una importancia global. Pero lo que más me afectó en el 'zine fue una carta avergonzante e ignorante escrita al editor de una revista argentina, *Visión*, de un norteamericano que enfatiza la arrogancia y estupidez de países hispanohablantes (¡junta las naciones latinoamericanas con España, como si las aspiraciones y las situaciones de cada país fueran las mismas!) que esperan alcanzar influencia política o económica en el mundo. La carta está llena de bigotía y estereotipos, y francamente me da vergüenza más que me causa rabia, porque nunca me ha sido tan obvio que los Estados Unidos están llenos todavía de gente que he preferido olvidar tanto como fuera posible. Aun más triste es lo que añade *Corazón de Chanchó* (una foto de un revolucionario armado que está diciendo que al menos el autor de la carta es honesta, mientras el resto de los estadounidenses piensan igual, pero en silencio) porque quiero protestar, ponerme defensiva, gritar, "¡Ese tío no soy yo!" ¡Nosotros no pensamos así!", pero es evidente que mis protestas serían ridículas. Actitudes como la de G.F.G. (el escritor ilustre de dicha carta) son tan extremas y tan crueles en su ignorancia que casi no tengo respuesta. Y que esa actitud viene de una persona que no tiene vergüenza de expresarse así, que esa persona puede sentirse tan superior al resto de la humanidad, y que esa persona no sólo es de mi país pero que además es de mi propio estado...bueno, me quedo sin palabras. En general este 'zine es provocativo y original. La única lástima es que no hay más escrito por el editor, porque él se expresa inteligentemente y profundiza en sus discusiones de temas que a veces son tratado brevemente por otros personas o grupos. Recomendando entusiásticamente *Corazón de Chanchó* para una lectura interesante, y le suplico a Julio, por favor, la próxima vez, ¿puedes darnos un poco más de tu sabiduría?, que nos agradecería tanto...(y siento mucho lo de tu tortugo). --@ *Corazón de Chanchó*, c/o Julio, Los 3 Antonios 414-B, Nuñoa, Santiago, Chile.

(tortugo). --@ *Corazón de Chanchó*, c/o Julio, Los 3 Antonios 414-B, Nuñoa, Santiago, Chile.

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Reading ZINE REVIEWS

LONG VIDEO REVIEW

THE ART OF REVOLUTION: an ABC NO RIO benefit video; This is, obviously, a benefit project for ABC No Rio. While the cause is certainly worthwhile, the video leaves a bit to be desired. The bands appearing aroused some excitement in me at first—Oi Polloi, Born Against, Avail, and Aus Rotten, in particular—but the quality of the recordings just wasn't quite there. Without a doubt, the most interesting part was the conversation with the Israeli hardcore band Nekhe Nattza about situations in Israel. Overall, though, I would say if you are buying this with the intent of getting a recording of a good live performance from one of your favorite bands, it's probably not worth it. The shame is that someone put energy and time compiling this with the intent of capturing the feelings that exist at ABC No Rio shows all in an attempt to provide a product for us to consume so that their feelings can continue. Look, No Rio needs money in order to be able to continue existing. It is a place that is an asset to punk and all they should have to do is ask other punks for some help to get it. If everyone sent a couple bucks the place could continue putting on shows, running Food Not Bombs, providing a place for art exhibits, etc. However, since the possibility of people just sending money for a cause just unfortunately isn't going to happen, they have to spend money putting together a video and sell it in order to feel legitimate in asking for help. We always have to get something back for our money, right? All we'll ever be is consumers. —b.a.

Tribal War, P.O. Box 20712, New York, NY 10009

ABC No Rio, 156 Rivington St., New York NY 10002

ZINE REVIEWS

Blind to Faith #1: Hmm... Cleveland is finally coming back on the map, with a brief but well-put-together 'zine named after a Ringworm lyric. Contents: an interview with the infamous Tony Erba, now of Nine Shocks Terror (with Steve Pepper of the Mormons on vocals), an story about an evening of professional wrestling written by that same Erba, some record and 'zine reviews (focusing mostly on fast, ugly, grindy modern punk music), and reprints of two ancient interviews: the Necros in 1984 ("life for us is just seeing how long we can deny being adults") and fucking Bad Brains in 1981 ("punk rock isn't fast music, all punk rock is really slow. We're a gospel group."?!). If this 'zine reprints one old Bad Brains interview ("I Against I" or earlier) every issue, I'll guarantee them at least a couple kind words each time. —b
P.O. Box 771296, Lakewood, OH 44107

Brat #3 [volume 2]: This is important because it is a politically/socially conscious magazine made by and for the youth of Louisville, Kentucky. It's ex-

citing to see this level of awareness and self-motivation among young people. Articles range from Critical Mass (up there with Food Not Bombs as one of the best "activist" activities going on right now), straight edge (the point is made, and made well, that straight edge by itself is bankrupt as a foundation for values, since it defines itself only in terms of negatives and does not place a positive value on anything—right on—still, that doesn't mean I should start drinking or smoking, or stop calling myself straight edge; it just means

that unless we straight edge kids decide what we *do* want, our lives and "movement" are pretty pointless), and the way that big businesses sell the spectacle of rebellion (personified by such bands as Rage Against the Machine) and thus can make money off of, and thrive upon, the very discontent that their system generates. This is good stuff, and done for all the right reasons; some of us hardcore people should get in touch with them and see what help we can offer. —b

P.O. Box 4964, Louisville, KY 40204-0964

Change #10: Change has heart, it has personality, which is the most important thing for a 'zine to have. It's still confusing and off-putting to me here and there, but at least it has some fire in it, at least it possesses an identity. That said... professional basketball and the Simpsons? If you want to celebrate being involved in sports, that's great—go out and play sports, talk about playing sports, go crazy, as long as you're getting your hands dirty in *real life*. And I think editor Patrick does... so why all this bullshit about fucking mainstream media stuff? So many Americans know so much about sports and care so much about sports because they feel like they don't have control over anything else in their lives—following professional sports is a surrogate activity. They're bored and impatient with their jobs all week, but they're content to wait for the football show to come on television. It becomes the one thing that they can feel excited about—and, to maintain the status quo, the networks, bosses, and everyone else encourage us to think more about things like sports and fucking cartoons than about things in our lives that we could change. Patrick might think I'm being boring by politically critiquing the simple things he loves, but I want high stakes in every aspect of our lives: I don't want us to be neutralized so that we only riot in the streets when the Tar Heels win a basketball championship, rather than when taxes increase or war is declared. These recurring features of Change (the Simpsons and professional basketball) really underline a deeper theme in this magazine: Patrick's unusual anti-intellectual, anti-political sentiments. He makes it clear that he hates the mainstream, that he hates the way the world is set up right now, and

he's obviously really smart—so why is he always emphatically denying that he could ever have any political/social message or that he could work towards any real social critique or transformation? I think Pat obviously knows that taking some kind of political/social stand will be the inevitable result of following his ideas and inclinations through to their logical conclusion, and I imagine that he is just afraid to commit himself because it feels like he's up

Making Punk a Threat Again: Profane Existence 1989-93: This book should be required reading for every single person in punk rock. If it was, then people in punk circles would have the necessary understanding of class consciousness, feminist theory, working in collectives/federations, and other subjects that they need to become a *real* threat to the status quo. Some of those other subjects addressed in here are: activism against racists and anti-abortionists (made relevant by reference to real-life projects carried out by the authors and their comrades), efforts to organize anarchist/social activist centers (again, made exciting by the descriptions of actual attempts to make this work), the revolutionary undertones of the L.A. riots, self-education for punk rockers, the bad things about police and police states, D.I.Y. networking and organizing, and more really crucial stuff. The article on why the general masses of people are not morons, just in a bad position when it comes to taking control of their lives, and why punks should therefore not despise them but seek to work with them, was especially astute. There's an emphasis above all on how to use punk rock as a resource to fight for freedom and fairness, and on living life to the fullest. The articles are all spirited, clever, and entertaining, as well as educated and insightful, which is really important; because of those qualities, this book can be read, enjoyed, and understood by anybody remotely involved in punk. If it gets out enough, it could really make a difference in how focused and effective our community is in doing something about our discontent. Find this book and read it: you'll find it easy and fun, as well as eye-opening. I think the universal reaction among all of my friends who have seen this is "I don't remember seeing anything that good in Profane Existence!" —b

Profane Existence, P.O. Box 8722, Minneapolis, MN 55408

Reading ZINE REVIEWS

hardcore scene with Harvest and Brother's Keeper interviews and the Syracuse scene news that this 'zine consistently delivers. There are a few layout errors in the interviews that occasionally make for difficult reading, but for the most part, this is solidly laid out, colorful, and interesting to look at, although never excessive. The record reviews are pretty short, but specific enough to be useful. —j

Full-size, newsprint, roughly 60 pages. \$1.00 to Ryan Canavan, 201 Maple Ln., N. Syracuse, NY. 13212

Hodgepodge #2: Issue #2 of this zine shows that Hodgepodge is progressing at a rapid clip. Here's why: the editors have mostly corrected the scanning problems that marred #1; there are great photos of a wide variety of hardcore, "emo," and underground bands; this new issue boasts a clean, readable layout that never fails to catch the eye, and it features above-average interviews with By the Grace of God, Monster X, Ink and Dagger, Louie from Antidote, and a piece on the Last Crime. The interviews are entertaining and thought-provoking (my favorite being the discussion of drug legalization with Monster X) and show that the editors, Mike and Kevin, are willing to go beyond the usual "so, dude, who's your favorite straight edge band?" line of questioning. Kevin reveals his true nature as a posi-core kid in his introduction, too: "All I know is that all the problems in life are actually not all that bad... Life isn't perfect, but we can make it nearly perfect if we understand how to think the right way." Uh, come again? Despite some minor flaws, Hodgepodge #2 is worth a buck. —j

(Full-size, newsprint, 56 pages. \$1.00 to Mike Schade, 432 Red Jacket Quad, SUNY Buffalo, Buffalo, NY. 14261.)

Hot Rod Suicide #1: A kid called Andrew does this 'zine, and he gave it to me in Richmond last time my band played there. And it's a great 'zine, so I'd like to be able to give you his address, but I can't find it in here for the life of me!! Anyway, track it down if you can. The writing (an article about goings-on in Richmond hardcore, for example) in H.R.S. is what sets it apart—it is clear and skillful enough to make any topic seem worth thinking about. The interviews (with \$500 fine, who talk a lot about capitalism, Scott from Bloodlink, who explores a number of interesting topics, and Avail, which is shorter but still has some interesting content) make for really good reading, too. There are also plenty of really lengthy magazine and record reviews, at least as informative and interesting as the ones in Inside Front, if not better. The layout is a little disorienting (small text, decentralized placement), but benefits from disturbing images taken from the Re/Search reprint of *Atrocity Exhibition*. I wish I could tell you where to find this. —b
??????

Inconsystemcy combined issues #1 and 2: There's a lot in here, it's a really thick 'zine. The computer layouts sometimes make it a little fuzzy (or is that the scanning at the printing factory?), but it's still legible. The illustrations (lots of band photos, etc.) add interest. There are a number of good interviews: Damnation (some depth, no revelations, but not as shallow as I've seen them be), Catharsis (one of the better and more challenging Catharsis interviews around), Trial (one of today's most articulate straight edge bands

here, as usual), Indecision (lengthy enough that they eventually have to start giving useful answers), Ensign (same as the Indecision interview, actually), the guy from Trustkill (it's interesting to see a label guy speak for himself), Bloodlet (they never have anything interesting to say...), Ascension (fun guys, but the silly interview doesn't have much to offer), and Earth Crisis, Downset, and V.O.D. (there's not much to say about these interviews). The articles, which are lengthy, well written, and passionate, deal with such topics as the television anesthetic, nutrition and the vegan diet, how drug use is counter-revolutionary, etc. There are also show reviews (featuring, in fact, an historic picture of Culture playing, with me standing confrontationally right in front of

their singer... this was shortly before we got our silly conflict worked out), lots of really long record reviews, and some more personable writing from the editor. Like I said, there's a lot in here, and some of it is really worth reading. The politics and general attitude are right on, too, which is great to see. —b

Robin Staps, Oldauer Heuweg 29, 29313 Hambuehren, Germany

Inmate #1: This is pretty damn basic. Inmate consists of interviews and not much else; the bands featured are Plughole, Kindred, Ashlar, Lockdown, and Morning Again. This has some of the worst record reviews that I've ever read, with descriptions that are so brief and vague that they're hardly helpful at all. The show reviews are a little better (but only a little.) There is really nothing remarkable about this effort. Inmate(s), I know you can improve, but you're going to have to try harder than this. Come on! —j

Photocopied, half-size, 40 pages. No world price listed. Dirk, Rooterweg 15, 3680 Neeroeteren, Belgium

Inmate #2: This isn't a bad 'zine: they seem to care about what they write about (2 short columns, one on protesting animal testing and the other about hardcore fashion rules and how they get in the way of scene unity), even of their topics aren't terribly original and they don't bring anything new to them. Still, all in all, it's nothing really special. It includes interviews with Stalker—be scared. Be very scared—who tell us, "If you're not into metal, you're not our friend," Reveal, and Catharsis, which features Brian rambling on about hardcore fashion and his lack of it, religion, NCHC, and the prime minister of the USA. Average record reviews. Show reviews that are personal enough to be usually interesting. Scene report disguised as "News." Scene reports are so boring. Someone really needs to revamp the whole idea, because at this point they're just lists of bands with a sentence or two about them—as useless as really short record reviews. At any rate,

that's not Inmate's fault, but they certainly aren't helping. I didn't intend for this to sound so negative. These guys seem like their hearts are in the right place.

Innocence Regained #1: This is one of those political punk 'zines with absolutely unreadable messy layouts. Well, it's not completely unreadable, I'm just being a jerk as usual... here's what I can make out: some advice on urban guerrilla warfare on the first page (that won me over right away!), followed by a brief but insightful criticism of voting as a (an ineffective) route towards change, a discussion of nudity, capitalism, objectification, and sex-

DWGSHT #10: Alex's 'zine gets right down to business as usual, starting immediately with the letters section (the sort of banter you usually get in letters sections, only spiced up with the occasional paragraph about anarcho-syndicalism), followed by a piece on Cesar Chavez—I like the political/historical articles in Dwgsht, they're educational without being too dry or boring, something hard for short-attention-spanned punk kids like me to find! Further on in the magazine is a discussion of how freedom of speech has been curtailed again and again in the U.S., three smaller pieces (about anarchist Emma Goldman, the invasion of and slaughter in East Timor, and the issue of race), and an interview with the Strike. The interview is well-done, it connects the band itself to political/social issues and also includes lyrics, etc. in the layout. The weakest points here are the music reviews (never Dwgsht's strong point) and a wandering, incoherently defensive column by one Tracy Pickle, whose non sequiturs and obvious misinterpretation of the term "anarchist" identify her as a *person who should NOT be asked to contribute columns in the future. Fuck Tracy Pickle!* (No, I don't know who she is or anything about her, I'm just trying to hurt as many feelings as I can before the review section is over...) The late supplement/insert also includes some highly class-conscious book reviews and a little musing from Alex about how much he hates work. The layouts are beautiful and the 'zine itself is gorgeous, complete with a glossy yet D.I.Y. cover and unusual (National Geographic-size) dimensions. So, overall, this is excellent as usual, more proof that politicized hardcore 'zines don't have to be dull. —b
P.O. Box 28, Durham, NC 27702

Reading ZINE REVIEWS

against too much. Well, go for it, Pat! Don't just make a religion out of your discontent—DO something about it! We'll all be behind you, when you decide to start concentrating on real life stuff and leave the fucking Simpsons and other television shit behind you. You know the network psychologists designed that shit to get people like us who hate everything to still watch television, don't you? Anyway—there are some decent 'zine reviews, record reviews that are about as good as three-sentence reviews can get (that is, decent), and some columns which stand head and shoulders above the columns in most 'zines these days (in one, the writer speaks out on political grounds against a certain straight edge band's endorsement of Nike... that's the sort of thing Patrick shouldn't be afraid of doing). The interviews, excellent as always, are with Ensign (not a bad interview, Patrick starts it off by

asking some questions about sex... and pardon me for being a fucking jerk, but maybe he should have asked them some questions about the relationship between sexism, homophobia, and ignorance, since the last time I saw Ensign their drummer was screaming "you fucking faggot bitch! faggot cunt bitch!" at somebody he wanted to fight), Spazz (hilarious, due to Patrick's hilariously offbeat questions), Converge, and the guy who does the 'zine Sound Views. Finally, the 'zine ends with an article in which Patrick discusses the implications of the way the word "pussy" is used in slang—it's strange, because he demonstrates quite a bit of sociological insight and consciousness in this piece, but still writes it in a way that is insensitive enough that it made Nadia want to vomit when she read the pull quote. So from the beginning to the end of this 'zine, I'm torn between different feelings and reactions. Hmm. —b
P.O. Box 1010, Village Station, New York, NY 10014-1010

Disturbing the Peace #5: This is much more "punk"-oriented than most of the 'zines reviewed here. That shouldn't put any of you off, though, no matter what your tastes might be, because this is an excellent, highly intelligent magazine. The editor is exceptionally well-spoken, and not afraid of starting trouble by speaking his mind (as the spicy letters section indicates), which immediately endeared him to me, of course. Other highlights include an interesting and educational column about the sex industry (first-hand experience), a reprint of the old MRR Amebix interview (they beat us to it, but we don't care), and articles by the editor on such subjects as the nonsensical claim some punks make to being "apolitical." Also present are a good number of reviews (ranging from excellent to mediocre), a couple good interviews (the Newtown Neurotics and the silly Charles Bronson), and various other entertaining tidbits (a "gossip column," for example). They apparently spread this 'zine for free (postage donations, of course), so I'd say their hearts are in the right place as much as their brains are. —b

Stuart Schrader, 9 Fenwick Road, Whippany, NJ 07981

Drops in the Ocean #2: Editor Roger gave this to me when we stayed with him in Europe—I remember talking to him for a long time about how he had been living fairly comfortably on the Dutch welfare system for a while, concentrating his energy on doing various creative things. This 'zine has a very personal feel, but that doesn't prevent it from being useful to anyone who has interests in common with Roger. The quality of the photos (everyone from Rorschach to Swing Kids to Portishead) is absolutely perfect—in fact, the layout in general is gorgeous. The interviews (with Acme and Man Is the Bastard) are exhaustive, touching on everything you could want to know about these bands—it's also significant that he chose to interview two bands that are both interesting and hard to track down: that makes these inter-

views particularly interesting. Not much else here, except for some scraps of (what I find to be) second rate poetry. —b

Roger NBH, le Jacob v. Campenstr. 3, 1072 BB Amsterdam, Holland

Eventide #3: What Eventide needs to do is to tighten up and get focused. They obviously have the energy they need—this 'zine is really fucking thick and has a lot in it, especially for such a newcomer publication. But I don't get the feeling that they are sure what they are trying to accomplish besides just doing a 'zine. There are fucking twenty one interviews in here, from Morning Again to Rainer Maria, but they are all pretty superficial. There are a bunch of columns at the beginning, but they suffer from a common column virus: most of them are wandering and poorly written, and they seem to only have been included because MRR set the standard for 'zines to have columns.

There are a fucking lot of reviews, but they aren't really lengthy or useful either. There is a LOT of fucking advertising, and that's never easy on my delicate, overpoliticized eyes. If the makers of this 'zine got together, decided upon a unique goal for their magazine, went after it with all the energy they are obviously already using, and got rid of all the dead weight, they could do great things. I hope they do. In the meantime, since this is free in the NJ/NY area, it should provide some brief reading to residents there. —b

225 Riveredge Road, Tinton Falls, NJ 07724

Fueled By Hate #1: Basically, what this 'zine has to offer is a few good reviews and two fairly lengthy interviews. The interviews are with Earthmover and Catharsis, and they both go into some depth about what the band cares about, what their goals and approach and motives are, why they chose certain cover art, etc.; if you're interested in either of these bands, this might be a good 'zine to pick up. There are only a few reviews in the reviews section, but each is as long as any Inside Front review (i.e. longer than any HeartattaCk or MRR review...), and they're all usefully descriptive, too. Other than those features, there's some writing about various problems within the hardcore scene, which is well-reasoned, if limited in its relevance. Drawbacks? Well, it's a really brief read,

the layout and printing are far from beautiful, spelling errors abound, and this general aura of amateurish confusion often makes Fueled By Hate seem to have less to offer than it does. But the editor's sincerity and good intentions do come across, and so we can expect good things from future issues. —b
Steve Titus, 77 Zittel Street, Buffalo, NY 14210

Funtime #7: I can struggle through some written German, but most of this looks really unfamiliar to me; it must be Swedish. Interviews with Ten Foot Pole, Unsure, Voodoo Glow Skulls, SNFU and others, with coverage mostly on bands of the "pop-punk" variety. The photos are mostly either too light or too dark, and most of the layout is pretty basic. For a seventh issue, this should look a lot better than it does. Funtime isn't anything to get excited about, even if you can read Swedish (or whatever language this was written in!) —j

Full-size, photocopied, 52 pages. No price given. Stijn Vorbinnen, Boukopleinbaan 30, B-3110 Wezemaal. What fucking country is this from?

Note: The above 'zine is obviously in Flemish. It must be from Belgium. —Gloria C.

Hanging Like A Hex #8: This 'zine improves with each issue, and although there are still some aspects of Hanging Like A Hex that could stand improvement (less typos, for one thing), #8 is a pretty satisfying read. Editor Ryan Canavan shows an affinity for AmRep/Relapse-style noisiness with his interviews of Today Is The Day and Unsane, while still keeping his feet in the

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ism (an excellent piece, really), instructions on "altering" (vandalizing, those law-abiding scum would call it) corporate billboard advertisements (excellent again!), a rant about Michael Jordan's social position as an idol and how little he or anyone deserves that status, and various other articles of similar import. Graffiti writing comes up off and on from the beginning to the end, too. Really, I shouldn't have complained about the layout, there's some great stuff in here. A better layout (or even an equally messy one with more personality and aesthetic direction) would make this much more accessible, and easier to take seriously, but check this out regardless if you want a little interesting reading. —b

P.O. Box 13274, Chicago, IL 60613

International Straight Edge Bulletin #22:

This 'zine is significant because, more than any other, it brings together people from all different cultures and nations who share an interest in hardcore punk—both the music and the general approach to life that comes with it. Interviews include the anarchist skinhead group R.A.S.H. (who are effectively confronted about the supposed difference between excessive football-team loyalty and nationalism), Sight For Sore Eyes (Brazilian hardcore), and Mainstream (Bulgarian hardcore—when asked about gay rights in his country, the interviewee answers "there haven't been any gay [rights] demonstrations until now, but they have bars and stuff"—!). We also get hardcore news ("scene reports") from Spain, Peru, the Philippines, two from Malaysia, Panama, the U.K., Croatia, the Czech republic, and Uruguay, some brief reviews (of a variety of international records and 'zines, of course), and various scraps of writing about hardcore punk from people around the globe. —b

Y. Boislevé, BP 7523, 35 075 Rennes cedex 3, France

Interpol Times #11: This is a little bit hardcore, a little bit punk. Content-wise, the line-up consists of interviews with Clusterbombunit, Eversor, Hot Water Music, Ignite, One Eye Open, Necrosis (not Neurosis) and a special talk with a hardliner. Hmm. Layout is mostly cut-and-paste on off-white copy paper, the pictures are decent, the record reviews are sloppy (but get their point across,) and the transcription/ writing is of varied quality. The editor injects too many comments into the interviews and other writings; they're distracting, and only occasionally funny or otherwise meaningful. The hardliner interview is ridiculous: "Homosexual sex basically is a form of spitting in the face of Nature by using body parts that were intended for very specific purposes in wholly unnatural acts that defy Nature's logic and intent." If that's true, then how come animals have same-sex relations in the wild? Interpol Times is a tolerable effort nonetheless, even if #11 should look and read better than it does. —j

Full-size, photocopied, 60-odd pages. \$3.00 to Dennis P. Merklingshaus, Auf Dem Stefansberg 58, 53340 Meckenheim, Germany

La lune noire #2: I do not read French. Like our curmudgeonly editor, I often wish that I had more languages under my belt. If I did read French, this 'zine would still be difficult to read because of the layout, which often consists of

strips of paper with text typed on them pasted over messy collages of photos and ads at odd angles. What I would read would be an interview with Stormcore, who manage to talk a lot about some pretty basic, simple questions (What's your line-up? Why'd you sign to Mad Mob? What do you think of the French scene?), although they don't seem to say anything brilliant; and some short interviews (that often use the same questions, when appropriate) with Pin Drop Records, Good Life Recordings, Hang-Up, Striving for Togetherness Records, Out for Blood, and Mass Murderers. The reviews are mostly brief and vague. Not useful at all: a lot of "sounds like _____ mixed with _____"-style descriptions. (Facedown, for example, apparently skillfully ally the intensity of "I'mo" to the efficiency of metal, whatever that means.) The most (potentially) interesting interview was with Mass Murderers, who discuss (tragically briefly) Basque issues, 77 versus 80s punk, and whether they're descended from either, and how singing in French affects the way a band is received in hardcore on a local and international level. They also are asked to define words like anarchy, pornography, and hardcore. I just wish they had some better questions to work with, and spoke more at length, more thoroughly, because they seem like they *might* have something interesting to say... —@

Stephane Petit, 11, rue Vauvert, 49100 Angers, France

Never Again #1: For a first issue, of a 'zine in English from Bulgaria, for that matter, it's amazing just how polished and relevant to my life this is. The cover reads "state resistance—by any means necessary"... fair enough! The interview with Laura of "Synthesis," a 'zine from the U.K., is excellent—Laura comes across as extremely articulate, and has some really powerful stuff, to say, especially when she challenges the interviewer on his preconceptions about feminism. The other interviews include Unison from Belgrade (who assert that "with all the killings in ex-Yugoslavia and Afghanistan it is rather ignorant to sing about killing humans to save animals"), Jan from "Selfworth" 'zine (who has always seemed like a really mild fellow in my correspondence with him, but proclaims here that "even though sometimes the actions of "terrorists" seem real really violent, it is still nothing compared to the violence of this system!" fuck yeah!), a tattoo artist, the Bulgarian band Mainstream, and the Belgian distributor Empower. The articles (about anti-immigrant xenophobia in France, which is a real problem, and the roots of the oppression of women in capitalism) were well written and informative. Some nice long reviews, useful contact addresses, and scene reports (mostly from eastern Europe) round this out to make it a great first issue and a 'zine that I'd love to see read on this side of the Atlantic. —b

Jordan, Shipchevsky Prohod Str. #7-13, BL228A, AP29, Sofia 1111, Bulgaria

Engine #4: Engine is sort of an enigma, in that it is one of the very best magazines coming from the hardcore punk community today, and yet it isn't distributed nearly as well as it deserves and it comes out *even less* predictably than Inside Front! Despite that, if you're going to go to the trouble of getting Inside Front, you should definitely track down Engine. There's some great fucking stuff in here. First of all, the interviews: Seein' Red (great fucking interview, many pages long, with a excellent, extremely intelligent band), Agents of Satan (kind of silly but long enough), No Less (hm... who are these guys?), the Pist (short, but high content, and intelligent too), Black Army Jacket (long enough to flesh out the hype surrounding this band with some actual information), Charles Bronson (dumb band name, I'm not going to say anything more), Final Conflict (yawn!!), the Workin Stiffs (these guys even manage an interesting answer to a question about the fucking Simpsons!), Capitalist Casualties (grindcore nerds...), Monster X, and Code 13 (these last two are too short to contain anything you haven't probably read before from these bands). In addition, there are some well done music reviews, a revised version of an article from Inside Front #9, a moving introduction from the author (in which he speaks about exploitation in the capitalist workplace, and the ways his life has changed when he has relocated), a well-written account of the last Failure Face show, and an excellent and original feature: "Rate a Record," in which an old scenester guy recommends his favorite records and what they have meant to him. The bottom line is, this 'zine sums up what hardcore 'zines should be: it's thick as fuck with interesting stuff, the layout is incredible, and above all the bristly attitude is all there. —b

PO Box 64666 Los Angeles, CA 90064

No Barcodes Necessary #5: Probably the best hardcore 'zine to come out of England in quite a little while, unless I've missed something. Nearly every requisite of a quality 'zine is here: legible but organic layout (you can tell the pages have actually been touched by human hands, unlike many prefabricated computer layouts these days), a layout in which the editor makes his

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(laudable) goals clear, in-depth interviews (Hellkrusher, Mainstrike, Dropdead, Unborn—who turn out to be a lot more intelligent than I had expected, since they had been described to me as being nearly Hardline, and photographer Andy Thompson—good work including a non-band interview!), a great many detailed reviews of 'zines and records (although I can't imagine why they chose to review the latest Offspring record), and some social political commentary about the separation of the warring communities in Northern Ireland. There's plenty of great writing, ideas, and information here, it's a first rate magazine and I hope that people will start reading it more in the U.S.A. The only thing I can think of that could improve is the columns section—they don't run quite as deep or seem quite as relevant as the rest of No Barcodes. —b

Mel Hughes, 83 Glebe Park, Chanterhill, Enniskillen, BT74 4DB, Northern Ireland

Nowhere Fast #4: I found this 'zine to be a quick, entertaining read. It is full of short pieces that include whimsical, imaginative stories; well-written articles on topics such as freeganism (guess they beat us to the punch...), capitalism and the politics of employment, child abuse, and cultural attitudes toward death; an ode to an ashtray; and a diary that traces the short-lived and tragic career of Last in Line, the writer's erstwhile band. I was absolutely enchanted by "Corn." The juxtaposition of analysis and charm throughout the 'zine can be a little jarring, but not in a negative way: it is always fresh (yes, young, but never immature) and intelligent. I like having the more analytical pieces (which are original and not dry in the first place) separated by the writer's tales of childhood ambitions or flying after doughnut trucks. The illustrations are hand-drawn and often remind me of illustrations for children's books, and I'm not referring to Disney cartoon characters, either. I like the feeling of reading a children's book that is more than just that...—@

Jen, P.O. Box 235, Jericho, VT 05465

Only a Phase #2: This is quite attractive, well-put together, and not devoid of substance either. The editor is straightforward and tells us where he's coming from (in a piece against religion, for example), and I appreciate that. The interviews with Reveal, Born From Pain, and Pale are fairly detailed, though the bands don't really bring up any unusual topics (subjects include older bands they were in, bands they like, choice of record label, etc.). In the review of Pale's record, the editor mentions that he doesn't really understand their lyrics—maybe he should have pushed them harder to explain them in the interview. The review section concentrates entirely on European hardcore, which is great, an American reader (or even a reader from a different part of Europe) can read about a lot of bands here that she might not otherwise hear about. There's also a Catharsis interview in here, and the editor played a funny joke on me with it—he said that everyone he interviewed had to draw a picture of themselves for their interview, but he only did it to us, so there's a funny little sketch in there, and a photo of me in the table of contents (filthy, half-bearded, lost somewhere in Europe, sitting in this guy's car) trying to do the sketch...it reads: "Catharsis—drawing a worst case scenario?" —b

Karsten C. Ronnenberg, Rehmannstrasse 10, D-52134 Herzogenrath, Germany

Outlet #1: The most interesting and exciting thing about this 'zine is that it's bilingual: many of the contents are printed in both English and Italian. This goes for the interviews, which include Mike from Phyte records (nothing really exciting), Grievance from Rome, and Catharsis. Also included are a number of record reviews, a short review of a hardcore festival in eastern Germany, and some writing here and there about things like sexism and the objectification of women. The printing is nearly unreadable in some places, which is a drawback, although the Italian parts are clearer. I really like that this 'zine is accessible to people from two different language backgrounds,

and that it is created by a collective rather than just one dominating editor; but I would ask that they work to improve the layout and writing. —b

Luca Fontaneto, Via Muratori 95/b, 28060 Lumello (NO) Italy

Paperweight #1: Promising, but not entirely polished. Some of the interviews (Civ, Getup Kids) hold zero interest for me, but others (Trial, Voorhees, Devoid of Faith) are good choices. Some of the columns are well-done (Spencer Ackerman appears, and his friend Jesse Cannon, who brings up a number of interesting questions), while others are less thrilling. For the review section they picked a few records and wrote extremely lengthy reviews of them, and in all the words about each one they couldn't help but provide some useful information; so, good work there, I hope other small 'zines follow that precedent. There are already enough big 'zines doing ten thousand reviews, so instead of doing one thousand reviews badly, try doing twenty really crucial ones well! Excellent layout, too, by the way. —b

72 Plymouth Street, Montclair, NJ 07042

Phyte #1: Although this says it's the first issue, I swear I saw an issue or two of this 'zine a few years back. Anyway, what do we have here... A slick computer layout, which I'm starting to think is the easy way out these days. The editor gets points for challenging Trial about whether having crowd singalong parts in a song about rape is appropriate—the rest of that interview is excellent too, as is the interview with 400 Years, who have plenty of interesting things to say and come off as a genuinely D.I.Y., conscientious band. The show reviews (of shows at the editor's house) and tour diary (with Botch, Ninelion Spitfire, and Ink & Dagger) didn't really provide anything useful or interesting to me, but at least the photos are clear. The article about how kids buying fewer band shirts will be the death of hardcore did not convince me (I'd rather we thought less about fashion and con-

sumerism, and without the revenue from shirts bands might have to find more *dangerous* ways to finance their tours... punk rock!), and the column by Dennis (from Refused) also addressed hardcore fashion—enough about fucking fashion already!! That's the death of every would-be "revolutionary" youth culture right there, is getting caught up in caring about clothes and appearances. Fuck that. But the 'zine ends on a really exciting note—the editor dares to actually tell a story about one of his sexual experiences and how it relates to the rest of his life. If only more 'zine writers had the guts to talk about important, personal issues like this—aren't we grown up enough to be honest about sex and its important role in our lives yet? —b

P.O. Box 14228, Santa Barbara, CA 93107

XPoint of ViewX #2: If at first the sheer number of X's in this 'zine turns you away, keep struggling ahead, because there are some decent writings to be had in here. This begins with several columns that discuss the "68 revolution," as they call it, and acknowledge that the hippies actually did accomplish something through protest; the overall message is to "look beyond the stereotypes," a noble sentiment. Also included are interviews with Integrity, Refused, Rain Still Falls, Burning Defeat, an article about the horrible working conditions that multinational corporations inflict in the name of profit, and a piece about the effects of alcohol. The Refused interview is well-done and interesting, and Dwid says a few provocative things in the Integrity interview, too. —j

Photocopied, half-size, about 50 pages. Where's the price? Contact Chris Paracchini, Via Della Salina 3, 6600 Muralto, Switzerland

Ravenn #4: Three cheers to Ben Quirk for having the courage to put out a highly personal 'zine that is a pure, unfiltered expression of all things emotional. There will undoubtedly be more than a few people in the hardcore scene who regard Ravenn as nothing but drivel, but I happen to have a soft spot in my otherwise hardened heart for this sort of thing. #4 is filled with

Fireball #6: This is a fucking excellent D.I.Y. comic.

In some ways, it reminds me of Eric Drooker's work, if you know who he is: it is a "novel in pictures," that tells a story all the more eloquently because it uses no words; and in some places the stark, scratchy black and white artwork reminds me of his, too, although the overtones are less intrinsically political. The story is a retelling of the fall of the rebel angels and the emergence of evil and suffering on earth—that's the best I can do to describe it, to really feel it you're going to have to see this for yourself... I'd definitely recommend trying to hunt this down. All I can say is that the artwork is flawlessly composed and executed and the storytelling is fresh, unpredictable, and sometimes really powerful. Finding this kind of creative work, which is inspired, inspiring, and relevant to everybody, makes me proud to be involved in this D.I.Y. counterculture thing. —b

Brian Ralph, P.O. Box 2328, Providence, RI 02906

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raw, "go-for-the-throat" poetry that others might label as a mere expression of "teenage angst," but what makes this connect for me is the attitude and honesty that almost every page manages to convey. This issue isn't just limited to poetry; it also contains an interview with animal activist Tony Wong, an immensely readable (although brief) article on gender and sexuality, and a neat little rant about the creative process, as well as a girl's brutal recollection of rape. The pictures of Kim Gordon and Thurston Moore were a nice addition (I can't help but hear the outro to "Disappearer" every time I come across them,) and Ben's artwork makes a good complement to the writings. Only two of the poems stuck in my craw: "Dookie" and "Midnight Tinkle" should have gotten the axe. Edit, edit! --j

Half-size; 32 photocopied pages. \$1.00 to Ben Quirk, 1920-101 Eyrie Court, Raleigh, NC, 27606

Reflect/ #1: This is an excellent first issue of a 'zine that all Inside Front readers should be aware of. The writing is significantly more articulate and intelligent than you can find in almost any other 'zine in the hardcore genre, and makes for interesting and provoking reading. The editor is refreshingly clear and well-spoken about his intentions, and brings these qualities to the features he writes. These include a lengthy discussion of the implications of Christianity in hardcore, a rave review of a Converge show, and individual reviews long enough to be free-standing articles. I will say that his writing style is based upon the traditional "college essay" approach, which some of you may find a little distancing (this issue includes an actual "college essay" about two movie adaptations of an old novel), and his reviews come off a little too much like potential press-kit marketing tools, but this stuff is still vastly superior to the writing in most similar 'zines. There's also a negligible scene report from Germany, a couple dashes of competent poetic prose, and three interviews: Fall Silent (who speak critically about militant straight edge and Victory records), Damnation (who seem to be interested in very little besides discussing the next business moves their band will make), and Snapcase (who speak about why they are breaking up). The last of those bands don't come across so much as the would-be rock stars that one might expect—instead, I felt sort of bad for them here, in the parts of the interview where it becomes clear that their lack of a real critique of their place in the capitalist-marketing machine of fake "hardcore" business has brought them to a position where there is nothing meaningful they can do but quit. Oh well, quit away, Snapcase, it's all you can do for hardcore punk at this point anyway... let's hope others learn from your mistakes and emphasize their criticism of mainstream life and economics over the mere marketability of their band. —b

P.O. Box 988, Redmond, WA 98073-0988

Reflections #9: This comes across to me as one of those long-running, semi-glossy, seamlessly executed hardcore 'zines that lack the extra something in the personality/originality department that makes a 'zine really special... there are probably at least fifteen of these *almost-good* hardcore 'zines, these younger brothers of Second Nature 'zine, floating about. In this one we find interviews with 97a (in which their singer categorically refuses to reveal his age, for some reason), By the Grace of God (which starts off with the editor sort of fawning upon Rob Pennington, but goes somewhat deeper), Young

Blood records (lots of talk about straight edge, nothing new), Culture (in which their guitarist claims that using corporate television to advertise the straight edge ideology will not dilute or compromise the ideas...?), Down By Law (why are these guys interviewed in every fucking hardcore 'zine?), Kate (formerly of 108—it's refreshing to have at least one woman's perspective in here), Life Force (a German band), and Integrity (written in fragments from memory, on account of a broken recorder). There's also a glowing description of an Earth Crisis show (sorry, we're not convinced...), a description of a visit to a Krishna festival (the editor is a devotee), and a fair number of reviews. —b

De Nijverheid 30, 7681 md, Vroomshoop, the Netherlands

Retrogression #13: This is an excellent 'zine for people who desire hard

political content in their reading, but it suffers a little from... well, I'll address that at the end. There's a LOT here. The magazine starts off with a little world news, the sort of thing that most of us supposedly politically aware hardcore kids know very little about (arms exports from the U.S. to the third world, for example), goes on through a little "hardcore scene" report (that is, anything in the hardcore scene that editor Dave sees fit to report), and then enters the letters section, one of the most important parts of Retro, in which a great number of pages is dedicated to a total of 14 letters and responses on a wide range of topics. Deeper into the 'zine we find a breathtakingly researched discussion of the connections between big business profits and the armed services, a discussion of same-sex rape (an important, and almost never mentioned, issue), an attack on the title of Earth Crisis' last full length (which is far too intelligent for said band to ever even make sense out of), a piece about a survivor of war-torn Bosnia that the editor knows, and an article by my hero, the young Spencer Ackerman, about the latest problems with police getting out of hand in Brooklyn. Damn it, I'm trying, but there's more here than I can possibly describe. The interviews (with the editor of Bamboo Girl 'zine, a proud and refreshing female voice in a sea of male 'zine writers and interviewees, and with the worthy Trial) are extremely in-depth and miss nothing: they practically make this issue worthwhile by themselves. Some of the more accessible writing is to be found in a section in the middle, where Dave has compiled a bunch of little articles touching on all sorts of different things (even including a little poem about how much he hates poetry). Approaching the end of these hundred-some pages, we find the reviews: in these Dave has picked a few books, 'zines, and

records, and written a lengthy piece about each. My feelings about this 'zine? I'm not sure... Retrogression is written with the intelligence and informed awareness that I wish every 'zine had, but something about it is tiresome for me, too: the political articles are too dry to attract the attention of people not already involved in politics, the general approach to the 'zine seems somehow humorless (precise, but not exactly impassioned—are those things compatible, anyway?), and sometimes Dave's comments are just plain uncalled for (his viciously personal attack on Jen Angel for what seems to be a problem much better worked out privately) or off base (his suspicion that an issue of Profane Existence with a woman on the cover will sell better than one with a man... fucking come on!!). So while this is a magazine to be reckoned with, there's definitely room for improvement—especially after the

Handbook for Revolutionaries #2: I like this 'zine alot. It's pretty good example of how 'zine should be done: Clear, yet attractive and creative layouts, plenty of variety in the content, plenty of intelligence and spirit in the discussions, plenty of humor and expectation-defying innovation in the general approach. Good work, Swedish guys! Now let's get down to specifics: an inspiring and sincere introduction by editor Dennis (yes, of Refused), followed by a little equally-inspired raving about Sweden's favorite sons Bloodpath, and, on that topic (since Bloodpath is an explicitly class-conscious band), an article about Britain's Class War Federation... then, some excellent columns (the blue ribbon goes to Dave from Final Exit for his excellent, daring critique of monogamy). Moving on, we find a couple more fact-oriented (and less entertaining/accessible) articles about phone tapping and the atrocities committed by the Shell corporation, interviews with Randy (a Swedish band) and some guy who talks about Food Not Bombs, a couple pages of writing about the band Bob Tilton (by the famous British 'zine writer Vique Simba), a surprising number of well-done record and 'zine reviews, and, to round it all out, a couple unusual scraps—a tour diary from the Swing Kids' attempt to visit Europe (that could have been much better done, sorry... *much* better done), and a section in which a panel of writers is asked about their reactions to the lyrics of a number of songs. OK, good, good. Let's see another one fast, this issue has been out for a while now already. —b

P.O. Box 385, 90108 Umea, Sweden

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Profane Existence book and similar projects have shown us how much fun political stuff can be. —b

P.O. Box 815, Norton, MA 02766

The Right Path #1: Where to begin . . . this is the worst-looking 'zine that I've ever laid eyes upon, for starters. Hand-drawn, retarded-looking title; horrible photos; no binding (it's stapled at the edges); little concern for presentation, etc. Hatebreed and Strong Intention are both featured on the cover, but only S. I. is interviewed here. At the very least, they should have given these out for free. I'll say this: if you ever want to get respect, Right Path, you have to work harder at putting out something of quality! Ugh. —j

Full-size, photocopied, about 16 pages. A whole dollar to Josh Engineer, 49 Wilcox St., Rochester, NY. 14607-3832

Scream #6: Because of the atrocious public education system in the U.S., I can't really read this French-language hardcore punk 'zine, but it looks good enough that I can confidently recommend it to you Francophile punk kids. The layout is excellent, it retains the earthiness of messy D.I.Y. layouts but adds a real precision that, together, make this a prime example of the punk aesthetic. I.e., one of the hardcore bands I am most excited about right now, is interviewed, and though I can't read their French answers they are lengthy and appear far from petty or empty. The Devoid of Faith interview is in English, and the answers are shorter and less meaty, though not embarrassing or useless by any means. At the end of the 'zine, as well, is a much shorter interview with France's Obvious Waste. In addition to the interviews there is a short review section (the section is short, the reviews themselves are not), three columns by Frenchmen, and various political snippets that help to give Scream an anti-American, anti-authoritarian atmosphere. —b

Luc Ardilouze, 2 Bd Rempart-Lachepaillet, 64100 Bayonne, France

Second Nature #6: Very pretty, very professionally laid out, and obviously a lot of advertising was solicited for this. There's a little squabble in the letters section between the nerdy singer of the Enkindels (this guy will do anything to get people to pay attention to him, and he sure comes off childish here as well, sounding like a spoiled kid on a playground taunting another kid, only less mature) and somebody else (who is a little more well-spoken and coherent). In his dual response the editor correctly names Trial as an example of a band that genuinely cares about the subjects they address, good for him to be perceptive. The photos in here look fucking gorgeous, if you care about that at all. The interviews aren't badly carried out, although Refused and Boy Sets Fire are really smart bands and could have provided more challenging discussion, and I'm not too interested in Mineral (yet another band that just cares about playing music and nothing else, apparently) or the Descendants (they haven't mattered in hardcore for a fucking decade and a half!). The Grade interview is nice and long, although it still doesn't answer my one question about this band—was "Believe" (with whom they supposedly did that first split CD, the only release of theirs that I've liked) a real band or not? There's a funny story about a kid's first experience with prostitutes that kind of breaks up the more predictable 'zine stuff, thank god. Sean Ingram reviews a hardcore festival, and spends far too much time complaining, if you ask me. The 'zine and record reviews are comprehensive, they cover a lot of fucking territory—they don't go into much detail at all, but they do cover a lot of territory. Actually, that's unfair, there are a few lengthy record reviews. The 'zine ends with a Converge interview; singer Jake speaks well and clearly, but he doesn't really go into depth about the things I wanted to hear about from him: neither "political" stuff (which he convincingly explains can be better expressed by others) nor the content of his lyrics or their music. Sum-

mary: Second Nature retains its crown as the "Time Magazine" of hardcore 'zines, and if you want to read about hardcore it will provide well for you... but on the other hand, there's always room for improvement, and here, it should be in the direction of more content, more challenging thinking. That's what is lacking if anything is. —b

P.O. Box 11543, Kansas City, MO 64138

Self-Defense #2: This little magazine is definitely the most punk-looking of the bunch; it's of the cut-and-paste, scribbled writing school, and it's even held together by a rubber band! Content-wise, Self-Defense includes a little bit of everything: personal writings, quotes, a punk primer reprinted from Fucktooth, definitions of Anarchism, reflections on the Midwest Underground

Media Symposium, and interviews with Karate, Boys Life, Free Verse, and Intact. The Karate interview should draw a chuckle out of you, and the Intact interview features some interesting thoughts about sXe, revolution, and whether moshing is a good thing or not. Send Marissa a dollar and some stamps and check this out for yourself. —j

Photocopied, half-zine, about 40 pages.

Two stamps to Marissa D. Johnson, 135 N. Terrace, Wichita, KS. 67208

Slave #1: This is a really exciting first issue, and although it is filled with little first issue flaws, it is clear that these are only temporary: we just might be witnessing the inception of a great fucking magazine. The details are all perfect: they've made an effort to use artwork and illustrations from the punk community (I hadn't really even thought deeply about how much we stifle our own creativity by relying on older art for our visuals until they pointed it out), they interview a local controversial artist who has more interesting things to say than any hardcore band, they make their intentions clear and explain the meaning of the 'zine's name (a comment on the lack of freedom we as individuals have to choose our own destinies in today's world) in the introduction, and over the music review section they print this Dead

Kennedys quote: "music scenes ain't real life—they won't get rid of the bomb, won't eliminate rape or bring down banks." So the Slavesters have their heads on straight. Politics, of one kind or another (articles about air pollution and racism in their home state of North Carolina, reviews of books about the "war on drugs" and the oppression of the Palestinians, an interview with environmental activist punk kid Rick Spencer, editorials on public education, television and advertising, and abortion rights) actually outweigh music (interviews with the much-deserving Kilara and the surprisingly eloquent Coalesce) as the main focus of the 'zine, while Slave maintains the perspective of "young-musically-oriented-people-exploring-issues." That's pretty much the same thing Inside Front is trying to do, so we have to pat them on the back for that. Drawbacks? Well, a couple well-placed spelling errors obscure the writing here and there, and, for that matter, the writing sometimes obscures itself—particularly in the reviews, which are mediocre at best and become downright incoherent when the writers try to spice them up with a little ranting and raving about their favorite records. But if they work on the writing and maintain their focus, this will become a really important magazine for the hardcore community. —b

P.O. Box 10093, Greensboro, NC 27404

Sliver #1: This is the slickest-looking "independent publication" that I've seen in quite some time. From the looks of it, Sliver must have been inspired by the free-form approach of Raygun, although this magazine is a bit more conventional overall. Editor Grail Mortillaro certainly knows his way around a computer (as nearly every page demonstrates,) but he should invest a little more time in proof-reading his articles and interviews. At first glance,

Slug & Lettuce #52: Most of you are probably familiar with this tabloid, but it is worth mentioning here, since it has a new address now. Basically, S&L is the Food Not Bombs of hardcore punk magazines: it's a free resource that exists solely for the sake of helping punk kids to know about each others' projects. Not only are copies of this free, but classified ad's in it are free too—so if there's any reason you might want to be in touch with people in punk from all over the planet, S&L will take care of you. And while you're working on that, it will also educate you about social and environmental issues, provide reviews of records, books, and 'zines, and entertain you with artwork and band photos (this issue includes me at the end of our last U.S. tour, looking emaciated as fuck). Finally, S&L maintains a friendly, personable atmosphere, with editor Chris always keeping you up to date with her life and thoughts. Suffice to say this tabloid makes up a good part of the backbone of our community. Send some stamps for one and stay up to date. —b

P.O. Box 26632, Richmond, VA 23261-6632

Reading ZINE REVIEWS

this magazine looks like it could hold its own on any city newsstand, but a closer look reveals a lot of typos, grammatical errors, and cluttered layouts that make for a challenging read. There is no differentiation between the questions and answers in the interviews, and the abundance of typos conflicts with this magazine's attempt to look professional. All in all, it's still a good read, even if the featured bands are mostly of the mainstream/alternative sort: the Deftones, Vision of Disorder, and (gulp) Rage Against the Machine are all interviewed. Grail also includes some more obscure bands, as well as better-than-average interviews with By the Grace of God and Damnation a.d., an article on whether there should be a right to health care, and a fairly solid record review section. Although Sliver smacks of careerism on the whole, at least Grail is devoting time to his own publication, rather than selling his considerable talents to the likes of Spin and Rolling Stone (i.e. "the enemy.") —j

Full-size; 64 offset-printed pages. \$2.00 to Grail Mortillaro, 27 Commercial St., Gloucester, MA. 01930

Sober Pride #0.5: This isn't the first issue of Sober Pride, it's the "appetizer issue" of the 'zine. I don't see why this 'zine couldn't have held out a little longer and included the contents of the "appetizer" in #1, but putting that aside, this features interviews with Ten Yard Fight and One Day Closer, fanzine reviews, video game reviews (that's a little different,) and an article on "the war on drugs" that endorses legalization. Tasty photo of a rotting corpse, too. The picture of Manowar on the back cover is good for a laugh, but does that justify paying foreign postage? —j

Full-size, offset/glossy paper, about 12 pages. No foreign price; is this free? Write to Ricki, Hauptstrasse 14, CH-9556 Affeltrangen, Switzerland

Solid State Entity #2: A very quick read. Solid State Entity is done by the same people who do cries of the many 'zine; this is a more sXe-oriented affair, and resembles a newsletter more than it does a 'zine. Everything seems to be a page in length, even the interview with the now-deceased 108; there are articles about conscription in Norway, being vegan for life, a desire to see more feminine attributes in the world, and remaining drug free. The most interesting is "sexuality the deceiver," where one of the editors (Aaron) expresses an anti-feminist position because he feels that feminism only masculinizes women in the end. The article sounds troubling at first, but it's pretty balanced and interesting overall. In sum, this is better than you'd expect. The layout is above-average and the pictures are excellent. Best of all, this is FREE. —j

Full-size, photocopied, 8 pages. Contact Aaron or Morten, P.O. Box 386, 5001 Bergen, Norway

True Till Death #2: This is a different 'zine than the one of the same name reviewed below. This one is in French, and it took a fair bit of effort on the part of Gloria and I to make any progress through it, since she only knows scraps of French and I know less French than Negate knows English. Negate (see the demo reviews) are actually interviewed here, and I feel terrible having so much fun at their expense, since I get the impression that they have positive goals and take themselves very seriously. I do think that they should sing in French, since it's obviously a language they are better able to express themselves with, and there are plenty of people who can understand it. Also interviewed are Belgium's Family of Dog and Rennes' A Way of Life (nice long responses), All Out War, Blood For Blood, and Children (not so long responses), Drowning Room, Right For Life, Muddle, Moelo's, and Give a Chance (short interviews), Headway (always fascinating), one of the fellows behind Overcome records (Loic, a truly sincere and nice guy), and, yes, another Catharsis interview. That's a lot of interviews, and they're all translated into French. About the Catharsis interview—I have to admit, it's a little weird for me to review so many 'zines that have interviews with my own band in them, and I hope that it doesn't seem to anybody that I am trying to glorify the band I'm in... I'm just reviewing 'zines people send here. I also hope that nobody feels that Catharsis (since we have been interviewed in more 'zines reviewed in this issue than I can count on one hand) is monopolizing space better shared with other bands who need the opportunity to express themselves; I mean, I care about what our band is doing very much, and want the interviews to be there to make our goals clear, but I don't want our band to monopolize attention any more than I want fucking Victory bands to. Enough about that. The reviews here are excellent, they go into a lot of descriptive and emotional depth about each record and 'zine. Making my way through them, I can discern the writers talking about more than just hardcore music: they're talking about life, real life, in all its complexity, contradiction, and beauty. That's what I love about what I've seen of hardcore in France: it seems to be much more related to broader issues, it seems to be more of an artistic approach to wide-ranging questions, rather than just a self-referential youth culture. Good for them! The rest of us should learn from that, so if you can read French, you would do very well to read this 'zine. —b

Tanguy Romey, 18 cite Montgolfier, 29200 Brest, France

State of Existence #3: I'll do my best to describe this, even though it's in German and (being a stupid American) I can only speak English. I did meet the guy responsible for this when I was in Europe, and he seemed smart and cool, so I imagine the writing in this magazine is too. It's pretty brief: three interviews (Brother's Keeper, a short one with Germany's Loxiran, and a Catharsis interview which has been translated into German so I can't even recognize my own answers), a Berlin scene report, five pages of paragraph-long record reviews, and a few articles (one of which seems to be about animal rights and the A.L.F., and another, which I wish I could read, is by Daisy Rooks and is entitled "Not Just Boys' Fun"). Legible layout and durable cardstock cover. —b

G.D. Kopina, Prescherstr. 35, 74405 Gaildorf, Germany

Straight Force #2: "Hey what's going on?!! I hope your excited about this issue, I sure fucking am." That quote pretty much captures Straight Force: youthful, energetic, and basic. #2 is a low-calorie, light-hearted read with a thrown-together look to it, although Straight Force lacks a cohesive personality in its writings. There's an article about punk's demise that is full of conflicting statements: "Punk's not a rebellion anymore. True punk, of course, still is..." What? The conclusion is that punk is dead and we should "let it go," although the author never discusses what this might mean. Should we abandon the sound of older punk rock but keep its non-conformist ethics, or should we simply let the whole thing drop? Unfortunately, the author proposes nothing. Standard interviews with Follow Through, Good Riddance and the Planet Smashers are also included. I got more out of the Weird Al picture at the end than I did out of this zine's content. —j

Newsprint, full-size, 40 pages. No price listed. Chris Howe, 49 Crestdale Rd., Glastonbury, CT. 06033

True 'Til Death Zine #1: This 'zine looks pretty humble — it doesn't have a binding, but is merely stapled together at the edges — and is a very quick read. Interview-wise, this features Day of Suffering, Spineless, Rudiger Mahn of Lifeforce Records, and Deformity. The interviews are brief and rather unengaging. The reviews (of both shows and records) basically cheerlead the H-8000 scene, with the record reviews being extremely short, mostly positive, and close to worthless. The photos aren't too good. On a positive note, I've seen worse, although this is decidedly mediocre. —j

Full-size, photocopied, 44 pages. No world price listed; try sending a couple bucks. Contact PJ, Bethlehem 4, 8930 Menen, Belgium

Truth Will Out #4: The 'zine starts with discussion of some important topics by the editor, which is good, but I can't say I agree

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much with his ideas (pro-technology, for example—and the figures he uses here are very misleading), which seem to have been constructed by Ayn Rand, the queen of self-righteous capitalist/psuedophilosophical drivel herself. But he seems like a smart guy, and he's thinking about the right things... I'm sure that he'll find the holes in her "arguments" pretty soon. Next, we find a fair bit of material on the Libertarian political party, including a book review and an interview; as with Rand, this stuff makes sense until you consider the selfish and materialistic assumptions on which it rests. Still, it's great to see these subjects put on the table for discussion in the all-too-closed world of hardcore, they're important ideas that we should all have thought about at least a bit. The Bane interview isn't too interesting, except for the singer's

stories of older Boston hardcore shows (the Cro-Mags, for example-I), and I think his claim that hardcore is merely "a style of music" opens the door wide fucking open for corporate music industry exploitation of our community, so fuck that. The In My Eyes interview is short enough to be completely useless, and the Converge tour diary really let me down—I expected a lot from this band, but in these diary entries, the particular members comes across like just another nerdy young boy, writing about cute girls and similar shit. The reviews are pretty good, though few in number—it's cool that he prints the band addresses as well as the record label addresses, and it's funny to me that he quotes a few lyrics at the end of each review, like Brian Hull used to do in the older Retrogression 'zines. —b

AJ McGuire, 34 John Street, Worcester, MA 01609

Ugly Duckling #2: This 'zine is written (in very legible handwriting) rather than typed or laid out on a computer, which gives it a more organic and personable quality that almost every other 'zine in this review section lacks. Computers really have sapped creativity from our 'zines in terms of layouts and formats, and it's refreshing to see a departure from that trend. The content itself is really personable here, as well—this 'zine is filled with lists of things the editor finds annoying or exciting, ruminations on such things as idealism and growing up, diary entries, etc., and the interviews (a long, challenging one with two members of Catharsis, plus Spineless, Culture, and a commentator on the death penalty) seem less prefabricated than usual as well. There's also a little fact-page about abortion, a scene report from Poland, and little pictures of ducks. To sum up, "Ugly Duckling" is user friendly and full of youthful energy—it's a completely different species of 'zine from, say, Profane Existence, but it's interesting in its own right. —b

Lieve Goemaere, Zwaanhofweg 3, 8900 Ieper, Belgium

Value of Strength #4: The cover photo of Converge is so dark that these eyes can barely make it out; ironically, the rest of this zine is filled with pages and pages of good photos at excellent resolution, in addition to interviews with Kindred, Invidia and Earth Crisis. The graphics and layout are well-done and effective, and editor Jean-Paul Frijns shows remarkable restraint for being a graphic arts student. The Earth Crisis interview is mostly positive, but manages to rile Karl nonetheless: "I don't know what you're trying to say, dude," he remarks after Jean-Paul asks him if he would go to prison for his animal liberation beliefs. The Kindred and Invidia interviews are both

interesting, but each would have benefited from a little more attention to proof-reading. This issue comes with a limited tape comp. featuring mostly vegan straight edge bands, and all proceeds will be donated to the Animal Justice Front. It's clear that both veganism and straight edge are important concerns for Jean-Paul, as issue #4 also includes an article by the South chapter of Holland Hardline and an article by a member of the Animal Justice Front. However, unlike some other near-hardliners, he seems tolerant of others' opinions. A good read. —j

Full-size, 42 pages. Price not listed! I'm guessing \$5.00 ppd. to Jean Paul Frijns, Kloosterstraat 53, 6369 AB simpelveld, Holland

War Crime #6: OK, the music stuff in here is really brief—a few brief reviews,

a brief interview with Depressor, a couple advertisements, and one band photo. The reason some might find it worthwhile to read this magazine is that 95% of it deals with politics. Typical left-wing activist politics, to be specific, such as anti-mahogany and Shell protests, human rights abuses of individuals involved with the Black Panthers and Food Not Bombs, etc. etc. Personally, I find a lot of this left-wing protest politics stuff to not really be very efficient as far as bringing about discernible change in our world; I think a lot of it suffers from being predictable and cliched to the point that people in mainstream society just blow it off without thinking about it, no matter how hard anti-Shell demonstrators clamor for their attention. But you may disagree, and if you do, here's a magazine for you. I found "Federal Investigators and Your Rights" to be, to me, the most relevant and interesting of the articles. There's a new issue out now, which, when I looked at it before sending it off to someone else to review, looked much more interesting and effective than this one. —b

P.O. Box 2741, Tucson, AZ 85702

War Crime #7: If you're sick of the average 'zine format (band interviews, talk of "scene politics," sXe writings, etc.) then pick up War Crime. "Cerebral" is the key word here. There are no band interviews, the record reviews are kept to a bare minimum, and the overall approach reminds me strongly of Retrogression, although this is even more politically concentrated. The introduction ought to give you a feel for this thing: "This zine is dedicated to those who still remain locked in cages and bound by chains, to those who feel the constant lashing of the whip upon their back, and to those who have given their time, blood, and lives to end this injustice. Our day will come." Unfortunately, War Crime lacks noticeably in the graphics/photography department, but it's big on content: everything from an interview with Greg Jackson of the Black Autonomy Collective, a history of the Sea

Shepard (part 1), an Animal Liberation Front interview, an article on Mumia Abu-Jamal... there's a lot of reading here, basically. Very few ads, too. —j

Full-size, newsprint, about 50 pages. \$2.00 to P.O. Box 2741, Tucson, AZ. 85702

The Way It Is #1: This is a new 'zine, still rough at the edges, published with the express purpose of informing and glorifying the Detroit hardcore scene. There are interviews with Detroit bands Earthmover, Dogz of War, and Cold As Life, and then with bands that won't leave Detroit alone, like Catharsis, Facedown, and, uh, No Redeeming Social Value. In addition to the interviews (which are pretty basic), there are some show reviews and a touching

Viral or Bacterial #1: I'm really excited about this 'zine—although it lacks the variety and depth, it possesses some of the same youthful energy and precocious brilliance of Icarus Was Right. That's a big compliment, but I got really excited when I read Spencer's introduction in which he tells about his upbringing as a hard-line communist and how he has broken away from it to try to become a complete human being. That was the I.W.R. project, too: to become complete and human. The best part is the collection of police stories; Spencer has an excellent storytelling voice, and it's real life stories like this that lend some credibility to the generalizations of our social theories. When someone tells true stories about the times they've been harassed, threatened, and humiliated by the supposedly upstanding professional authorities our system pays to defend it, there's nothing anyone can say to argue with that. Reading these makes me laugh with Spencer at his human frailties and rage with him against the blind, ignorant power that stands above us all. The stories from his subway rides are just as good, as are the touching explanations of the relations of his favorite songs to events in his life. A little behind those are articles about the Tupac Amaru in Peru (very informed and interesting) and cultural conditioning under capitalism, followed by less perfect articles about political campaign finance and the brutal slaughter and oppression in East Timor, a forum on the usefulness of voting, and a whimsical story about soul-selling. For a first issue, by a seventeen year old man, this is fucking top notch—I would want to read it even if I didn't have to write reviews. Hats off. —b

678 East 24 St., 1st floor, Brooklyn, NY 11210

reading ZINE REVIEWS

retrospective on Earthmover's old bassist, who has left Detroit for NYC; the 'zine is at its best at moments like those, when it actually evokes the atmosphere of the community from which it originates. —b

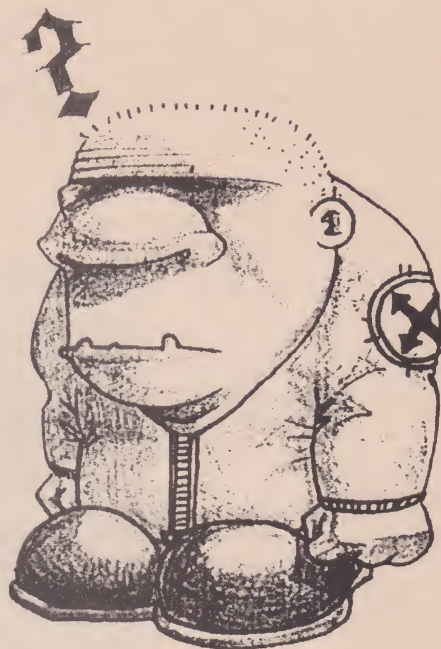
P.O. Box 510103, Livonia, MI 48151

We Ain't Got No Car #5: Personal 'zines are difficult to do well, although they may be easier to do at all than some other types of 'zines. *We Ain't Got No Car* is similar to 'zines like *Cometbus*, but fails to be as interesting. Part of writing well is knowing where to stop, understanding what is excessive and why, and both the stories included and the 'zine itself are just too long. Although the stories aren't fundamentally less interesting than the ones in the couple issues of *Cometbus* that I've seen, the writer's style is weaker and more disorganized. I don't mean this as a violently harsh criticism: while the 'zine probably won't change your life, it's entertaining, and the writer has some good ideas. Plus he mentions *Inside Front*. —@

wagnc, P.O. Box 49657, Atlanta, GA 30359

XYodaX #5: This is a straight edge 'zine from the infamous H-8000 sector in Belgium. Issue #5 opens with a piece about despising cannabis that's a response to a newsletter advocating marijuana legalization. The editors neglected to reprint the newsletter, so the reader is left with a one-sided debate of only marginal value. Interviews with Upright, Kindred, Hans of Sober Mind Records, XContributionX, Morning Again, and Spirit of Youth; the interviews are of varying depth and interest. The rest of #5 is filled with some writings about skate-related stuff, Star Wars references (of course), and a reprinted pamphlet on supporting the Nigerian Campaign for Independent Unionism. The layout is decent and the writing is fairly intelligent, but this is hardly essential. —j

Photocopied, half-size, 56 pages. No foreign price listed. Julilaan 114 or Roggelaan 25, 8500 Kortrijk, Belgium



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INTENSITY



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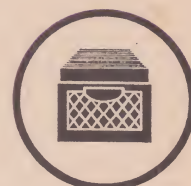
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At the eleventh hour, we recieved Eric's missing disc, and obtained delinquent layout boy Paul F. Maul's top ten list. So, in a very small, nearly unreadable, and partly abridged form, we present them to you... with, as fucking usual, our humblest apologies.

Paul F. Maul's Top 9 and Worst 1: 1. Babe Gladwallers stories 2. M4 with green tip ammo 3. John Denver 4. Motorcycles 5. Glock 19c with 33 round clip 6. Oregon coast 7. Punch Rothschild 8. "Armed Joy" pamphlet 9. cold Alaskan mountain runoff water 1. money.

Weightlifting For the Hardcore and Puny column by Eric Warner

There's always been a stigma attached to lifting weights (and being in shape in general) within certain circles in hardcore/punk, and that's really hypocritical. Most of the bands that are fondly remembered in hardcore had members that had an imposing physical presence: bands like Youth Of Today (sure they were about 5'5", but they were cut pretty good way back when), Negative Approach, Uniform Choice, etc. and yet, most kids that listen to hardcore are turned off by lifting. I'm not gonna speculate why I think that is (laziness?) or go into much detail as to the benefits of lifting (people treat you better), I'll just give you a few suggestions as to how to go about getting into lifting in a way that's compatible with your hardcore lifestyle.

Most people who listen to hardcore don't like going to a gym (myself included, even though I do lift at a gym now) and being around a bunch of fake, tanning salon-attending, name brand loyal, smug pieces of shit. But if you think about it, most people who listen to hardcore are just as shallow as the guidos at the gym, they're just not as upfront about their fakeness. Ok, so you don't like going to a gym, but you want to get into lifting. Here's what you need:

- space in your apartment roughly equal to a 6' by 6' square to store your-weight bench
- straight bar
- about 200 lbs. of metal weights (plastic take up too much space on the bar)
- curling bar (one of those wavy shaped bars)
- dumbbells that you can add/subtract weight from

With just those five things, you can make quite a bit of difference in your physique. More important than any equipment, is the discipline needed to stick with a routine week in and week out. Even I slack off sometimes, get sick, or am just fucking busy to work out as much as I should. The important thing is to get back on the bench, even if you fuck off for a couple days.

It helps to have a game plan. What I do, is work out different body groups on different days.

Day One: chest and biceps. I do five sets flat bench press, five sets inclined bench (be sure to get a bench that you can adjust to incline), five sets of butterfly presses (that's when you lay flat on the bench, holding dumbbells in each hand with your arms extended straight above you. Slowly lower your arms to your sides, keeping your elbows relatively straight, although a slight bend to 'em is good, until your arms are level with the bench. Then bring them back up the same way, repeating the movement ten times or so.). Then for my biceps I do five sets of curls with a curling bar, standing up. Try to keep your back straight while you're doing them. Sometimes I do concentration curls, but I'll cover that next issue.

Day Two: triceps and shoulders. For triceps I do five sets of tricep extensions (duh), and five sets of skull crushers, just to be clear, when I say five sets, I mean do the exercise five to ten times (depending on how much weight you're using), stop, rest for a minute or two, then continue with five to ten more reps, etc. Triceps extensions are when y ver while holding a dumbbell, bring the dumbbell forward to your chest, keeping your elbow held inward toward your side, then extend your arm back out away from you as ble. Skull crushers are performed as follows: lay flat on your back, hold the curling bar straight up above you. Slowly lower the bar down to your forehead, without swin arms. Then raise the bar back up to its starting position. Repeat five to ten times. For shoulders I do upright rows, and military presses. Upright rows: take your straight bar and hold it with your arms lowered at your sides. Slowly raise the bar up to chest level. Lower and repeat, etc. If you don't know how to do a military press, then what the fuck are you reading Inside Front For? Go read HeartattaCk ya fucking wuss!

Day Four: rest. Some people like to work their legs on day four, I'm just telling you what I recommend for those of you who wanna go about lifting at home. It goes without saying that you've got a lot more freedom at home. I don't think the staff at Bally's would take too kindly to you playing your new Gehenna CD, but at home, it's open season! And if you wanna take all day to lift at home, you can. Next issue I'll go into more detail about lifting, but this should tide you over for now. If some of my descriptions were hard to follow, tough shit. You shouldn't need me to tell you how to lift any fuckin' way!

AND... SOME OF ERIC'S FORMERLY MISSING REVIEWS (as many as we could fit):

97A- Abandoned Future CDep: Many people like to put down bands like 97A for playing this type of music these days, usually for 'rehashing' the sound and style of mid-late 80's NYHC/straight edge bands, and I think that is partly true with some bands, but so what. It seems like everything has been done already anyway, so you might as well play stuff that you like and enjoy. What sets 97A apart for me, is that they cover new ground with their lyrics, even if their musical style is all too familiar. And really, the music is blazing fast and impressively raw enough to avoid sounding dated. The music seems to get better as the CD goes on, with the singer's voice getting rawer and screechier. The recording quality seems to improve also, with a thicker guitar and drum sound. The only criticism I have of this CD is the singer's voice. He sounds too screechy for my tastes. Everything else is pretty enjoyable. All the songs are under three minutes, hell, half of 'em are under one minute! And in that short time they still manage to throw in some respectable leads and structure, with a fair amount of changes.
Teamwork Records, P.O. box 4473, Wayne, NJ. 07474

Brother's Keeper- Self Fulfilling Prophecy CDep: Whoa boy. I wanted to go easy on this, but so help me God this is some of the worst fucking shit I've ever heard for 'hardcore'. Mike Ski sounds like the excreted offspring of Edith Bunker and the singer of AC/DC. I don't know if he's trying to be funny singing like that. I hope so. The music is helmet-ish midtempo slop, with a lot of twiddle dee leads and wah-wah overkill. At times the drumming is clearly off, which is inexcusable when you're playing such simple beats. Simple, badly written mosh-rock with hideous unlistenable vocals adds up to the worst music I've ever heard from Mike. Wake up man!
Trustfundkill Recs.

Catafalque- Awakening CDep: Hilarious cover art for this CD, with winged fairies frolicking amongst the leaves and mushrooms on the forest floor. Now, if that doesn't clue you into what we're dealing with here, then the text on the inside cover should: "At the dawn the Catafalque will ride, to carry all your souls- Never to return!" This is not hardcore kids who have taken to ripping off Slayer and Pantera. Nor is this ex-metalheads who have shaved their hair and decided to play hiphoppin' metalcore. This is a band of young European longhairs who play a musically impressive cross between Carcass, Anacrusis, and Maiden. You've got the awesome riffs, drumming, and changes of Carcass, with the cheesy leads, lyrics and solos of Maiden. Melodramatic as fuck, six minute songs. This is definitely real metal, without a shred of hardcore. I find it hilarious to listen to, and more than a little bit of a guilty pleasure. I mean, the guitarists and drummer fuckin' pound!
Good Life Recordings, PO Box 114, 8500 Kortrijk, Belgium

Kindred/Culture split CD: I was surprised by how good Kindred sounds, they breathe a decent amount of personality and urgency into the Slayerish style most hardcore bands

play within these days. Good songwriting, good recording quality, and good musicianship, and a hard to quantify element of surprise. When I say good songwriting (which I refer to quite a bit) I mean: they take the same instruments notes that every other band on the planet has, and they arrange them into parts that I find interesting and capable of holding my interest through to the next change, even surprising me by changing into something unexpected, yet still powerful and attention-holding. How a band like Kindred can do this; when bands like Culture (who probably have the same general influences, and play in the same style as Kindred) cannot, is a bit harder to explain. Or maybe not. I don't like the singer's speaking voice, which he does too often anyway. And they drag out the same tempos long after they've ceased to be interesting. I'm sure that when they're coming up with this crap, they're pissing all over themselves with how heavy it sounds, and how much their nerdy fans are gonna go off when then break into yet another chugging stomp-part, but I'm just not with it. Obviously someone at Inside Front HQ likes 'em, because they made it into last issue. But that someone isn't me. There is something missing, and I have neither the time nor the patience to wait for it to show up.

Good Life Recordings

Deformity- Misanthrope CDep: Now that's more like it. With all the mediocrity I've gotta hack through this issue, I'm psyched to find this fucking brutal axe murderer of a release slashing and attacking right back at me. Everything that it takes to impress me and entertain me with heavy music is present here, almost. But I'll get to that in a minute. Awesome, razor sharp musicianship that is put to good use with so many catchy, infuriating surprises. I never quite know what's coming, and even if I can guess what part they're gonna break into, I don't really mind. Vocals alternate between high pitched screeching that usually annoys the fuck out of me, and deep cookie monster vocals. But instead of singing about cookies, or the letter J, their lyrics are about getting abducted by aliens and other evil stuff. Which brings up a question that been on my mind for a long, long, time. When bands sing about evil, satanic stuff, or even about how hard they are and how violent they feel, what are their intentions? Meaning, how do they expect me to feel? Are they trying to scare me with their evilness or toughness? Or am I supposed to feel evil and Satanic right along with Deicide, like we're gonna kick some ass together, for Satan? Same thing with gangster rap groups. Am I supposed to feel afraid of them and their claims of ruthlessness, or am I supposed to feel like a thug right along with them? So when Deformity sings about splitting their victims' heads wide open and fucking their brains out, I feel a little confused. Other than that, this is top notch thrashmetal. I hope they put out a full length soon.

Good Life Recordings.

Inhuman- Evolver CD: We misplaced the review of Inhuman's demo a few years back, which was too bad because I gave it a decent review. Right off the bat I'm struck by how clean this sounds, and how much it sounds like Cro-mags Best Wishes, with better vocals. This CD took several listens to grow on me, but I came around. I'll take the easy way out and compare Scordotto's vocals to John Brannon, maybe John Brannon with a NY accent. The first song, 'Dwell', sounds totally like later Cro-mags, but then the second song 'Cripple Inside' sounds more like Straight Ahead to me. Honestly Inhuman does a great job of switching up NYHC styles from Cro-mags, Straight Ahead, Sheer Terror, etc. but keeping the Negative Approach type vocals throughout, with a really clean crisp sound musically. This is just decent meat and potatoes hardcore that has enough fast parts to keep it from being boring. They do a Negative Approach cover that I've heard done better elsewhere, but they still do a good job. If you're turned off by the forced all-yo'ed-outness of many other NYHC bands lately, and like Straight Ahead and Sheer Terror, give this CD a shot, since Inhuman has enough personality to keep from being derivative. Eyeball Records has put out a good number of decent hardcore records in the past couple years, especially the Breakdown CD.

Eyeball Records, PO Box 1653, Peter Stuyvesant Station, NY, NY 10009

Kickback- Forever War CD: What a surprise this was. I've heard Kickback's older stuff, and they didn't have many distinguishing characteristics to set themselves apart from the horde of other European bands that attempt to play metallic streetwise hardcore. But with this CD they fuckin' blow the house down! Taking cues from Starkweather, Merauder, and Catharsis, Kickback put forth an amazingly powerful effort. Big league production, totally anti-human lyrically, well-written fighting music. The recording is just about perfect, and while some of the lyrics seem sneakily familiar ('No gods No masters shall stand before me') English isn't even their first language. Besides, I can think of a lot worse places to draw lyrical inspiration from. Kickback pulls their influences together in a such a way that they achieve their own sound, and that sound is heavy as fuck. Plenty of smooth transitions, excellent drumming, this is fucking great. There's an instrumental song called 'Long Live Death' that reminds me of some of the instrumentals on 'The Heart Grows Harder', and the last song on the CD is a ten+ minute industrial noise number similar to Psywarfare that I could do without, but other than that, Kickback does no wrong on this CD.

Hostile Records

Nine Shocks Terror- The Sheik Throwing Fire 7": This kills the h100's stuff, mainly because the new singer is so much better than Chris Erba. I know that this band is heavily influenced by Japanese hardcore and wrestling, but since I don't know and don't give a fuck about either, I'm gonna compare it to SFA and Antidote. And I dig it. The thing is, short of playing industrial vegan folk rave, Erba can do no wrong in my book. I compare it to Antidote because Steve Pepper sounds a lot like Drew Stone, only more crazy. If there's one thing this record is, it's crazy. Not like grindcore crazy, but just raw hardcore crazy. To me, this sounds like 'old school' hardcore, because this is what a lot of bands sounded like when I was 14. I guess if you were 14 in 1989, and you wanted to play in an older style of hardcore, then maybe you would sound like Fastbreak or whatever.

River On Fire Records, PO Box 771296, Lakewood, OH. 44107

Kill Your Idols 12": I guess hardcore really is getting to be like blues or jazz, in that you have a growing number of bands going out of their way to sound old or 'vintage'. Even so, this record sounds fucking great to me. Totally enjoyable, NOTA (the band, not the label), Burden Of Proof sounding hardcore with great hooks and soul. I fucking love it. Good recording, good lyrics, great vocals, especially on 'The Path', where the singer starts jabbering like a rabid, foaming lunatic towards the end of the song. They're honest enough to list their influences on the lyric sheet, which are surprisingly diverse enough to include NoMeansNo and Carnivore(!). So many bands make it easy to get away with short reviews this issue, by playing stuff that's easy to pigeonhole. Many people wonder why reviewers and humanity in general like to categorize everything. I know for myself, it comes down to laziness. Why should I try to think of original ways to describe this record, when I can just tell you it sounds like Negative Approach, and be pretty much accurate? Hmm? Anyway, this comes with a poster drawn by Chickie from Sheer Terror, who, according to Bobby Agars, now plays bass in this band.

NOTA (the label, not the band), PO box 654, Farmingville, NY. 11738

Six And Violence- Petty Staycheck CD: Incredibly stupid, hilarious fast thrash with two drummers NYHC, these fuckin' retards have been around forever. I used to see their 'Lettuce Prey' record in Record Time like ten years ago and I never bought it. This shit is pretty hard to describe, let me just say that you've gotta be pretty humorless to hate this. Everything about this is a joke, from the stupid samples, to the riffs, to the pictures of the band in funny wigs and gorilla suits. I like that they use two drummers, it adds a unique element, like it's salsa-core or something. There's all kinds of silly singing voices and silly operatic backup vocals, fuck, there's so much shit going on during this CD it makes my head feel like it's gonna explode. Some of the lyrics are semi-serious, like the song 'All My best Friends Are Turning Into Their Dads'. Which is kinda scary to me because it hits home so hard! I just can't believe how stupid this is. I love it. 'Apocalypse', 'I'm Gonna Kick God's Ass', you can't beat it! Sure, some of the humor is forced, but what the fuck. It's funny. I'll take this shit over ManLiftingBanner any day of the week! And sometimes the music actually is pretty effective and heavy, like when both drummers are flying along trading double bass parts back and forth. Like the song 'Die For Fun', about doing dangerous stuff for fun, like jumping out of airplanes, playing with poisonous snakes, etc. that song is actually pretty good in a heavy, pounding way. *Striving For Togetherness Records*

Reveal- Dissection Of Thought CDep: Generic name, but Reveal seems to be well on their way to achieving their own sound. Urgent sounding, with interesting slightly technical riffs, lots of changes, excellent bass lines, screechy, high pitched vocals in a European accent, Reveal seems to have some amount of charisma or something, intangible that makes me like them more than most of their peers. Or maybe I've just had too much cider. Anyway, the lyrics seem to have some thought put into them, the recording is good, nice packaging. They just seem to succeed at putting their own personality into the overfilled genre of metallish hardcore. Very clean recording, you can hear all the instruments clearly. My only complaint is that they rely too heavily on slower tempos. The lyrics definitely are thought-provoking. I just can't get over what a great bass sound this CD has. It's perfect.

Good Life Recordings, see address elsewhere

Regression/ Breach split CD: The cover of this CD shows two planets crashing into each other, and that's appropriate for the unearthly heavy sound of Regression. An out of this world guitar sound, that is just so thick and heavy I cannot fucking believe what I'm hearing. Comparable to Entombed or Crowbar, the awesome guitar sound on Regression's songs could make even Pansy Division sound heavy and threatening. The rest of the music is similar to Entombed, but not as fast. Man these guys pound! Awesome vocals also, that totally fit with, and even compliment the brutally heavy, pounding music. The lyrics are about the extermination of the human race, and the end of the world, which is what I feel like doing when I hear this. They don't really pick up much speed on these three songs, but they don't need to. They just sound like an unstoppable juggernaut of fucking death and destruction, especially since I'm listening to this on headphones, typing up this review on my mother-in-law's computer. Thanks Lolly. The music doesn't sound that complex, but something is happening here that makes this blow away most of the competition. Breach on the other hand, who I am familiar with outside this recording and already like, disappoint me with a sub-par mix, shitty (for them) guitar sound, and no lyrics. I can tell that the material on this CD is well written and original, it's just a bad recording. Still, pick this up for the unbelievable destructive power of Regression. Wait, they manage to turn things around on their third and last song, which has slightly more audible vocals, and a slightly better mix.

Good Life Recordings

Morning Again- Martvr CD: This band has gotten better since they put out that shitty CDep on Conquer The World a couple years ago, but they still have some more distance to go to reach perfection. Great recording, packaging, competent playing. I can tell they're trying to be what they think is heavy. It's just that they're trying to be heavy in the same way so many other bands are, and even though it sounds good, this record still sounds like they just stole parts from many popular metal bands (Like who, you ask? Slayer and Metallica. Who the fuck did you think!) and slapped 'em together. Not to mention the singer's voice still sucks, sounding like a little kid who's trying to sound evil. No charisma, no real hooks, this CD is like driving a Chevy Cavalier. It'll get you where you need to go, but you won't really enjoy the ride there. On the back of this CD they say, "This is our lives. This is where we belong. Nobody outside the band can understand this and we don't expect them to." I can respect that, and agree with it. Because to me, they just sound like another straight edge band trying to sound evil and heavy, and not quite pulling it off. Keep trying though.

Good Life Recordings

Visual Discrimination- Serial Killers 7": Who would've thought that my favorite late 80's California hardcore band (besides Excel) would return with what is probably their best release ever. Usually when bands get back together, its to capitalize on their established name, and pawn off some watered down, uninspired slop on kids too young to know better. I had wondered what Tim Singer and co. were up to after putting out that Prison CD a couple years ago, and this is the answer. This 7" is angrier and rawer than anything VD put out ten years ago, with a lot less mosh parts and less 'me and the crew are gonna beat yo' ass' type lyrical content, which I can get into, depending on who's saying it. This time around they sing about drunk drivers, child abuse, 'social injustice', etc. actually the song about child abuse ('Suffer') is a Prison song. Where Prison sounded a lot like a cross between Beowulf and Helmet, this is hearty meat and potatoes blazing fast thrashcore. Very little metal overtones, this has the same type of feel to it that Devoid Of Faith has. Sure, I could do without all the pictures of corpses, the Manson quote on the cover, but the music is so enjoyable to me that I can overlook these minor annoyances. Tim has a unique voice too, with a slight drawl to it. I wonder if he still wears the hairnet onstage.

Deep Six Records, (no address) VD Army, 4915 Cecelia St., Cudahy, Ca. 90201

Urbn Dk- Will E. Survive? Yes E. Will! 7": A big surprise, this 7" was. Fast, raw, punk rock that sounds similar to Battalion Of Saints or maybe Code 13. I thought this would be terrible, but I kinda like it. Gruff vocals that go well with the powerful, simple, yet effective music. The lyrics touch on homelessness, crack usage, and gangs in thoughtful, yet clear terms. They never let on who E. is, so I'll just assume they're talking about me.

Will E. Survive Records PO Box 2065, Northlake IL 60164

Rumor 39 7": If you're gonna play sloppy, don't give a fuck punk rock, and least put some passion into it. This record sounds like the band was bored out of their mind, ah fuck it. I just broke the record. This blows. Give it up, morons.

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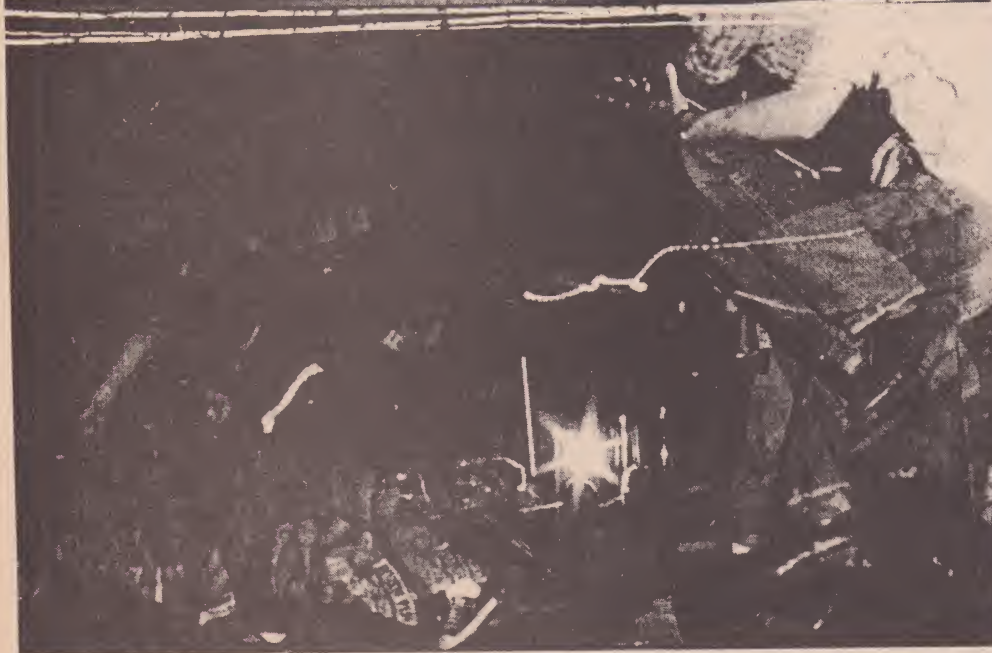
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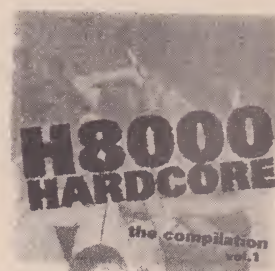
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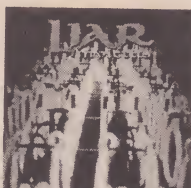
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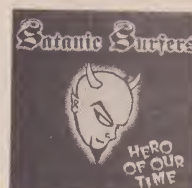
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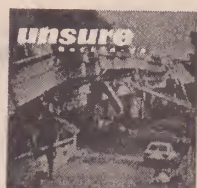
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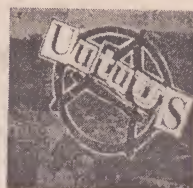
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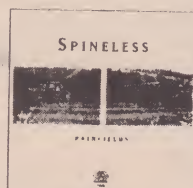
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For this project, the CrimethInc. collective included Paul F. Maul, Alex Foxcroft, Alex Dwgsht, and Andy Demps (The Paul F. Maul Artists' Group graphic team); Eric Bohemian, Greg Bennick, Matt Average, Disco Dave, and Al Burian (editorial board); Eric Warner, Dan Young, and Jim Walkley (arts and entertainment); Lydia Eccles, Nadia C., and Gloria Cubana (management consulting); the Kinko's Independent Revolutionary Cells (represented by Shawn Dawson and Bill); Catherine D-Ablo (mail room); and B. D-Ablo (maintenance and repair).

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For a listing of some CrimethInc. projects up to this point, consult our advertisement in the first pages of this issue. For information about upcoming CrimethInc. projects, watch the front page of your local newspaper.

*[Not to be confused with "Crimeth Inc.," whatever that means.]