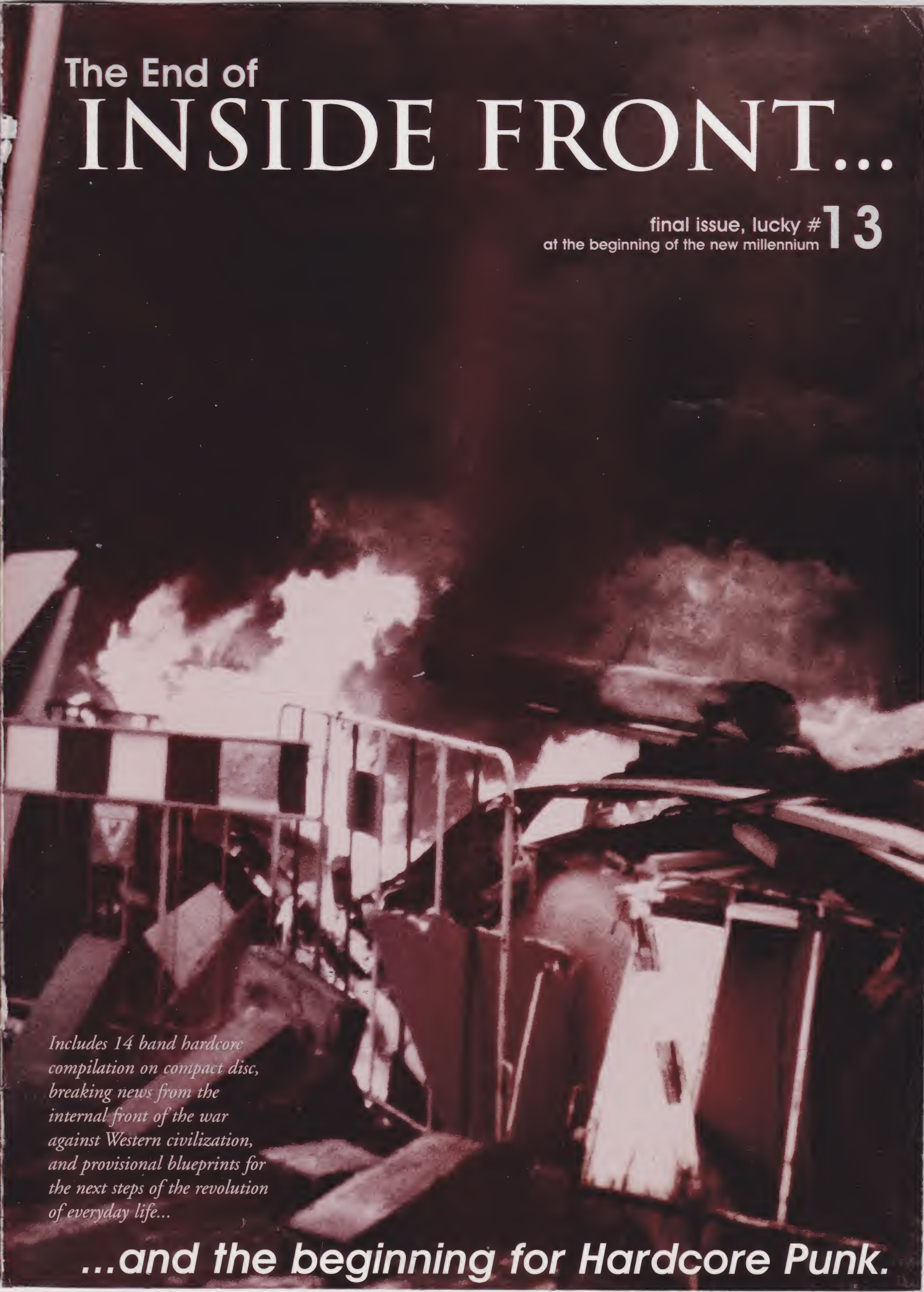


The End of INSIDE FRONT...

final issue, lucky # **13**
at the beginning of the new millennium



*Includes 14 band hardcore
compilation on compact disc,
breaking news from the
internal front of the war
against Western civilization,
and provisional blueprints for
the next steps of the revolution
of everyday life...*

...and the beginning for Hardcore Punk.

USA IS A
MONSTER

2:00 AM

Hey punk boy—I was listening to your band, and I wanna know:

Where's the content? are **YOU** **CONTENT**?

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Editor's Introduction

to the Final Issue

Confession and declaration of war

I am a wild animal.

No, I don't feel comfortable paying for food. It makes my skin crawl, my stomach clench up—it seems like a really alien, superstitious thing to do. It makes much more sense to me to hunt for it, to find it in dumpsters or free bins or take it by force or stealth from the ones who don't care about my welfare. I can't imagine signing a contract and paying rent to one of them, pretending I think that's a sensible way for people to interact; I would much rather travel constantly, or sleep on the couch where my friends have established a collective space, contributing what I can... or sleep on benches and rooftops, if it comes down to that. I can't sit still or act fake long enough to work at one of their jobs when there's so much out here in the real world to do. I can't lie to myself enough anymore to lie to anyone else by participating in the farce that is polite society under capitalism. What they call delayed gratification looks to me more like gratification abandoned.

I am a spoiled child.

I would rather starve to death, freeze to death, end lonely and incomprehensible to everyone than change myself. I know what I am is inconvenient for everyone, and frustrating, too, since I'm doing what many people would like to but feel they cannot; but there's nothing anyone can say that will persuade me I'm wrong in any way that matters. People talk at me about adapting, being reasonable, realistic, but none of it seems reasonable to me. I think that what I am and what I want is beautiful in a world that sorely needs beauty. I'm not crazy for wanting every moment to be wild and right and fair and honest. I won't let anyone tell me I need to stop listening to my heart. Even at my blackest moments, when it seems like I really have been abandoned by everyone and everything and I have jettisoned myself from the cosmos for no explicable reason, I would simply rather perish than compromise. Whether this is a good thing or not, it's how I feel and I won't back down.

I am a human being.

When I see people cleaning tables at restaurants or bellboys carrying heavy bags,

my first impulse is to help them: my instincts, laziness aside, are to assume that what they're doing is of value to humanity and that they deserve assistance—even if they're really doing senseless paid make-work, and it's "not my job" so I shouldn't worry about it. It's not easy for me to suspend my compassion when I meet homeless people or others in need. I even have a difficult time remembering that when a solicitor or a police officer talks to me, I can't trust them to respect my needs or have my best interest in mind—they do *seem* like human beings, after all, at least when the pigs aren't dressed in their star wars costumes. I can't make excuses or joke smugly about exploited labor, people being bombed or beaten or starved to death or raped, animals in slaughterhouses. I can't put my humanity on hold like everyone else seems to have learned to.

I am an experiment.

I know I can't survive too long in this world the way it is. If I am to live another twenty six years, I will have to evolve—devolve, that is, which I have sworn not to do—or else the world will have to. I have everything at stake in transforming this place... and so do you, unless you think that people like me deserve to die, unless you're ready to excise everything in yourself that resembles me.

Disclaimer for the hypercritical

I think in the seven year history of this 'zine, one of our greatest contributions to the hardcore community has been our emphasis on the subject of lifestyle: that how you eat, what you wear, where you live, how you spend the typical days of your life is more important than what you do on Friday night, or what musical taste or ideology you subscribe to. Of course, there have been people who have misunderstood our attempts to open up new possibilities to others by taking an extreme position for ourselves ("never work ever") as an attempt to legislate what is right for everyone else, who thought we believed that we had the "one true way" that every cliquish, infighting radical group claims to have. That was never our intention. There is no one right way to revolution (or making the world a better place or what-

ever you want to call it), and there's no best way to live in its service. We *all* have our roles in this society, which separate us from our potential allies and divert our energies into role-playing; the question is not which role to choose (professor, outlaw radical, etc.), but how to *subvert* your role in order to create volatile situations in which new, unpredictable, wonderful things can happen.

That being the case, the only remaining question is which lifestyle would be the most personally fulfilling for you, and there are some great reasons to try the one we've embraced, I assure you. People always become defensive (myself included) when somebody is doing something they feel drawn to but have feared to try; nobody wants to admit that they're not already doing what they want, or that someone else has a good idea they didn't have. As for the questions of whether my lifestyle is responsible ("but when you're sleeping on the couch somewhere, doesn't somebody else have to pay the rent?") or sustainable ("do you really think you can do this for the next thirty years?")... it's important to remember that everything is a compromise until the whole world changes, whether you're depending on a little help from your friends who have different resources or participating in the economy of exploitation and destruction. To look for a "sustainable" life as a participant in an unsustainable global system is sheer madness; relying on the assistance of others to work towards a better world for everyone makes plenty of sense as long as you really are pledged to give your all. After all, the American ideal of the "self-sufficient" individual is just bullshit: everyone is totally dependent on everyone else in this society (for self-sufficiency you have to look to small farms outside the First World), and the ones who seem the most "responsible" for themselves are often simply the ones who have been the most *irresponsible* to others, taking from them to take care of themselves. Don't tell me that's not what a manager who makes twice the salary of his employees is doing, when they all have to work just as hard.

And another thing—work-free living isn't something that just a few parasites can do until the excess that feeds them runs out.

The more people who do it, the more possible it is to create really autonomous lives, with the shared resources and energies of everyone adding up to a sum greater than the parts. One work-free kid in a city can shoplift food and get new shoes from the trash on campus when the college semester is over. One hundred kids in the same town can start collectives or squats, start gardening instead of stealing, start organizing bigger projects. And one thousand kids could occupy and collectivize housing and schools and workspaces, start to really take social resources back into the hands of the people. We're not just parasites. We could be the start of a new world.

Finally, after all those points, just remember this: this magazine, and all the other projects we've done with CrimethInc., would literally have been impossible without all the time and energy that we put into them instead of into working—even when that meant sometimes sleeping on the couch somewhere where others were paying rent. Imagine all the good things you, or your friends who still have to work, could do if more people took this approach to life, if more people were *able* to take this approach to life. While we are still at the mercy of their system, let's put all the energy we can into building up the framework for work-free living (Food Not Bombs, the squatting movement, dumpstering, bicycle cooperatives, sharing resources...) so that this option will be more widely available, and we couch-surfing revolutionaries won't always be occupying this no-man's-land between generosity and dependence.

*A snapshot from my life:
the past four days
(as of Sunday, almost midnight, June 11, 2000)*

I've been going back and forth between Chapel Hill (pretty, quiet college town where my lover and student activist friends live, where it's easy to focus on writing and reading) and Greensboro (dirty, post-industrial dead end Southern city where some of my best friends and co-conspirators live, where I go to hatch plots and answer CrimethInc. mail) for the last few weeks, trying to catch up from being gone on tour most of the last year. Last Thursday I caught a ride back to Greensboro to see a show at the new communal warehouse my friends had organized while we were gone.

It was Submission Hold, Antiproduct, and a band from Arkansas with a Native American name my ignorant tongue cannot pronounce (Tem Eyos Ki). They started the show (after a hilarious performance from a

punk kid with an acoustic guitar and a maniacally rudimentary sense of humor) by introducing a song about holding on to the fantasies of your childhood through the crush of the "adult" world, and charged forward with so much enthusiasm that we all caught it—and suddenly punk was brand new again, perfect and beautiful and offering the whole world to all of us. We hung out outside after their set, eating from the free buffet of vegan food our hosts had shoplifted in mass quantities to celebrate their first show (when it started running low, some of them dashed off again to procure more!), or wandered around inside, dancing to the Black Flag over the speakers and admiring the handiwork of our friends, how much they had been able to build and create in this empty warehouse in just a month. Then we watched Antiproduct and Submission Hold, two bands also fronted by confident, tough women like the one from Tem Eyos Ki, and it was beautiful for me to see our community live up to its pretensions about fighting sexism and gender roles: the men present all listening, confident enough themselves, for once, to hear other perspectives, to share the space and power of our scene. After the show I went with Jon and Moe to Birch's house, where we ate vegan apple pie that Mark had dumpstered, dreaming and scheming wildly into the dawn.

Friday evening, after answering a day's worth of mail, I went to see a friend of mine from outside the punk community, a single mother who lives on welfare in order to spend her time assisting battered children and women suffering from spouse abuse or alcoholism (since there are almost no paid positions available doing that—another big argument against the bullshit "get a job" mentality, which assumes that it's better to be paid for doing something useless or destructive than to spend your life working on positive things for free). It's always wonderful to talk to her—she keeps me grounded in real life, telling me about the struggle to help individuals who are suffering from our fucked up status quo, when it's so easy for me to get lost in the abstractions I'm always working in. After that, Jon and I climbed a series of ladders and steep shingled inclines to the top of a building on the university campus, to brainstorm for the new Harbinger in the windy exultation of 3 a.m.—and then when we got back to his apartment, he left to put up fliers for an event the next evening, which is what I *really* want to talk about.

The fliers read, simply, in huge letters, "U.S.A. IS A MONSTER 2:00 A.M." Jon

had been supposed to book a show for this noise band for months, and never got around to it, until a week before the date he'd promised them he realized he was in trouble and started trying to come up with a solution. He hit upon Zack, the devil-may-care graveyard shift worker at Handy Pantry, the all-night convenience store in this neighborhood.

Zack is one of those beautiful lumpen-proletariat guys who knows who his enemies are and gets jobs just to fuck with his employers. I heard that when he was tired of his last job (night shift at U.P.S.), he took a package being shipped by a chewing gum company, set it down in front of a surveillance camera, opened it up, took out a piece of gum, and, looking straight into the camera, began chewing it. The next morning when the manager found the opened package still sitting there, he checked the tape and saw Zack staring him in the eye, smacking his gum.

Jon went to Zack and told him that he'd forgotten to book a show for a band that would be arriving on Saturday. Zack drawled "well, I'm working every night this week," and it was arranged: U.S.A. Is A Monster would play at the Handy Pantry at 2 a.m. on Saturday night.

Now, Handy Pantry is not some out-of-the-way convenience store. It's in the middle of the main drag by the college campus, a center of Greensboro night life (such as it is!), next to all the coffee shops and restaurants and sharing a parking lot with Kinko's... and with the university police station. This last one is about two hundred feet away, and you can see it through the windows of the convenience store—so we weren't even talking about a risky proposition, we were looking certain catastrophe in the eyes and offering it a formal invitation. I think that's what appealed to us the most about this idea: more than any of the Reclaim the Streets or Critical Mass actions in the past year, more than the noise parades or any of the nocturnal breaking, entering, and exploring we'd done, this was something crazy enough that the outcome couldn't be foreseen or even imagined. We had to do it just to thrust ourselves out into that dangerous space where *everything* is a surprise.

Word of the show spread long before Jon put up the fliers, and by last night every mouth was whispering about it. Jon and I went to a going-away party for Mark, who is off to spend the next month teaching art in another city, and then went to a show in nearby Winston Salem, at the collective warehouse there (which is four years old and much more developed than the one in

Greensboro, really incredible and inspiring!), at which we were to meet U.S.A.I.A.M. themselves. They showed up around midnight, just when we were starting to worry, and we went out in the parking lot for a briefing.

They seemed like good kids—trying as hard as we were to act like this was a normal thing for them—but, to our surprise, there were *eight* of them, including two drummers with full sets, and a keyboard player with crazy electronic equipment. It wasn't going to be easy to run their stuff out the back door when the pigs came in. They followed us back to Greensboro in their van, and I spent the ride talking Jon out of his apprehensions: "This is our chance to put punk rock where it was never supposed to be, where it's still dangerous. This is payback for all the nights we've had to walk around watching this town do nothing, man—this is revenge for that flag they put on the moon!" When we arrived, he turned to me, reassured, and declared "we're going to make Greensboro history, man."

I agreed. For the sake of everyone in this little, dead end town, there is no choice but to make Greensboro, as we've all known and loathed it, *history*.

There were about sixty people from widely varied backgrounds (punks, art students, homeless people, a middle-aged professor "interviewing" people with a microphone that wasn't plugged into anything) lined up sitting on the curb as we loaded two drumsets, four amplifiers and speakers, a vocal amp and borrowed microphone, and assorted other instruments and equipment into the store. The drummers had forgotten sticks, or lost them at the other shows or something, so they ended up just beating on the drums with various junk foods (beef jerky, soda cans and bottles, popsicles), grabbing a new one whenever one substitute stick broke or shattered. The first notes of soundcheck were so loud that I couldn't believe they were even going to get to play a minute.

Everyone pushed in, packed between the aisles, and the noise began. The band were leaping around, smashing things and falling over like they might have at a normal house show, but here it was totally new and dangerous, visceral, and music that could have been standard somewhere else was suddenly the fiercest, most vehement thing any of us had ever heard. At a normal show the band are the ones taking the risk, but here everyone was at risk, just by standing there in the store—and not just because of the threat of the police, either. There's no way I can describe what it felt like to step out of reality as it had been and into that space, to fuse

two separate parts of my life (the passion of punk rock, the lifelessness of convenience stores) that were never supposed to meet... everything was electrified, tense and intense, ten thousand years of culture turned on its head in an instant. Amazingly, the band finished one song, the members all switched instruments while the scream of feedback tore the air, and they shot into another one, knocking against the shelving, smashing into the drink coolers, pulling the cardboard display posters over their heads and banging into people—all of us looking nervously back and forth between them and the police station out the window. A couple civilians who had come up to buy cigarettes joined the crowd in total wonder. Some people were throwing junk food, candy, breaking things, wrecking the place (this was the most controversial topic afterwards, since the kids doing this were largely bourgeois children of the suburbs who had nothing at stake and weren't worried about Zack's welfare or anything else)—others, and this was much more beautiful to me, realizing that we owned the place for a moment and they could do whatever they wanted, were picking up candies and other commodities, looking at them, and then just dropping them, realizing just how valueless they all were at *any* price, especially compared with the lightning of what was actually happening. The band switched instruments again in the middle of the song, banging out random notes and screaming nonsensically—someone from the audience jumped behind one drumset, and started playing along as natural as could be—others joined in—and then looks of terror spread through the room, as we all saw the flashing lights of an arriving police car.

And you know what? We got away with it. The pigs pulled up, paused, and drove off for some inexplicable reason, basically giving us the go-ahead to take the city over (if we can do this so easily, then what next?). "Should we get out of here?" shouted a band member, clutching a cymbal stand. "Naw, man, they've just headed off to get the Black Mariah," drawled Zack—"keep playing." The band played for another twenty minutes, until everyone was satisfied that we'd done what we came to do. Still spinning in a delirium of adrenaline, we hastily packed all their equipment out the back door and into the van, while the locals drifted slowly off into the night, exchanging grins of disbelief and delight.

In fact, just as I was writing this last paragraph, Zack stopped by Jon and Will's apartment (where I'm staying tonight, while they drive to the airport up in New York to pick up Zegota's new bassist, Ard, imported

directly from Holland for their upcoming world tour without so much as an audition) to tell me that, though the pigs prank called him at the store afterwards ("you're in big trouble, son—some underage kids who were drinking at your store drove into a tree and died [total bullshit!]. You need to give us the store tapes. Don't lie to us, boy..." and Zack replies: "I'll lie to you as much as I want, officer—but I don't know what you're talking about..."), he just talked to his manager, who said: "no, you're not fired, the store was clean this morning." As I expected, they need us more than we need them—we will win.

Tonight I have a whole apartment to myself, despite not paying rent for the last sixteen months or working for over six years, and I sit here listening to my favorite vicious punk records, stuffing myself on dumpstered food, writing the introduction to our hardcore magazine on my beleaguered little laptop computer, the last surviving vestige of my bourgeois origins—quite conscious that I am enjoying a moment of heaven. Tomorrow Matt and I will drive out into the rural wilderness for Catharsis practice, then Zegota returns to show their new bassist around, who has never been to the U.S. before, and to screen fliers for the benefit our bands are supposed to play for the warehouse space. Then on Thursday night at midnight, we have a date to meet Liz and some of her friends, fifty year old middle class women whose children have grown up and left them, who feel invisible in society, who see themselves represented in the media as helpless and clutching, who have reasons of their own to find common cause with others seeking adventure and transformation, but did not know where to find them—until they met us. They are to bring the picnic snack, and us, the adventure: a 16-story building, abandoned and easy to break into, with a roof that looks out over the rest of the city. There, we'll sit beneath the stars and build bonds between our different communities, talking of which resources each has to offer the other, of what the next step to revolution is—a revolution that is becoming more and more real for us, for all of us, every day.

*The last word (we can only hope!)
on complaining about "the scene"*

An interesting characteristic of communities is the way no one actually feels like a part of them, even the people in their center. Alexei and I had a disheartening experience in Brazil when we were both reading HeartattaCk: it seemed to us like there was all this awesome shit going on in the hard-

core scene, but that we were totally left out of it. "I think it's great that they have this community going on," said Alexei, "but I don't feel like a part of any community. If you put all my friends together in one place, they wouldn't be able to get along or even understand each other."

After I'd thought about it for a while, I realized that the hardcore community is actually nothing more than a bunch of people like Alexei and I and our friends, connected to each other in the loosest of ways. In fact if you were to pick two people who are undeniably close to the core of this thing called "hardcore" right now, it might well be him and me. So what's going on here?

The truth is, nobody feels like any community could be big and deep enough to contain all that they are—and that's OK. But we have a disturbing tendency to project our own fears and insecurities onto our community: everyone feels comfortable in it but us, we are secret outsiders, the community is like a Frankenstein's monster with a will of its own, doing things to people rather than being a place where people do things... people talk about the scene as if it is a force separate from the humans involved in it, as if it could suck without our participation in that sucking, as if it could alienate us without our participation in that alienation. And so everyone complains ad nauseam about how the scene is getting worse, it's not like it used to be, it has all these flaws, etc. etc. etc.

At this point, that really is the *least* original, the least creative thing you could possibly do. Punk has always sucked, it's always been getting worse, that's been the word ever since about 1977—so seriously, what could possibly be the use of complaining more, except maybe to state for the record that it's not good enough for *you*, either?

I think it would be much more positive for us to admit that punk does whatever we do with it, that that's all it is, and to claim responsibility for it rather than blaming it as an outside force. As soon as we recognize that punk is simply a tool we can use as to do whatever we want, rather than worrying about whether it's cool enough for us.

These complaints have their roots in the old voter/spectator mentality, I think: you want to pick the style or scene that is the coolest, and assert your identity by passively swearing allegiance to it. At first, as a teenager, punk seems to be perfect, so you buy punk records and attend punk shows, calling yourself a punk just because you watch what people who are really

involving themselves in punk are doing. Maybe at age 21 or 22 you get disillusioned with punk—it's lost the novelty it used to have, it doesn't seem as profound as it once did—so you move on to the rave scene or something. You call yourself a raver or an indie rocker, but it's all bullshit—you've just been a consumer, a spectator, all along.

I no longer expect to have my world changed just by buying a new punk record. I look to other styles of music to bring me inspiration, since I feel like I'm pretty much up to date with what punk has to offer (though if you're in a punk band, please surprise me!); but hardcore punk is my community, no matter what music I listen to—it is here that I get to do what really matters: *participate*. You're going to get jaded wherever you go, if you go as a spectator; but if you pick this community as a place where you can try out your own projects and live out your own adventures, you'll find it to be endlessly rewarding, no matter how many morons are involved in it.

I think I've had such a good experience in this community because I realized this about seven years ago, around when I started this 'zine. Since then I've found myself complaining less and less about the scene, even though I spend more time involved in it than just about anyone else I know. It's common sense—hardcore (*your* hardcore, the only one that matters) is what you make of it... so get going! It can take you around the world and back a hundred times, introduce you to the craziest, most beautiful people on this earth, thrust you into moments of adventure you'd never dreamed of—and no halfwit in a Madball or Blanks 77 shirt can interfere with that, unless you let them.

And now I'd like to take just a paragraph to celebrate briefly my love of punk rock. In this community, I can express every side of my character, I don't have to leave anything behind: I can scream and destroy and hate blindly with Gehenna, I can be articulate and idealistic with Trial or Zegota, I can revel in the simple pleasures of wreaking havoc with my friends as we wander the town late one night or I can indulge in sweet solitude reading a 'zine by myself. I can be intellectual as all fuck, debating post-Situationist social theory with a graduate student over the internet, or I can strike up a conversation about the Misfits with a teenager drinking on the job on third shift at a convenience store while I shoplift potato chips. I can enjoy a communal dinner with welcoming strangers on the other side of the world, or organize a

demonstration with mohawked local activists here in North Carolina. I can travel and have a home anywhere; I can write, or dance, or even learn to juggle or speak French, and I would have awesome people to do it with. Here's to punk. Punk fucking rocks.

The end, and the beginning, for Inside Front—and hardcore punk

This is the last issue of Inside Front we are going to do. There are already a hundred 'zines that can take over from here—Slave, F.B.I., even HeartattaCk is quite good these days—and I feel like we've finally realized the potential of this project, finally made Inside Front what it should be. Rather than stop here and hit a plateau, trying to make this into some kind of periodical, I'd rather leave it as an example of what is possible, effectively collectivizing its legacy to be carried on by everyone else who thinks there's something good about what it has done. I don't want to risk ever getting stuck doing something that becomes boring or predictable or irrelevant, and there are so many more things we want to do from here—so don't worry, you'll still be hearing from us. After this issue of Inside Front, which should come out about the same time as the third Harbinger and our first book, *Days of War, Nights of Love* [*editor's last minute note: scratch that, they're out already!*], we've got new records, new pamphlets and 'zines and books and tours and actions planned... in just my own case, I can think of about a hundred projects I want to try, all just waiting for the space to materialize.

From here, whatever was worthwhile about Inside Front is in your hands. We're not ending our work with the magazine in defeat or exhaustion—to the contrary, we're more involved and active than ever—but because it has taken us as far as it needed to; now we find ourselves standing at a vista from which new horizons can be seen, and we have to make new vehicles to carry us to them. This isn't the end of hardcore being relevant to our lives, or of life being relevant to hardcore, or of our contributions to either of those things. But Inside Front is now *yours*, yours to improve on, yours to apply and add to. I'm absolutely confident that from these seeds, a hundred greater forces will grow, and we who have nourished this project to this point must simply let go of the reigns to let it become what it must now become—which *you* can see more clearly than us, I'm sure!

For further *reading,*



In the past, we've had a hard time keeping on top of all the mail, mailorders, wholesale orders, etc. coming to CrimethInc. [editor's note: *haha, understatement!*]. We've solved this problem by dividing mailorder responsibilities between four different CrimethInc. teams. Hopefully this catalog will make everything clear, and no one will ever have to wait a month and a half for their order again.

BOOKS

At this writing, we have only one book published, but we have others coming by the end of 2000. The Paul F. Maul Artist's Group at CrimethInc. Far East is handling single and wholesale mailorders and distribution of these.

Days of War, Nights of Love: This is "Crimethink for Beginners," the definitive work of our first half decade in action and far superior to anything we'd done before it. It's 292 pages, fully illustrated, the works. \$8 USA

contact the PFMAG:
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Or visit the CrimethInc. webpage for more information, news, further reading, etc.:
www.crimethinc.com
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The third issue of our free propaganda tabloid *Harbinger* is now available. If you want a copy to read, or a big stack of them to distribute in your area, please send a postage donation to:

Amelia Wood
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RECORDS & MAGAZINES

These are available from Gavin at Stickfigure Distribution. He does single mailorders, and wholesales inside and outside the U.S.A. as well. The single order prices are included here; email or write him for wholesale information or foreign postage costs.

Inside Front #12: 136 pages, with the already classic eleven song 6" by Finland's wildest Motorhead fans, Ümlaut. Features a lengthy retrospective/interview with Refused, an interview discussing hardcore imperialism and the third world with Brazilian band Point of No Return, a new take on the old tradition of scene reports (including the Appalachian Trail and Louisburg, North Carolina), an analysis of the Reclaim the Streets protests, and a whole lot more. \$4 USA

Inside Front #11: 104 pages, with 13-track CD including Ire, Earthmover, Zegota, Botch, Amebix... the interviews are with Zegota and Ire, and the articles dissect the age old superstitions of moral law and hierarchical order. There's also a lengthy Amebix retrospective. \$4 USA

listening, acting...

Inside Front #10: with 7" of Swedish hardcore from Outlast, interviews with Stalingrad, Systral, and Culture, and articles about the drawbacks of capitalist economics in punk and how to survive without selling your soul to "the man." \$3 USA

Inside Front #9: with 7" of Belgian hardcore by Liar, Congress, Regression, and Shortstight. Interviews with Congress and Timebomb, articles on work (what's fucked up about it) and how to do d.i.y. tours. \$2 USA

Zegota "Movement in the Music" CD: The Zegota 12" on CD with revised packaging. It's remastered, so it sounds a lot better than the vinyl, too. Zegota is one of the most innovative and idealistic hardcore bands today, and this is a simply beautiful record. \$8 USA

Ire "What Seed, What Root?" CD: This is Ire's swan song, their last twisted, savage masterpiece of wreckage and reckoning, in which their earlier ideas and experiments reach their final, awesome form. If Neurosis had gone the direction we hoped they would back in the early '90's, it would have been something like this. \$10 USA

Catharsis "Passion" CD: To sow seeds in barren soil if there is no more fertile ground. To bear the fragile worlds within through the ruined one that surrounds. To lift us up, to bring empires down... \$10 USA

Catharsis "Samsara" 2x12": The "Samsara" album takes up three sides, the old 7" is on the fourth. Cheaper than getting both of the older CDs (the first of which is out of press, anyway), it includes all the material before the new record that the band still plays. \$12 USA

Kilara "Southern Fried Metal" CD: The kings of southern noise. Incomparable weirdness and fury. \$8 USA

Timebomb "Full Wrath of the Slave" CD: Italian, vegan straight edge, anarcho-communist black metal. \$8 USA

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2695 Rangewood Drive
Atlanta, GA 30345 U.S.A.
www.crimethinc.com



Letterbombs

Dear Inside Front,

I have been thinking a lot about the role that [North] American culture and American individualism have in American radical ideas. The U.S. has a tradition of a very individualist anarchism, that kind of anarchism that says "I'm gonna live in the forest, I'm gonna live there by myself." It's an anarchism very influenced by the way that American society sees itself. Everything in U.S. culture is about individualism and this has a strong influence upon anarchist ideas there. People see anarchism as a way to free yourself from society, not as a way to build a new society to live with the other people. I think that this is a reflection of the whole heritage of American society, the myth of the self made man, is a thing that only can happen in a society that is very capitalistic and with enterprise values like American society has. I don't think that people from other cultures see themselves as a totally isolated individual in the same way that Americans see themselves.

I saw this when I talked about the Arauto (Harbinger) ideas with people here that came from poor areas and poor backgrounds. They can't relate those things with themselves because they don't see themselves separated from their community, they think in terms of their community in they think to fight with the community. They can't think in terms of "my personal happiness and freedom are the most important things in the world and I'm gonna fight for them. As I can't be happy if the others aren't, I'm gonna fight for everybody's freedom"—because the don't see their own personality as so separated from the rest of the world like people in the U.S. do. People here who are more middle class (like me) can relate more with this question because they are more Americanized. But I hadn't stopped to think about that until I started to talk with more poor people. I think that this individualism came together with the other values that make it possible for capitalism work so "well" there. Values that came from the Protestant heritage. Don't you think that making a radical change in everything isn't just seeking to build a way out based in the same vision of the world that your society has, but changing everything, including the way the people see themselves in the world? What do you think about that? Can you do an exercise of imagination and start to see yourself as a part of something?

Yours, Fred

Dearest Fred—

What you have to remember is that people who live in the West are not just individualists because the culture of capitalism has programmed us that way—we are also individualists because there is no healthy alternative culture here that could have raised us as a part of it. Most of us radicals here had to make a painful break with our society, since that society is itself hostile to freedom and happiness. In a culture of violence, it makes sense to reject that culture and the society that embraces it. From there, of course, you have to create another community, because human life does not take place in a vacuum (you are whatever your interaction with others make you—so to make yourself into something better, you have to arrange to have better interactions with others)... but people in the U.S. and Western Europe are very suspicious, and rightly so, whenever someone

starts telling them about the virtues of identifying yourself with your community: remember the ones in the West who have done this over the last century were all people trying to trick us—Hitler, Stalin, Ronald Reagan, the religious right, etc. In a "sick" (oppressive) society, the "healthy" (life-and compassion- and liberty-loving) people will have to be individualists, to start out.

That doesn't mean we don't need community, but it does mean that creating real, healthy community again is a long, long process. For us, it makes sense to consider our personal desires, because as long as there is still something "healthy" about us, those desires will be in conflict with the values of our destructive civilization. Those who are fortunate enough to belong already to genuine communities, in which they need not differentiate between their own needs and those of their companions, are very lucky (I myself live in one of those communities, but it only has a few thousand people in it, and they're spread out across the world), but they can't fault people who don't have communities like that yet for thinking individualistically. The only problem is if that individualism prevents them from overcoming their isolation.

It's true that this capitalist-born individualism can be a real problem in building new communities. You're right, the cult of "self-sufficiency" in capitalist cultures is an obstacle for all symbiotic human relationships—people want "what they deserve" and "what they earned themselves," not what is good for others too and thus better for them. "Self-sufficiency" is a fucking myth, anyway—to quote Gandhi: "Western man fills his closet with groceries and calls himself self-sufficient." It's generally true that whoever calls themselves "self-sufficient" has stamped all over everyone else to be able to be "responsible" for themselves. And since there really is no space left in the world to go live in the woods (and even if you can do so, it's not very cool to abandon your fellow human beings, and your desires that they are happy), we have to face the fact that we are not independent, we are interdependent. The new Harbinger contains a lot of writing about this, as you'll see—the idea that to be truly free, we have to create that freedom with others, in our interactions with them, rather than finding freedom "from" others. The radical individualist wants that simply because he's never had the beautiful experience of getting along with others, and finding that their happiness and his are inextricably linked.

At the same time, I really don't believe in us "sacrificing ourselves" for the good of any generalization, like "community." Whether or not what we are is totally socially determined, that doesn't mean I owe anything to society. I experience life as a self-contained entity, myself, and it is that self I must answer to first. People who don't recognize this, even if they are part of a non-capitalist culture that has existed for thousands of years, are at risk, I think, and I hope that's not just my ethnocentrism talking. When you make no distinction between your own beliefs and desires and the prescriptions of your society, you leave yourself open to being conned into things like female genital mutilation, which is just not cool, period, if you ask me. Also, groups who have "strong community values" and answer to the group before they answer to themselves as individuals tend not to care about individuals outside their group. My ideal would be that each of us sees herself not as a member of a single group, but rather as an individual who has reason to build community with everything and everyone—who sees herself as a part of the world, not just one community.

to the Editor

I consider myself a part of our community (the punk community), as well as other communities, and I think the most important thing we can do right now is to build those communities. But (and this is the big distinction between anarchist communities and other communities) I think a community is only a good thing if it is good for all the individuals involved in it and outside of it. Therefore, we individuals do have to know what is good for us, to be responsibly involved in community building. This isn't radical individualism—rather, it's (what I hope can work as) the most complimentary combination of individualist and community thinking. Each way is a valid way to view the world, but each one by itself is dangerous and narrow-minded.

Or maybe that's just my U.S. imperialist-individualist conditioning speaking. The fact is, it's hard for any of us to get real perspective, since we've spent our whole lives just being ourselves, conditioning and all. The real question is how each of us can find a way to make things work out, whether you describe that in terms of pursuing your private dreams or integrating yourself into the world as a whole. I'll go to my grave insisting that for most of us, they're fundamentally the same thing.

Yours, Brian

Dearest Inside Front comrades!

It's been a while since the last mail to you, my faraway friends. Forgive me if I've been lazy, but I have to wait a long time for your letters too. On the other hand I'm probably not the best person to entertain relationships divided by the greatest ocean of all. It seems like my brother evolved out of the same lazy genetic pool so he hasn't been able to write down the Intensity legacy of being banned in the USA so I'll give it a shot. I reserve myself for errors...

Intensity fought the law—and lost...

They arrived at the airport pretty tired and Rodrigo had even a veggie-burrito-induced food poisoning complimentary of the airline. Jonas, Rodrigo and Kristoffer just breezed through customs and passport controls despite their gear and the fact that they look like Latin American guerrilla warriors. Thomas, who looks the most clean cut, got asked what he was going to do there and he replied that he was going to make some music with some friends in the country. He got dragged away while the others waited on the other side. After a couple of hours somebody came looking for them and dragged them back in before they even managed to answer the question if they were affiliated with Thomas.

They did some brief hearings with all of them but concentrated their effort on my brother, Jonas, while he had all the information. They put him in small room and 4 officers started screaming at him and postulated all kinds of accusations. Thomas had been forced to reveal that they were going to tour which they picked up on convinced that they lied about them not going to make any money off it. They did the whole good cop bad cop thing, screamed and threatened with jail and horrendous fines. They also came up with stories that Thomas had "confessed" and that they knew everything. Thomas said this and that and that they were

going to get this much money at this show which my brother explained that even if it would be true Thomas wouldn't know anything about, because he was sitting on all information.

They found an old tour chart and he even tried to convince my brother that he knew the organizer of the Chicago festival and had talked to him. My brother kept his calm but says that he never been so scared in his whole life. They threatened him jail for a couple of years before storming out the room and leaving him there for half an hour. He had no idea of what his eventual rights were. He was also given a paper at one point where he "should write his confession". This went on for 4-5 hours and they also called Felix and probably some other of the numbers they found in his pockets. It was out of their mindset that Timmy would accompany them for free and that people would put them up along the way. For some reason they had something against Thomas. Felix called later and said he has a legal right to bring band over as long as they don't make more money than the cost of airline tickets. He have had bands getting caught before which he been able to solve over the phone. When he asked why they wouldn't be let in they answered "because of reasons they wouldn't reveal to him". It was especially the boss that was fucking around. When it dawned on them that they really wouldn't make any money some of they others were prepared to way them by but he persisted. On their way up through an elevator to the interrogation rooms he mumbled something about that "it is my job to protect the American taxpayers from people like you". He clearly had a grudge against them and especially Thomas who "lied on camera about the purpose" of the trip.

The other three were technically free to enter the country but they would notify the local police who would take them into custody while they investigated the economic aspects of the tour, something that could take days. They three of them weren't exactly thrilled about the concept of spending days in an American prison, and not being able to do the tour without the drummer Thomas anyway, so they decided to return. After stating their intent to leave for home again the wisecrack to boss replied sarcastically "ohh, how so??" with a smile on his face. Luckily they could change their tickets on the spot and hence only lost about 1000\$ each because they we going to fly out from different cities at different from the East Coast. If Thomas wouldn't have made it within 12 hours he would be prosecuted. He can't return now without a special visa. It was all fucked up and they lost a lot of money some of them didn't have as well as a lot of other shit that went down the drain. It all took a pretty heavy toll on at least my brother. He have always wanted to go over there and tour and meet people—his great adventure. On the paper the tour looked really good and they received e-mails from all over the place that volunteered to feed and put them up. He went silent for days after coming home again. I think the Catharsisans can relate to the feeling only that they, Intensity, didn't even get a couple of weeks and never have and never will...

OK, what are we going to do with a world order that denies us pleasure and our youth—BURN IT DOWN!! Inflamed rhetoric

aside I really miss you all a lot...

Love - Christian/Volvo/Stella Nera/Big Burger(a new one given to me by the Stockholm people)

Dearest Volvo—

That fucking sucks. I'm putting your letter in our new issue so people will see just how fucked up the authorities and the whole borders thing itself are. I wish better luck to other bands trying to cross national boundaries—be careful, no preparation and cover-up is too much. Stay out of reach, Brian

This appeared on the CrimethInc. Message board in the context of a larger discussion about facial tattoos, and we kidnapped it for reprinting here. Hope the author will be forgiving...

Dear CrimethInc.,

I've read a lot of bullshit about the subject and have found not a single solidly based reason for not getting your face tattooed. I'll try to address some of the common concerns:

Employment

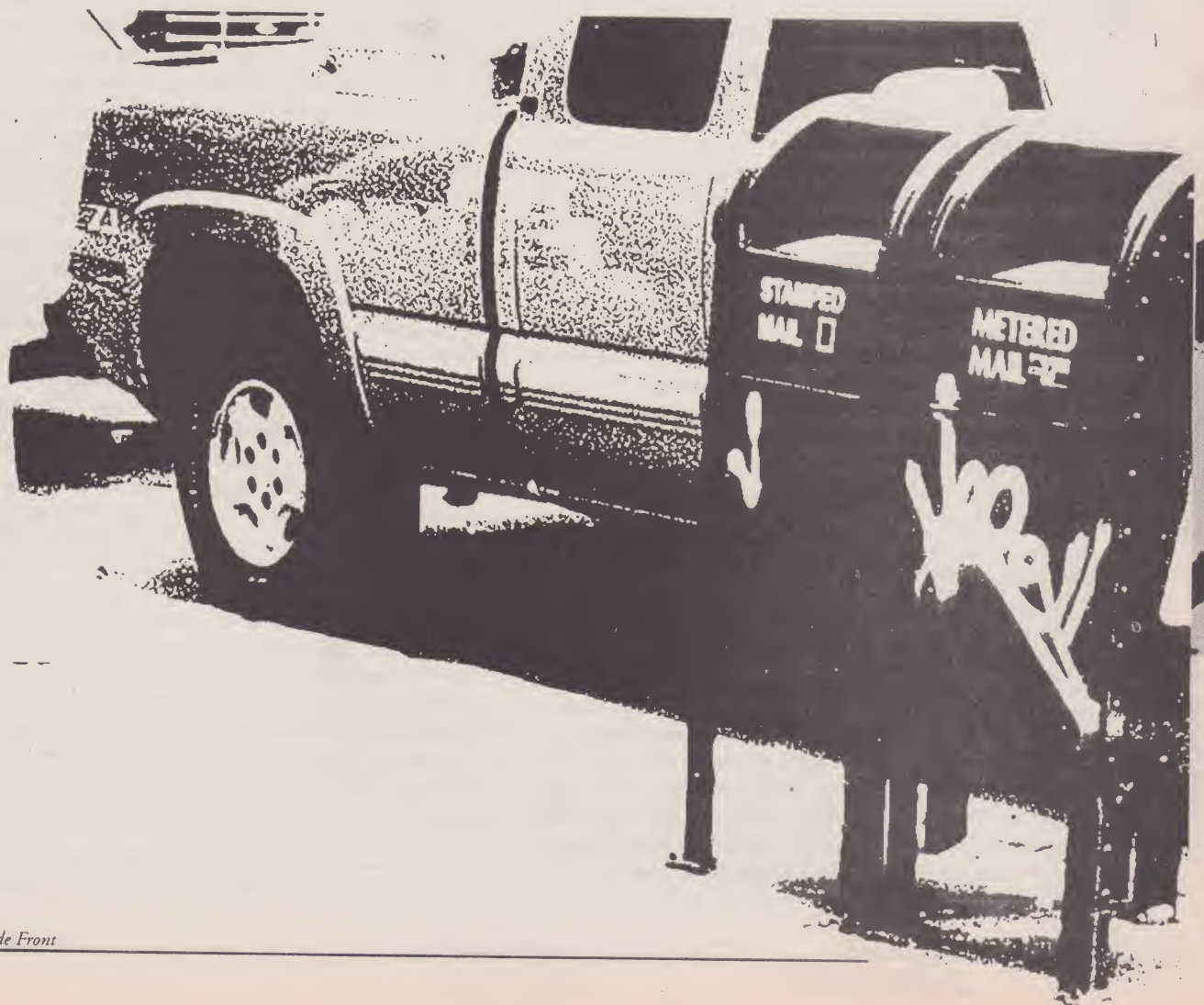
While it does limit who will hire you, it doesn't make you unemployable. My guess is that the people who wouldn't hire you are also the people you would never work for. Keep in mind, also, that because youth culture is one of the largest commodities on the market, that dermatographic [editor's note: pun?] is rapidly changing and what was once completely unacceptable is now the norm.

Social interaction

It is true that it will have a pretty profound effect on the way people see you. Those who are your friends will have to get used to it, but once they do everything will be as it always was. As far as those who don't know you... well, it's an individual thing. Many people will be frightened, and there will be many different reactions based in that fear, such as shock, disgust, incredulity, etc., etc.. There will also be many people (many more than you would ever believe) who will be utterly fascinated by it. Every time you go out in public someone will stop you to ask about it. The two most common questions are, "is that real?" and "did that hurt?", but you'd be amazed at the Betty Crocker, soccer mom types that actually engage in serious dialogue about it and consequently walk away feeling a little enlightened. People want to know why you did it and it's a perfect opportunity to share some of your ideas and beliefs with the "average" person.

Security Issues

Well, it's true, it will definitely make things different in your illegal endeavors. As far as plain old stealing goes it depends on where you live, where you plan to steal from, and most importantly how good a thief you are. It has a couple different effects on the store employees. One might be that they watch you like a hawk because judging from your appearance you are a fucking terrorist here to rob them blind, in which case you can take note of their behavior and point it out to them and liken it to any other form of discrimination. Or they might totally ignore you because they don't want to be seen as discriminatory. Of course I don't know what's actually going on in their heads, but that's my theory on the common reactions. Now, if you're planning on doing some ore serious things that involve possi-



ble police attention, prison time, cointelpro involvement, etc., then you should first do some studying of covert guerrilla tactics and I think you'll find that the common credo is DON'T GET CAUGHT. This usually involves, among other things, completely concealing your identity, and there are many ways to do this.

Aesthetics

Someone saying that facial tattoos look crappy is like someone saying that dreadlocks look crappy, or stretched earlobes look crappy, or whatever looks crappy. It's totally subjective and a matter of opinion, although it's true that there are many poorly done facial tattoos in the world right now. I think it's because most of them are not done professionally, or perhaps not enough thought is put into the design. You better be as sure as possible that the design you want to start with is the one you want (I say start with because after the first one you may want more). Also, you must be sure of the artist who is going to work on you. If you can, meet people the artist has worked on and see the work in person. Check it for scarring and linework and all the other little things that make a tattoo a good tattoo. To be sure of your design, draw it on your face and wear it around the house for awhile. Actually, have somebody else draw it for you, it never seems to work out when drawing on your own face. I find that designs that work with the natural shape of your face and bone structure work best. I have a thing for symmetry on the face, too.

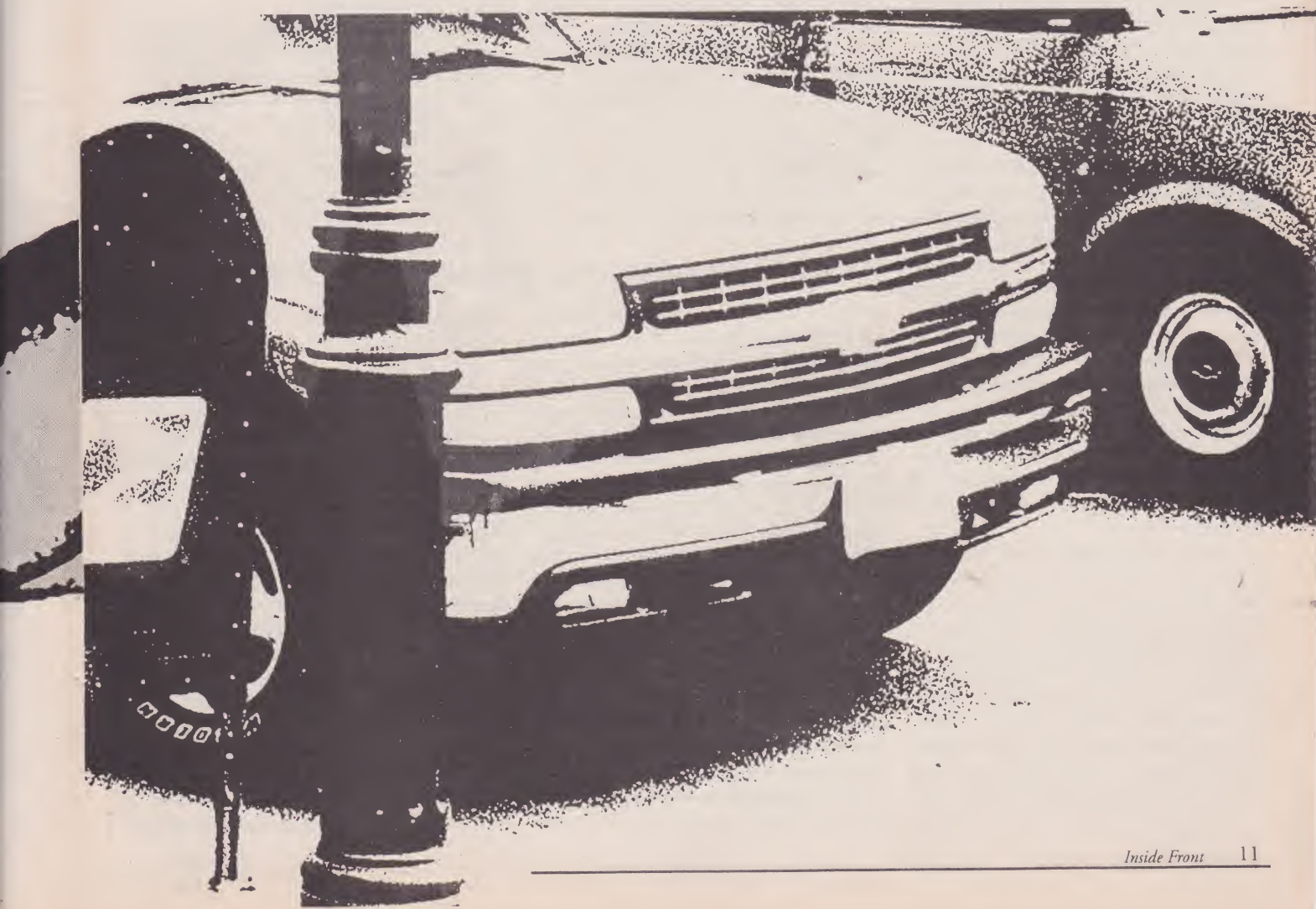
So I don't know if this going to help, but I tried. I'd also like to make it clear that I say these things from experience. I have tattoos on my face, and it changed my life. EVERY DAY I'm reminded of where

I stand. Whoever says everyone will treat you like shit, is full of shit, but it's true that some people will. They are most commonly white and male. This for the most part reaffirms my beliefs and strengthens my convictions. Every day I'm given a reason to want to change the world.

I live in Seattle and I still steal like a fucking bandit. I'm 28 years old and I know that you don't have to wait until you're 40 to be serious about what you do. I have a son who is the light of my life, his name is Justice and when he's old enough to start wondering why I look so different I'll tell him exactly why. I'll tell him about white skin privilege, capitalism, hierarchy, and all the other things that >shape our society and make it "weird" for a person to have something like this. I never regret getting my face tattooed, regardless of what people say about it, although sometimes, after about the 50th kid in a Korn t-shirt coming up and wanting to tell me how cool I am, I get a little annoyed.

As for those who say "don't make life harder than it has to be"!!!! Come on... millions of jews walked themselves into the ovens behind that same attitude. Billions of people live in fucking despair because of that attitude. The only reason life is harder than it has to be is because people allow it to be, because people don't stand up and say this is who I am, it's my right to be this person and I'll defend that right. I don't want to just exist in this world, I want every last drop of life I can get and I'll be damned if I'm gonna let any laws or rules or especially anyone else's morals or ideas that are based in fear and servitude dictate what I do or how I look. I think I'm done ranting for now.

XRichX



I want to FIGHT like a

If you tough boys want to talk about courage and strength... it takes one hundred times more courage for two girls to kiss in public than it takes for you to fight anybody. Fighting, in fact, is a gesture of weakness and cowardice on your part, since (with only a few exceptions) it shows that you are too scared to question the gender role that your society has pushed you into. You should be embarrassed to walk around flexing your muscles, looking violent—showing off to the world what a fool and coward you are. You would do better to find someone who is really tough—a single working mother, for example—and learn from them.

My heroes and heroines these days aren't dead white men from history books (whether the books be traditional or radical)—they are the living people I meet, the girls and boys whose actions and ways of acting contest and destroy traditions and make those history books obsolete. Most of all, I've been inspired by the individuals who are able to live and act with absolute confidence despite the forces of sexism, homophobia, racism, classism, etc. arrayed against them—that courage and resilience is beautiful, and a gift to all of us, so that the rest of us can see just how much is possible even in this fucked up world. Now, to get more specific:

I want to point out that it's not us conscientious boys who are "protecting" women from sexism, when we learn about it and talk about it; it's the feminist women who are protecting us, by making sure that we don't fail to benefit from what they have to offer our lives, by putting their lives on the line to break down the gender hierarchy that fucks up our lives too. It's not us politically correct activists "protecting" gay and lesbian and bi men and women when we speak against homophobia; it's those men and women who are acting on

behalf of all of us, to liberate us all from the cages our culture has built for us. When two men dare to walk down the streets holding hands, they are striking a blow on behalf of every human being who needs to be free to explore life for herself without fear of judgment or ostracism. Women, non-heterosexual men and women, etc. are not "special interest groups" whose rights have to be "protected" by us normal, sexual-law-abiding citizens. They are the courageous front line in the assault against the conditioning and constraining norms which have been unnaturally imposed on us by a hierarchical civilization that has confused sex with violence, power, and role-playing; their daring attempts to free themselves will free all of us, if we realize that they are leaders and warriors, not victims.

As usual, *freedom*, not equality, is the real issue.

What we need is *not* equality between "separate but equal" genders, sexual preference roles, sexual identity ghettos, etc., but the freedom for each of us to find her own way of acting and desiring and relating. There should be as many "genders" as there are people—or more, since people change over the course of their lives, too. The belief that there are two genders, boys and girls, and that they are somehow fundamentally different, is as superstitious as the belief in god, or any other myth that can be disproved just by taking a look at the real world: every person is different, and when we try to fit ourselves into generic groups (by all wearing pantyhose, or all claiming to be attracted to blonde anorexics, or etc.), it's never healthy for any of us. Don't tell me I have something fundamentally in common sexually with every other human being who has the same sexual organs—there may be some coincidental similarities, but if you look at the vastly diverse history of human

sexuality, you'll see that those coincidences are the result of cultural pressure and standardization, not biology. Fuck you and your generalizations, it's the unique specifics of individuals that matter to me, not the abstractions by which you hope to divide them up into categories, the easier to control. We won't fit in any category you give us, we're bigger than any cage you could offer.

So the same goes for giving us more than two gender role options (lipstick lesbian, diesel dyke, S+M dominant, leatherboy, etc.)—it's just like the choice between pop and grunge, between major label identities and "alternative" identities, all bullshit. My self cannot be classified, I will NOT be commodified, and I hope that one day everyone will be able to construct and reconstruct their

sexuality without reference to these strangulating labels.

You can see how gender roles constrict each of us, just by standing on the street and watching people. Watch the way men move their bodies—there is an invisible cage they've been taught not to leave: *Must not let wrist bend more than 45 degrees. Must keep shoulders back, chest puffed out, like authoritative frog, so others will know I'm not to be fucked with.* Listen to gangsta rap—most of the men are so brainwashed by the values of male competition and domination that they are literally unable to do anything with the chance to express themselves except repeat the same stupid mantra about how powerful they are. Pathetic. You can imagine how these same clichés and restrictions express themselves in our relationships, too: despite our best attempts, the girls still end up with their lives revolving around the boys' projects, the boys

girl!!!

still end up not listening or opening themselves up, and both genders find themselves acting out the same unfulfilling farce their parents did, that they swore never to participate in; this pattern is fucked, and we need to find ways to subvert it.

The more radical elements of the feminist movement have done quite a bit towards the liberation of women from their gender programming; as such, they strike me as some of the most successful anarchist efforts of the past half century, whether they used the "A" word or not. What we need now is a movement that can do the same thing to help men liberate themselves from their roles.

Both groups are held in their gender cages by intimidation: women are threatened with worthlessness and expulsion from society should they fail to make themselves docile and agreeable to male domination, and men are led to believe that being less tough than the next guy means certain death. My own personal experience as a boy, incidentally, has been the opposite: when I was younger, and felt the socialized need to lift weights and act aggressive all the time, that got me into trouble constantly with other men who were going through the same thing. Tell a bunch of people that they need to be scared of each other, to make themselves into weapons against each other, and you can't expect that they'll be able to get along and act civil together. On the other hand, once I stopped lifting weights and managed to adopt a less threatening attitude, people stopped fucking with me. Other men can tell I'm not playing their dumb game, and they leave me alone. If you are a young man who tends to get into fights, I would encourage you to try this tactic as well; the more of us learn to make others comfortable in our presence, the less we're going to have to deal with the mindless tragedy of violence. This is especially an issue at our hardcore shows, at

which people need to get along for our community to have anything of value to offer at all. When I go to a straight edge show and everyone is acting all tough, wearing their big bodies and swaggering walks as symbols of their each-against-all masculine role-playing, it doesn't surprise me nearly as much as it does everyone else when a fight breaks out. Don't waste your energy preparing yourself to be tougher than the next guy so as to take care of the next violent situation—try instead to create environments in which everyone can feel safe, in which people can learn how to let their guard down, so they can take that knowledge with them into the rest of the world and make it a habitable place, too.

To clarify—I'm not saying that every kind of behavior and attitude presently associated with "manliness" is a bad thing in all situations. We should all be able to express ourselves in every possible way, to have every human quality at our disposal for every situation we find ourselves in. But since being "manly" is the default setting for all us boys, let's be very, very distrustful of it. The desired end is that we will be free to move freely between all the possibilities that are divided between different roles and personas today, but to get there the first thing we need is experience outside our own sexual/gender ghettos.

I want to conclude this with a reiteration of what the basic problem with the word "fag" is. I know I'm pretty much preaching to the converted, writing about this here, but hopefully some of you will get the chance to put forth some of these ideas in a more challenging environment, and maybe this text can be useful then. A "faggot" was originally a block of wood for burning, so the word refers specifically to the days when women and men who would not toe the party line on sexual behavior and gender role submission were burned alive as witches. No matter how you mean the

word, the fact is that whenever anyone hears it, they instinctively remember that we live in a society in which deviation from the norm is attacked and punished viciously. Those of us who are real warriors in the anti-gender struggle, who are totally out of the closet and exploring publicly without shame, don't need any further reminders of how much risk we run, and neither do the rest of us need to be reminded that we should be scared to join in. The real fucking "faggots," the ones who should be burned at the stake, are the homophobes and thugs who would keep everyone in chains rather than risk a moment of tolerance, let alone questioning. They should be scared as fuck if anyone has to be; they should hide in the closet, if anyone has to hide. I recommend using the word "homophobe" as a slur, where people once used "fag" or "bitch" as all-purpose insults.

Homophobia and sexism have the same root, which is the idea that sex is a kind of violence. "Fucking," in that language of slavery and abuse, is something one person does to another to assert his position of dominance, not a way for equals to express affection or share passion. Women let themselves get "fucked" because they are weaker, according to this bullshit; thus, in homophobic mainstream society, every sex act between men and women has the implications of rape. Homophobes hate gay men because those men show that sometimes men like to be "fucked," too, which suggests that the stranglehold on superiority that men supposedly hold over women is not actually so invulnerable. Part of forging the path to a supportive, free, egalitarian society is inventing a new kind of sex outside the terrain of such power exchanges. That strikes me as exactly the kind of task that the young, adventurous, lascivious kids who read *Inside Front* are cut out for. Get busy!

Infinite Re

Relationships without bounds or boundaries,

This is about so-called "non-monogamous relationships," about some of the benefits of trying out one of the alternatives to the formulaic dating/marriage/divorce model for love. Your response to this article will probably be similar to the one I had a few years ago when I read a discussion of the same subject by David Sandstrom in the Swedish 'zine Handbook for Revolutionaries: "good idea, but, uh, not relevant to me, of course..." It turned out I was wrong. Had I remembered a lesson I've learned over and over, I would have realized that often the ideas that make me the most defensive and uncomfortable at first turn out to be the most important for me in the long run. Not to say that I'm offering a program that you must all immediately adjust yourselves to... but we can't remind each other enough to be open to new ideas, in case they do prove to be helpful in our lives.

A couple years ago I had a wonderful experience on tour, in which I finally experienced what it felt like for men's gender roles to be dissolved: over the course of the tour everyone in the band and the people touring with us were all able to open up and become emotionally supportive and loving, and suddenly the experience of being with a lot of other boys was totally fucking different from anything I'd encountered before. In this safe, encouraging environment, all of us really felt fearless, free, ready to try anything, with no more doubt or need for walls to protect us. On the surface, it was just that we weren't afraid to touch and hold each other, and that we stopped complaining and being selfish; but the implications beneath this were immense: I realized that there was no need for intimacy and emotional support to be confined to my romantic relationships—I could create and benefit from these things in every relationship.

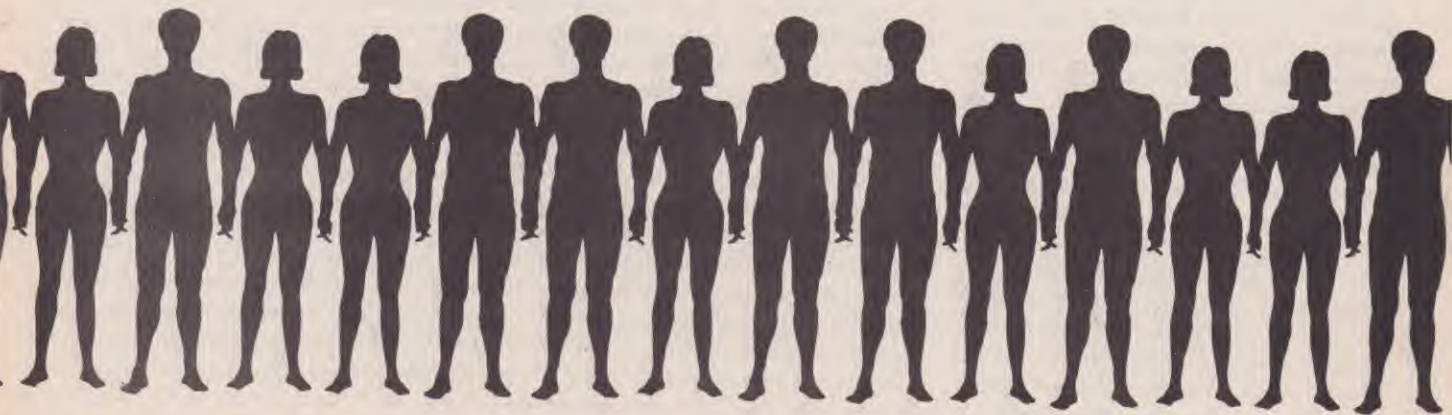
This got me thinking about my romantic relationships... if there was no reason my friendships couldn't be more like my love affairs, why couldn't my love affairs be more like my friendships? When I thought about it, my friendships had a lot going for them that my love affairs never did: my friends were never jealous or possessive, my friendships didn't tend to adhere to some strict socialized image of what they "should" be, and while my friendships generally continued on in one form or another through my life, once it

turned out that a romantic relationship wasn't storybook-perfect it would end and I wouldn't see the lover any more.

All my love relationships had proceeded something like this: In the beginning I would meet a beautiful new person, we would broaden each others' horizons and have wonderful experiences together, and thus fall in love. At first we would feel more free together than either of us ever had, and the world would seem full to overflowing with possibility and wild joy. But slowly, not trusting the rest of the world, or the future in which we might not feel such wonderful things, we would build our relationship into a castle, to keep out the cold and dangerous outside world, and protect our passion by turning it into an institution. Sex, which at the beginning had been something that came more naturally and freely than anything else, became jealously guarded as the seal sanctifying our love relationship, as proof that it was different than all our other relationships. [This seems, in retrospect, like a really strange role for sex to play.] Inevitably, I would wake up one day and realize that the free, feral passion that we'd been united by was gone, replaced by habit, routine, fear of change; the castle we'd built had become a tomb, sealing us inside and away from the outside world, which we'd actually needed all along to bring us each new things to offer the other and sustain ourselves. Inside the coffin, we fought more and more, each demanding that the other prove her love by

sacrificing more and more—when love is supposed to *enable you to live more*, not disable you in return for an assurance of basic companionship, a companionship that often replaces your participation in larger communities anyway. Falling in love had been like finding a secret entrance to the garden of Eden, a gift economy in which we shared everything without keeping score or worrying about "fair trade"; but now we were back in the exchange economy, competing to see who could need more, who could control more. After all my attempts to transcend the stereotyped roles of people in romantic relationships, I suddenly found that I was a "boyfriend" again, with a "girlfriend" (which is not a healthy role for anyone to have to play in this sexist society!), with no idea how it had all happened.

I started thinking about how it is that we all keep falling into these patterns, and how we could avoid them. The issue of limitation kept coming up: the idea that some things had to be off limits for the relationship to work. With my friends, nothing is off limits, and nothing is demanded either: we offer each other whatever we can, whenever we have it to give, and we don't demand anything that doesn't come naturally for the other (that's how my friendships go when they're healthy, at least, and most of them are at this point). I decided to look into what other models for love relationships there were, and discovered that there is a long tradition of relationships



Relationships

love without limits, without ends.

without these limits and expectations: non-monogamous, or "open," relationships.

I'm not trying to say that monogamous relationships are bad, exactly, but there are a thousand kinds of relationships, and we generally only permit ourselves to try one format, which seems ridiculous. Let's explore a bit. Every time I hear about another wife/husband/boyfriend/girlfriend cheating and sneaking around, every time I hear someone speaking proudly about how (in the name of monogamy) he has managed to resist doing something he really wants to, every time I must listen to someone pathetically lamenting the feeling of being "trapped" in a relationship or unable to pursue her desires out of some kind of fear, every fucking time I have to witness someone leering voyeuristically ("it's ok to look if you don't touch"), it makes me so furious about how we've trapped ourselves in this one-option relationship system, accepting these symptoms of suffocation as inevitable instead of experimenting with the other possibilities. More than anything else, our commitment to supporting monogamy as the only option (other than "casual sex," I guess, which is boring as fuck and bad in other ways too) keeps us from being honest with each other. We've got to dare to address all these complexities of life and desire openly, even if it is painful.

We punk rockers always act like we're such radical people, but when it comes down to acting, in practice, to try out radically different ways of living that might be more in line with our ideas (or just plain *challenging*, for once, not safe—nothing is more dangerous than playing it safe!), it doesn't occur to us to question our programmed habits. All too often our revolutionary ideas are just badges, a different ideology for us to vote for, not cata-

lysts for transforming life. This is an issue that affects everyone, where anarchist values can be tried out in the real world, but thus far I've seen very little discussion of this subject in our community; if we're going to question the way the world works, we should take that home to our own personal relationships, and perhaps try out alternatives there first before proposing solutions to the ills of the world. That is—if we really have solutions to the ills of our society, let's put those into practice to solve the ills of our own relations. Healer, heal thyself.

What an open relationship is

The most important thing here is to get over the idea that a person's value is measured by whether *she alone* can be "enough" for another person. The world is infinite, and so are we—no amount of living, no number or depth of interactions with others should be "enough" for any of us, just as no amount of interactions with a person you love will ever be "enough." To set borders on what another person can do or feel, as a condition for them to be able to receive my love and affection, goes against everything I believe as an anarchist and a human being; I want to trust others to know what they need, and never limit them—and I certainly don't think *my* life will be any richer from the limitations I place on others. We have to free each other to be and become ourselves. This isn't just about other lovers or sex partners or friends, it's also about other undertakings, needs, even the desire for space and solitude—it's heartbreaking how much of our selves our lovers often ask us to sacrifice to be with them.

I want to be valued for what I am, for what I do naturally, not how well I conform to some pre-set list of needs that someone has. If someone else can fill some of those needs, I

wouldn't deny that to anyone, and I don't want to be jealous when others have something different to offer; I just want the chance to offer what I have to give to those I love, and to remember that those things are priceless and not comparable to whatever unique gifts others may have. None of us should ever be saddled with the role of sole provider for someone's needs (romantic or otherwise), anyway; our purpose on this earth is not to serve others, but to find ways to be ourselves in ways that also benefit others. By saying the rest of the world isn't off limits to your partner, you free yourself of the *job* of being the whole world to your partner.

The monogamy system means that people hesitate to share themselves with others in certain ways, lest they become romantically involved—for since you can only have one romantic partner at a time, you have to make sure that your one partner is a *good investment* (and here we are back in the capitalist market even in our love relationships). Women check men out for financial means, men ponder whether a woman's beauty is socially recognized enough to offer the prestige he hopes to get by having her at his side, and no one is able to experiment with partners who don't meet enough of these criteria to be potential spouses. For that matter—just as in your friendships, there may be people in the world with whom you can spend some wonderfully romantic time once or twice a month, but with whom you don't have enough in common to date steadily and then marry, etc. (although you often see such mismatched couples, who would have been happy as more sporadic partners, making each other miserable in fifty-year marriages). Non-monogamous relationships make such things possible without paying any price of mutual unhappiness.



I've decided that I no longer want to have a hierarchy of value between my friendships and my love relationships: they're both crucial, irreplaceable in my life, and fuck anyone who wants me to choose between any of them. Not only that, but I've stopped classifying things as "love" or "friendship" according to arbitrary superficial details—the feelings I share with certain friends are so intimate, so beautiful, that it's ridiculous that I don't call them lovers just because we don't sleep together. It's fucking absurd that sex should be the dividing line between our relationships, between which ones take precedence, between who we play with, live with, sleep with, who we take care of first, who we die with at last.

By the same token, in open relationships, sex isn't weighed down with so many implications and restrictions. Love and desire outside the lines of the monogamy model are demonized and attacked on every front in this society—in the lives of women, at least, and those men who don't want to be monogamous but also despise the superficiality and sexist bullshit of the "player" scene are unlikely to find support in feminist circles, either. Sex should not be contained, and it should not be made symbolic of anything—it should simply be another way for people to be physically affectionate with each other, to give each other pleasure, to be intimate and emotionally expressive, taking equal responsibility for their involvement but without having to answer to some hypercritical mass, social expectation, or moral taboo.

An open relationship is just that: it is a relationship in which people can be open with each other, and with themselves—in which nothing need be hidden or suppressed or off limits, in which the whole world can be ours to explore without fear of transgressing imaginary boundaries. When we demand total openness and honesty from each other in relationships that include limits and taboos, we're setting ourselves up for betrayals and dishonesty: to say "be open!" without being receptive to all of the possible truths is fascist and preposterous. We have to be supportive of each other, in every aspect of our individual characters, if we want real honesty to be possible.

Otherwise, we're like Christians at confession with each other, demanding that we reveal all out of some moral imperative, with the whip of shame ready for any straying impulse. We have to learn to embrace and celebrate anything that feels good for each other. If it's good for our lovers, it's good for us—are we really so selfish that we can't see this?

For one example of how this could work, let's go back to the story of our tour. On the tour, different individuals formed close bonds, and shared private worlds together like lovers do; but they also remembered that for the community to function, they couldn't withdraw from their relationships with everyone else. And whenever two people needed a break from each other or wanted to expand their horizons a bit, they would spend more time with others, because there were always others around them who also had things to offer. Everyone was safe and cared for, and no one was left out, because we weren't paired off in exclusive twos.

Conversely, the scarcity economy of lovers which we have right now makes each person hurry to pick another and chain her to him, before he is left alone forever. The alternative, which this fear of solitude prevents us from seeing, seems more preferable: a world without borders, in which each of us would be part of a broader family of lovers and friends, with no distinction made between the two—and no set format for any relationship, so experimentation would be a constant feature of every one, and no relationship could ever get dull or overwhelming. To get to such a world, we just have to get used to not limiting each other, to not thinking of love as a limited commodity.

Jealousy, and what I've learned from it

Yes, I still feel jealous sometimes. I've had experiences before of being insanely jealous—not just of another man, but of other things my partners loved or experienced or were excited about. Being able to come to terms with these things has been very important in the development of my confidence and sense of self. It took me years to feel (not just understand) that if my lover loves other things or

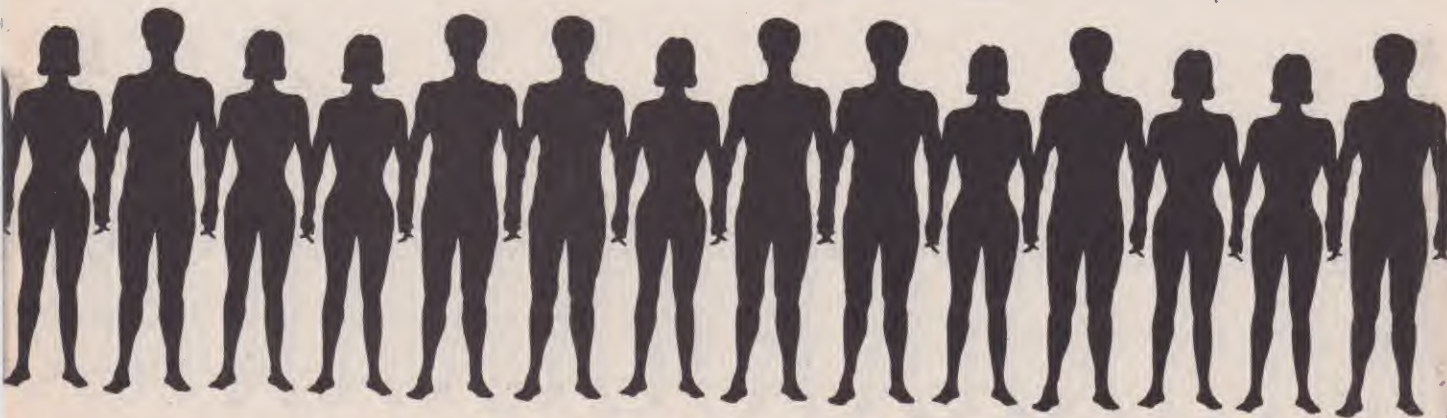
other people as well, it doesn't mean I am less valuable. Besides, if (he or) she *truly* loves me, it's not because I match up to some list of desired qualities that someone else can outmatch me at—she loves me for reasons that are unique to me, that no one else can compete with, so I have nothing to fear. Love isn't a scarcity commodity—it increases, just like joy, the more it is permitted and shared and given away. I don't feel like I have to hoard anyone all to myself now. I know that doesn't work, or help to protect love (or me, for that matter).

I consider my jealousy a worthy adversary, one that can teach me a lot about myself if I confront it rather than trying to protect myself from it by controlling others. I've had experiences in relationships before where lovers of mine have limited themselves in order to protect me from my jealousy, and it has been catastrophic for both of us, you can imagine. It's just as important to me now that I help others to not be "afraid for me" as it is that I learn not to be afraid for myself.

One of the things jealousy has taught me about is my attitude toward other men. It's interesting for me to note that I've never felt threatened by women whom my partners were attracted to or involved with, but other men have always made me see red. In our society, men are conditioned not to trust each other, to hate each other, to try to "protect" women from other men (which often looks more like hoarding and protecting personal "property"), and this inclination makes sense when you look at how fucked up many men are when it comes to interacting with women. But for me to not trust *any* men to be something good for my partners (past the point of limited friendship) is outright paranoia and territorial bullshit. If I trust the judgment of my partner, I should trust her to know what and who is good for her, and to not let my each-against-all male conditioning interfere.

Some objections I've heard raised to open relationships:

"It sounds good in theory, but the way people feel is more important than these abstractions..."



Some people think that we come up with ideas and theories not as solutions to the real problems of our lives, but to show off what good ideas we can come up with. If it's not clear by now that I've been thinking about this as an attempt to solve rather than exacerbate the problems in my love relationships, then I apologize for doing such a poor job writing this article. And hey—if you think open relationships can be tough on your emotions, just try long-term monogamy. They're both hard sometimes.

"But human nature—"

Fuck you. Enough said. Human nature is what we make it, and you know that too, whether or not you want to own up to it—you cowardly excuse-mongering bastards.

"I guess that's fine if it's what you want to try, but luckily I only want monogamy for myself! I'm all set!"

That's great for you, if it really is true—for the time being, at least. We're always so thrilled when our desires happen to coincide with social rules: then it's easy for us to feel proud of our desires, to think they're beautiful, since they are universally accepted (indeed, *everything* around you is reinforcing the idea that what you are *lucky* enough to feel for the moment is perfection itself)... but you might not always be that "lucky," you know. Should you (or someone else) ever feel a need that isn't satisfied by the monogamy system, if you haven't already made the effort to get others to understand and accept the idea that there are many different acceptable kinds of relationships and desire, you'll be back at ground zero, finding yourself misunderstood, hated, called slut and whore. Nobody should have to go through that, ever, so whatever you personally need, you have a stake in promoting non-monogamy as a viable option too. Otherwise, we'll all live in fear of waking up one day feeling a desire that is unacceptable—and that fascist power of moralism over our lives is exactly what I thought we were trying to fight in punk rock.

That's why I consider myself non-monogamous right now, even though I've

only had sexual relations with one person over the past five months: I do what I do not out of a commitment to monogamy, but rather a commitment to meeting my own needs and those of others, with no fucking regard for social norms—and to supporting others who do the same thing, whether or not they do it in the same way. Non-monogamy isn't about sex, anyway—it's a general approach to relationships with people, as I discussed above.

"Open relationships are bad for women—it's just another way for men to be selfish, and absent when women need them..."

This is the kind of sexist remark I'd rather not have to deal with, but I've heard it before. It reminds me of the old myth that all ["good"] women want "responsible" monogamous relationships, and the ones who don't must be confused [so it's OK for us to doubt them or look down on them, just as misogynist pigs call them sluts]. First of all, women have been the ones who introduced me to most of these ideas. Besides the women I know personally, the very best book I've been able to find on this subject (The Ethical Slut, by Dossie Easton and Catherine A. Liszt, on Greenery Press), which I would strongly recommend to anyone interested in this issue, is written by women [if you can't find it, write me and I'll lend you my copy]. Second of all, a lot of the men and women involved in pioneering different models for relationships over the past few decades have not been involved in heterosexual relationships, so in those cases this is a totally unfounded criticism. Third—people who say this make it sound like they think men are only emotionally nurturing to women who are paying them off for it with sex... and denying them access to any other sex as a way to be sure the payoff will always work. God, I hope that's not the best we can hope for in heterosexual relationships...

Finally—yes, it's true that men have been conditioned to be selfish and somewhat less than nurturing in their relationships, and just shifting relationship models is not going to cure that. But that's going to be a problem in whatever kinds of relationships they have, not just open ones, and has been dealt with as a sep-

arate issue. A loving, caring boy is not going to go running off for sex with some stranger when his lover (or one of his lovers) really needs him. There are so many landmines hidden in our sexuality, since so much of it has been programmed by our enemies; we men need to unlearn the pressures that make us seek out superficial sex as a way to avoid real intimacy and support. That brings me to the third objection:

"So does this mean you're giving up on your romantic dreams, your hopes for living happily ever after, just trading them for a series of sexual episodes with acquaintances?"

No, not at all. I'm not interested in evading personal commitments and long term relationships—rather, I want to *protect* them from being unnecessarily at risk. I want to *secure* my romantic relationships, so they won't be at risk from trivial things like temporary boredom or attraction to others, by creating relationships that are sustainable *through* changes in my life and needs. That way I can hope to have my lovers as long as I have my friends, 'til death do us part for real, and no old taboos (or jealousy, insecurity, etc.) will interfere. Sure, this will be hard sometimes, just like everything is hard sometimes—but the rewards of making this work will be greater in every way, I think.

What I'm hoping to do here is free us from the unnecessary tragedies of our love affairs, the insecurities and possessiveness that deny us the commitment and pleasure we could have together. In order to be ready to remove those obstacles, we have to be ready to face the real tragedies head on, with great courage: we can't demand that others protect us from our insecurities by limiting themselves, and we have to face the fact that there will be moments when we are alone. The price of not doing this is absurd—today, we suffer both the necessary and unnecessary tragedies in our relationships, because of the courage we lack. Is it too much to ask that we try something new?



WHAT SHALL WE

Granted, as I talked about in the introduction, lots of kids take the spectator role in punk rock and end up feeling as alienated here as they do in mainstream society. But for the rest of us (and hopefully for them too, soon), punk is a revelation—it is a place where we get to decide what happens, where we find out for ourselves just how much we are capable of, where we can make a world of our own. Playing music yourself, or watching your comrades play it, is nothing like listening to the radio or going to a stadium concert; it makes it clear just how mighty and beautiful we all are, it shows the rewards of freedom and participation in the flesh. So now, the big question is: if we want this feeling more than once every week or two, what do we do?

Obviously we need to build up a larger, more deeply-rooted community, that can provide the support system for us to take our entire lives into our hands—including the practical matters of survival, the aspects of our creativity and thirst for adventure that music does not provide for, and our interactions with the rest of society. This article is intended as a possible blueprint of where to start... but for heaven's sake, don't think we know everything about this—we barely know anything at all. Surprise us by showing what we left out, if you can!

POOLING OUR RESOURCES

There are two ways we can meet our needs as individuals: in ways that help others to meet their needs, or in ways that (directly or indirectly) deny others their needs. This is a basic principle of anarchist organizing in a capitalist world. For example: when you buy your food at a grocery store, you have to work to earn the money to pay for it, and since not everyone can afford to buy food there (or have the chance to get a decent job, in the first place), you're using your wealth and labor to support a system that doesn't provide for everyone—and for that matter, in the process of earning the money to pay for the food, you'll probably become selfish ("I had to work hard for this! I earned it! it's mine! None for you! Your problems are not my problems!"). On the other hand, when you organize a communal garden, or a Food Not Bombs group for that matter, the same process that feeds others feeds you, and food no longer need be seen as a scarce commodity. The more people volunteer at the garden or for the gathering and cooking, the more food there is. You can apply this principle to every aspect of life.

Today we only have a little "free" time to invest in the punk community and the other positive things in our lives, because the rest of our time and energy and resources go into maintaining the system that keeps us

separated and thus weak. Do you pay rent on your own apartment, or share communal space that can be used for more than sleeping, eating, and watching television? Do you work for a corporation to pay for your own health insurance, or do you volunteer at a community health clinic? Do you pay for car insurance, gas, and repairs, or participate in a bike co-op and share a community van for longer drives? Do you put your money into entertainment for yourself, or into obtaining resources for your community to build more entertaining lives for all?

There's a lot of talk in anarchist/activist circles about how to "get the message out." I'm not against demonstrations, but I think it's ridiculous to think that demonstrations should be our main outreach to other segments of this society. To show what is worthwhile about sharing, caring, anarchist values, etc., we simply have to demonstrate them. If we can create alternate ways for people to meet their needs together, through which they can take care of the details of survival without remaining divided into atomized units that must sustain themselves or perish, then it will be clear how much better our ways of doing things are. When people see that anarchism (or whatever you like to call it) is about helping people to find food and shelter and environmentally safe transportation and ways to afford the lives they want, they will be a lot more sympathetic than they are when they only see us breaking windows and writing graffiti. If you want to build a community so you'll have a structure to support your own efforts to live free, just find what you have to offer and offer it.

CREATING COMMUNITY SPACES

Here in the U.S.A., all I ever hear about is people complaining about how "this town sucks" (whether it's Louisburg, N.C., or N.Y.C.) and insisting "I'm about to leave, I'm moving to..." The town has refused to offer them the life they want on a platter, and so rather than see what they can do with the resources it does provide they just want to move on to some other place which will presumably take care of everything for them. Usually they don't. Sometimes they do, and they find that the new place also sucks, because they're still waiting for it to take care of everything for them. And since they're always about to leave, they never take responsibility for actually putting effort into making things happen where they are. Every city "sucks" in this country because we're paralyzed running in place from one place to another (in our heads if not in fact) that no one takes the time to build really strong communities, to make real things happen.

This happens a lot in the case of housing in particular. We need to establish communal spaces in which we can live cheaply and do creative things, but everyone is always too convinced of their own transience to take the trouble to make it happen. Were we all to put the necessary work into setting these places up, we could then move all around the country, and every place we went would be awesome—we would travel through established community centers, stopping and participating for a few months everywhere we went, just as blood moves through the internal organs of a healthy body. I'm exaggerating how bad things are a bit, since this is already the way the punk scene works in a lot of places in the U.S. But as far as community spaces go, I've seen much better things in Europe with the squat scene, and I feel like we could

TAKE BACK NEXT?

really benefit from doing something similar, even if squatting itself is a bit more difficult in this country. Rather than always being about to move away, in quixotic search for the perfect cool place to live, we should concentrate our energies on transforming the places we do live—we know better how to do that than anyone else does, and if we don't, we'll just take our inertia and disappointment with us to the next stop in our tour of the alieNation.

Without affordable living spaces, everything else is pretty much impossible—when you have to pay hundreds of dollars in rent every month, that money has to come from somewhere, and living on the street is not practical or sustainable in the long term. In the absence of alternative housing, most people inevitably give up on their dreams of leaving the wage-slave grind, or allow despair and inertia to consume them. As it is, the only bands that can tour as much as they want are the ones demanding ridiculous sums to pay for their leases and the ones who don't care about being homeless in between tours. This is absurd, since it's not too hard to organize cheap communal housing, and we already have a few good examples to work from.

When you rent an apartment, you are paying quite a bit for a space that can't be used for much besides recovering from work or studying for school, the two activities that are generally necessary for paying for the apartment in the first place—and you're stuck in that vicious circle. Rent (or buy!) a cheap warehouse, on the other hand, and you have a space that can be used for a lot of things: shows (which can help pay the rent), art exhibitions, big parties, housing for visitors or travelers or others in need, a communal library or darkroom or internet connection or anything, anything at all. Best of all, in the process of fixing it up and organizing all these things in it, you'll learn all about how to do things with space besides just using the microwave and calling the landlord when the plumbing's fucked. When we blur the line between living space and *acting space*, new things become possible that were unimaginable before.

Every town should have at least one community center/living space, where people come together to interact in person, where resources are pooled to complement each other. In the absence of a squatted building or warehouse space, houses can suffice, but the best thing is to have enough space that there can be a differentiation between the space that really is open to the community and the space that people dwell in, so privacy is still possible for those who need it. To begin this project, all you need is enough people to round up the starting capital and the labor to make it work. After that, if you can be careful not to separate yourself from everyone else as the elite that controls the space, others will join in.

MEETING OTHER NEEDS

Once you have a space in which meetings and work can take place, the question is what further resources to make and share. If enough food can be dumpstered, collected for Food Not Bombs, or stolen, you could have a free cafe, providing basic meals so no one in your community will ever have to fear starvation (I mention this especially, since in past years I spent so many hungry days and nights—others who have been in similar situations would probably be happy to contribute their labor to such a project)... that would also double as

a place to gather daily, to discuss new ideas and plan further activities. You could combine everyone's private supplies of books and 'zines (and even records, if you want to get radical) to make a library, so that your group will only need one copy of a given product, not one for each of you. You can get an old VCR and television and have movie showings, or set up a workshop with shared tools for auto repair or sculpture. You could take up a collection and set up a communal screenprinting center; the sky's the limit, as long as people are committed to learning how to share things rather than being selfish. You only learn how not to be selfish in the process of sharing, anyway.

In addition to the questions of space and sharing resources, there are other needs that can be met better communally: food and clothing (which I'm sure you know all about already, from Food Not Bombs and similar projects), health care, transportation. There are free clinics set up here and there in this nation already, mostly left over from the 1960's. If you can find one of them, they deserve all the support you can offer them, because they're trying to free us from the blackmail the corporate health "care" system is able to use against us: *your money or your life*, quite literally.

As for transportation... bands are already used to the idea of sharing vans, and that's a good starting place. Sometimes larger vehicles are useful, and if a group of people can get together and share one, it saves each of them a lot of money. Bicycles are best, of course, and a bike cooperative can help provide and repair them. Bicycles can be collected from college campuses where they have been abandoned after school is over, from the basements of lazy rich people who no longer use them, even from the police (who routinely confiscate them) if you can persuade them that you represent a "legitimate charity organization." I've been to places with bicycle libraries, where you can borrow one for your day's travels, and other places where if you put in volunteer hours, you can trade them for a fixed-up bicycle of your own; various groups throughout the last few decades have even set up stands across their cities, with bicycles at each one (painted bright yellow, to be identified as free bikes) that one can take and ride to the next post, to be left there for the next rider.

Sharing knowledge about trainhopping and hitchhiking is also important—and supporting others who are passing through is not only good manners, but helps you to keep abreast of new scams and information as well. It's crucial that each little community be linked with other ones, for mutual aid and education. This applies outside the lines of the punk community, of course—the most stable community projects I've seen have always been the ones that bring together groups from very different circles of society, to cooperate towards goals that benefit each.

A community of people committed to enabling and protecting each other can provide the support and safety net for each of its members to do incredible things. Such groups can start with a small handful who are pledged to give all, who are ready to recognize what disparate qualities and resources each has to offer and share them fairly, and expand to forces of awe-inspiring power. Let's stop treading water and start putting our energy into building these structures.

OTHER PROJECTS AND ADVENTURES

Solving practical problems is only half the program. The other half is to keep life interesting for everybody, and that means continuing to create challenging situations both inside and outside the punk community. The article about Reclaim the Streets in the last issue of *Inside Front* told of one project undertaken towards this end, and the introduction to this issue tells of another. Rather than go on and on in abstractions like I usually do, I think the best way I can address this is to collect some writing from earlier pamphlets here, with a couple accounts of other projects we've done.

Summer of 1999 Catharsis and Zegota came back from our U.S. tour together hell-bent on making life in North Carolina as exciting as it had been on the road. The first attempt took place at an Atom and his Package show. Considering that Atom was known for his between-song banter, and hoping to make the show something less predictable and more interactive, we composed a list of secret instructions and distributed it to everyone in the audience before Atom's set: whenever Atom says "song," shout "Go!"—whenever he says "package," applaud wildly—whenever he uses profanity, cough, sneeze, spit... We didn't interfere with the mood of what Atom was doing, but contributed greatly to the hilarity of the situation, giving everyone in attendance a way to "perform" too, and surprising Atom at the same time. It was a really good night for everybody. I think (although by the end of three songs, Atom was totally confused, sputtering and freaking out and laughing—the instructions had been designed so that the more perplexed he became, the more unusual the mass responses to his words would get, and eventually he was so overwhelmed that he didn't know what to do next)... if you want to see the secret instructions we passed out, I think Atom still has a copy up on his webpage.

After the Atom and his package show, we composed and distributed the following pamphlet. The original featured a photograph of our good friend Sally breathing fire into the audience during the most recent Catharsis show at Gilman Street.

Touring the globe with a rock and roll band is not be the only way to risk everything with your friends. For a new type of adventure

A group of us at ShotGunShelter in McLeansville, NC stumbled across an amazing way to get something done. Some of us call it a Thinktank, some call it a Concentration; they are the same thing. The following is a list of premises that explain what a thinktank is and how you might go about trying one.

In the last two years I have participated in a handful of thinktank projects. I have also been in contact with other groups experimenting with the concept. Where appropriate, italicized examples and anecdotes from various of these thinktanks have been included to expand on a premise.

Premise: In a thinktank, a specific amount of time, usually two weeks, is allotted for the attainment of a specific impossible goal. Impossible examples are:

- designing and building a mechanism or piece of art
- producing a public event
- producing a publication
- digging to China and freeing Tibet

I know of one successful thinktank in St. Petersburg, Florida where only the duration and place were predetermined. The rest was left to situation and spontaneity. This was a risky but brilliant expansion of the thinktank concept.

Premise: Design your thinktank like you would design a machine. In support of your specific goal, assemble a group of people, facilities, materials and tools. Each part should be integral to the project.

For a long while I had a project in mind that required some bicycle mechanic skills; I had a friend in Boston who worked on bikes, so I called him up. He came to McLeansville for two weeks and we built it.

PUNK

INVITATION TO THE ADVENTURE

Punk shows. Punk shows us what we're capable of in tight-knit communities, it shows us how to have more fun, more experiences, more life. If we let it, punk can show us just how much is possible in this world. And punk shows are exactly the place for this to happen.

Do you remember when you went to your first punk show? It probably felt like you'd discovered a whole new world, carefully hidden from the eyes of your parents and teachers, where people danced and screamed and dressed and talked and thought in ways that you'd never imagined before. You kept going back because they kept challenging you, kept introducing you to new things. Pretty soon punk was *your* secret world, where you had adventures beyond anything that could happen in a classroom or an office.

But there comes a time in every kid's life when punk shows start to feel stale. You feel like you know exactly what's going to happen: some kids will come together and talk about the same stuff, some bands will play while people stand around or dance a bit, maybe a little rhetoric will be thrown about, and then everyone will go home. Why even go anymore, except out of a sense of duty, if you're not going to be challenged and surprised anymore? That's why many people drop out and stop going to shows.

The Atom and His Package Show Was Just A Warning Shot

We can either accept that punk shows have lost their novelty value and are no longer entertaining (like the passive fucking spectators this society has raised us to be), or we can *do* something to make them entertaining and challenging again.

The Atom&H.P. show was fun because the audience got to participate in their *own* way, to be creative and active too, rather than just dutifully following the instructions of the performer or standing in slack-jawed boredom. This made the show better for everyone. What we did together that night wasn't enough to revolutionize the concept of shows itself, perhaps, but it was a little tiny taste of how much less predictable they could be.

THINK

Premise: Two weeks is not a long time; thinktank must be efficient.

"Day 11: I was sewing a six foot tall inflatable Arnold Schwarzenegger prop. Drew was in the sub basement trouble shooting beats on the sequencer. Erik was securing projection and hauling equipment. Jason was screening the last of the t shirts and posters. Chris, who was on his trailer bike picking up an electric motor, managed to dumpster dive two pizzas and a head of cabbage, which we ate for lunch."

Premise: Thinktank is not just temporary, it is *necessarily* temporary; like a sprint or a tantrum, a thinktank is utterly non-sustainable.

"A modern day vision quest, [thinktank] destroys the way you view your limitations and your self... none of these pursuits are for the faint at heart." -Manifesto for Concentration, 1999

Premise: Thinktank is holistic. Every part of life during thinktank belongs to the project. There are no lunch breaks or business hours. For the given period, Thinktank is in effect twenty four hours a day. Eating or sleeping are done only in a way that supports the project.

In the final days of a Thinktank arranged by a friend in Boston I had to skip a few nights of sleep to work on the accompanying publication. The next day, I was convinced by my cohorts to sleep in the car on the way to Providence. Because of

Lucky Number

SHOWS

The His Hero Is Gone Show Might Be Something More

We're not encouraging you to just start heckling bands—that's inexcusable. We're challenging you to contribute as much to these shows as you expect the bands to. For each show, it should be possible for us to add to the atmosphere with surprises of our own. *This is a challenge to you to outdo us, to surprise and challenge us even more than we can entertain and shock you with our tricks.* If we all surprise each other, then shows will be profound again for everyone, not just the youngsters, and we'll all have reasons to keep going.

JOIN US IN TAKING BACK THE SHOWS!

A message from the CrimethInc. Revolutionary Dance Party

Here are some examples of things other people have done to keep punk shows new and fresh:

- Stagal 13 (Philadelphia) has held punk rock proms, where everyone dresses up and dances (other theme shows include Halloween and Valentine's Day).
- Some place (I don't remember where) put on a show where all the bands had only ten minutes to set up, play, and pack up. Six bands in an hour! It would be awesome to make everyone's favorite bands write songs just for an occasion like that, or according to some other theme...
- Fort Thunder (Providence) used to have demolition derbies, including one show at which the first band set themselves on fire, the second band set the stage on fire, and the final band performed with a tube filling the room with carbon monoxide from a running car outside. The idea of making a punk show a place to explore the boundaries of life and death is as thrilling to me as it is scary. They've also hosted punk rock professional wrestling (complete with a cage, etc.) and a hundred other crazy events.

And here are some things you might want to try yourself:

- Try dancing to bands in ways that you never have before (or that *no one* has before). Make up your own dances. Explore the freedom in moving your body in new ways and shaking off the weight of self-consciousness and routine.
- Incorporate things besides bands into shows. Try putting on puppet shows, showing homemade films and videos, theater, comedy, spoken word, staging unexpected performance art... For that matter, try mixing up the lineups of bands a bit, so things won't be so predictable.
- Set up shows as part of larger events, or with greater themes than just music: have a potlatch (in which everyone brings gifts for the bands and each other, instead of money), a costume party, a feast, absurd competitions...
- Bring your own adventures to other shows: stage scripted events, introduce unexpected elements, refuse to accept the rule of expectations, strain against the fabric of reality itself. What else is punk rock for?

TANK.

their insistence, the publication remained unassembled until we arrived. Thankfully, Fort Thunder had a good stapler and some willing bodies so we got the job got done.

Premise: Socializing is an impossibility during thinktank. Participants must focus on moving forward at all times. During thinktank idle conversation and dilly dally are out of the question.

The apartment was saturated with thinktank. Peter, unsuspecting, dropped by around midnight for a visit, only to find Moe and I on a furious binge of screen printing. I don't know exactly what was said or done, but I haven't seen Peter since, and that was back in '96.

Other people did stuff at the His Hero Is Gone show, since I was in no condition that night to do anything (I'll write about that later on in this issue). It was tasteful and fun, and didn't interfere with the show for anyone, just gave it a more exciting feeling.

The next show I did anything for was the Trial show... Jon and I dared each other to write poetry for it and perform it there, something neither of us had ever done before. I took the dare seriously of course, and wrote "Fuckem Goddam Markem," which later was revised for the Folklore/Folkwar tour. When Jon saw me reciting it in front of everyone, he freaked out, since he hadn't taken the dare seriously at all. But on the spot he composed a few lines in his head, complete with a dramatic performance-art conclusion, and delivered them right after me. We were learning to not be afraid of doing anything...

We missed all the activity over the next few months, because Catharsis was in Europe and Jon was there playing with us... but he did something amazing upon his return. Jason had organized a benefit for a park area in the state, and Jon stood up between bands with a chalkboard and a notebook, to deliver a "lecture" on CrimethInc. topics... but as he proceeded, he kept getting interrupted by hecklers he had planted in the audience. The heckling became more and more insulting, and the audience turned more and more against the hecklers as the tension grew higher and higher. Jon attempted to go on with his lecture, until finally he was stopped by a heckler who stepped forward and struck him. Blood (homemade fake blood, but convincing to everyone there, in the mental state that prevailed) spilled everywhere, and real violence erupted as the audience leapt forward to break them up and drag the hecklers outside. They almost dismembered poor Jeff, who was one of the plants, ignoring his desperate insistences that it was actually just a performance. Meanwhile, Jon stepped back up on stage, and now, with everyone's full attention and an atmosphere so full of tension that no blade could pierce it, delivered a few lines of poetry explaining what he was really trying to do: we're going on the road, we're going on the run... and you're the ones I want to come...

For me, this performance was brilliant because, just like Zack's combination of the thesis and antithesis of poetry and work (which I spoke of in the introduction), it synthesized elements that had previously remained trapped in opposition to each other. Usually, a performer has to struggle against the hecklers, while the audience remains aloof, watching the conflict from a distance. By integrating heckling into the performance, Jon transcended the old conflict to create something new and dangerous to everyone.

Meanwhile, another CrimethInc. splinter group had been working on a parallel project. F. Mark Dixon and his cohorts had developed a philosophy of action, which they applied to their various art and performance projects: Think Tank. Using the principles of Think Tank, they had built such unheard-of machines as the Safety Bike (a bicycle that does flips when you hit the brakes) and the Sub-Sub-Contra-Bass-Blaster (described below), and in extremely short periods of time had created, booked, and performed multi-media tours (one explored the connections between bodybuilding and the modern capitalist idea of "progress"). Here is the manifesto they put together, in its latest form:

Premise: Documentation of thinktank is best handled after the fact in the form of propagandic myth making. Any real-time documentation should be handled by non-participants.

For our first thinktank, we overextended. We spent the first week doing everything twice so we could get good pictures. Finally, we realized we were missing out on the real experience so we could have photos to look at. For the second week, we scrapped the burdensome documentation and let our memory serve. It did.

Premise: Thinktank both produces "works or art" and is itself artistic expression rendered as movement through, and alteration of physical and psychological space.

It's hard to locate the borders of this project. Fuller and I have been tied together with an invisible six foot rope for eight days now. He tastes the Food Not Bombs spaghetti and I immediately say "needs salt." We are desperate to get this show working properly; our intensity leaves stains on carpets and sidewalks. Perched on a

park bench outside the third venue we grapple with last minute details. I see my own anxiety expressed on the faces of innocent passers by. Everywhere we go there is a vortex. Everywhere we go it rains.

Premise: Thinktank is a visitor in the world, a simultaneous but separate occurrence. When thinktank is over it is impossible to go back. As for your pre-thinktank life, leave a forwarding address, you'll never quite get back.

"It was like I got used to a zero gravity situation; when I got out of that building, all of a sudden I weighed a hundred and thirty pounds again. For a few days I could hardly move. Plus my eyes ached so bad from the light..." -excerpted from a

letter from Kelly in St. Petersburg. Kelly and three others secured an abandoned building, stocked up some food and water and agreed only that they would stay for ten days. By day three they had decided to blindfold themselves for the remaining period and build a shrine. As I understand, there is a giant deer head sculpture in some unoccupied building in St. Pete.

Premise: It can be quite distracting to be at home during a Thinktank. Take steps to isolate your group, go somewhere else, bar the door, rip the phone off the wall: "No, we can't come over for dinner!"

Jon finally met got to know Mark and became really excited about this method. While Catharsis was in South America, he combined his efforts with Mark and together they organized a "noise parade" through the business district of Greensboro, complete with elaborate costumes, homemade noisemaking devices, and joyously absurd avant garde pretensions. The pamphlet they put together afterwards stands on its own as a masterpiece of confusionist poetry, so I secretly dumpstered Jon's original notes (which were much more straightforward) to be published here for the first time. If you want a copy of the pamphlet, you can write the Zegota address (at the end of the "Fire and Lightning" piece at conclusion of this article); a revised version of the demands submitted in absentia by the parade on behalf of my own CrimethInc. faction also appeared in F.B.I. zine #3.

The Greensboro Noise Parade

The new medium is movement; the new movement is our medium.

It was in the car on our way back from Reclaim the Streets in Raleigh that a noise parade was first suggested. "What can we do to shake things up?" And downtown Greensboro is the perfect canvas—a place designed for routine, for the soulless, lifeless exchange of capital, inhabited by robots, the businessmen and women who've had all their creativity removed by a lifetime of bourgeois comfort and control.

So the idea was to bring as much attention to ourselves as possible: first by means of noise, second by manipulating our appearance. We made our noise devices as elaborate as possible; some were designed to be percussive, others to create droning, constant sounds. We made our costumes big and funny looking; we wore bizarre uniforms and made

color-coordinated protest signs [editor's note: these were no normal protest signs... one read "You can't push a rope, nope," another "Viral or bacterial?"]. We

reduced our level of communication to its barest essentials, until we communicated only through emotion. With the medium of movement through

folklore/ CRIMETHINC. SYMPOSIUM

After the Noise Parade, there was the Handy Pantry show described earlier in this issue, another Reclaim the Streets (our 5th in this state, in under a year and a half—not bad for a quiet place like this), and various other efforts. Our most recent undertaking was a two-man tour F. Mark and I did after our participation in the demonstrations in Philadelphia. I'll conclude this article (which I hope has not seemed self-glorifying so much as inspiring, imploring, provoking) with the report we co-wrote together afterwards... it won't give you much of an idea of the grandeur of traveling the country with nothing going for you but a burning commitment to making shit happen, but it's a start, at least. These are such little things we're doing, for now, but from inside they feel so big, so liberating—and they will not be so small for long, if we can keep upping the ante and daring to always wager all.

CrimethInc. agent F. Markatos Dixon and I kicked off the First CrimethInc. Symposium with a narrow escape from the Philadelphia Republican National Convention police state, after being pulled over and searched by a real dimwit of a police officer (Mark finally exasperated him enough that he let us go: "no sir, officer, it's not a weapon, it's a subsonic speaker for doing experiments on fish... yes, fish, well, robotic fish, actually, it's for the naval program with robotic fish at M.I.T., we're late already..."). Somehow, we managed to get our suspicious-looking red truck onto I-95 south just in time to be thirty minutes late to the first performance of Folklore/Folkwar, a tour that we'd booked a month in advance without having any idea what we were doing, let alone an organizational meeting or, god forbid, a practice.

Practice or no practice we had the kind of giddy confidence that can only exist when you have a fifty foot inflatable teddy bear in the back of your truck. If we didn't have a recipe, we did have a solid set of ingredients. In the back with the teddy bear was a three string upright bass made from scrap wood and two tin drain pans, a

low pitch horn called the Boviphonic Ohm Cannon made out of a trash can, sheet plastic and PVC pipe, a rearranged household prayer organ and the Sub-Sub-Contra-Bass-Blaster, a 300 pound hand-crafted speaker that produces bass frequencies too deep for the human ear to hear. All of this and more was unceremoniously piled in the back of the truck; up front in the cab each of us had brought the special notebooks were we scrawl only our craziest after-three-AM ideas. Between Philadelphia and Baltimore we managed to brainstorm a six act, forty minute performance piece using all the inventions and a pile of other items including a gas mask, three rolls of duct tape a roll of rosin paper and eight permanent markers.

What was our goal? I can explain this best by starting with a story from a visit I paid to my parents a few years back. My father and I were at an art gallery, and he was standing next to me trying to figure out how to relate to the painting in front of us. As a core member of the bourgeoisie, he'd heard about art and how important it was, but he had no idea what one was supposed to do with it. He gave it a shot in the only way he knew, con-

physical space, our creative expression existed INSIDE the onlookers. When we walked by and they said "What the hell is that!?"—that's our painting, that confusion our poetry, that curiosity, that disbelief, that is our sculpture.

And we couldn't resist the opportunity to make demands. So we targeted the owners of this town—the Jefferson Pilot Corporation, the only ones with enough resources to make the necessary changes.

Organization (. . ?)

The noise parade was valuable as an experiment in organization. From the outset, we realized that a delicate balance was needed between spontaneity and precise planning. The method we came up with to preserve this duality was to make an elite core responsible for the planning, to keep the project focused and organized, and then to arrange a large periphery of artists uninvolved in the planning, to be brought into the project at the last minute—who would bring with them the fresh enthusiasm that can otherwise be destroyed by a month of weekly meetings.

Execution !

The elite core began meeting in early April. At our first meeting we established our responsibilities. We decided who would make the signs, who was in charge of costumes, etc. We set a date for the parade, established a timetable for the coming meetings, and gave ourselves a deadline. All our dates and deadlines were pushed and pulled (of

course), but we continued to meet weekly. The Sunday before the Thursday of our parade we had a "stuff meeting" and a "final orientation" the night before. These last two meetings were more like art exhibitions than anything else, as our artists brought in their outlandish costume designs and noise instruments. We began to get excited, began to feel like the idea was actually taking shape and the event was actually going to happen.

The periphery began taking shape less than a week before the parade. Most of the people involved didn't come to a single meeting, they just began to show up on Thursday morning, ready to make noise and get crazy. The organization became chaos around noon on Thursday. We threw all our shit in the van and drove to the departure point on Elm Street downtown. We got dressed and ready in the Food Not Bombs park and set off down Elm around 12:20 p.m. We paraded north into downtown, took a left on Friendly Avenue and circled the block, arriving on the doorstep of the J.P. building on Market Street. We presented our 95 demands, which were printed on a Suzuki violin, and made our way back to the F.N.B. park. It was a quick in and out operation, lasting approximately 40 minutes, start to finish.

Analysis.

All in all, the parade was a great success. I think we definitely got the reactions we wanted, out of ourselves most of all (sweaty palms, pounding

heartbeat, doing something that seems impossible, terror and exhilaration, tumult and exultation) and the shocked denizens of the business district. There are things we could have improved on—better preparation, tighter marching formation, not forgetting the demands in the van and having to run back for them, and especially integrating the periphery more (bring them in earlier?) so no one would feel like they were just a warm body in someone else's project—but overall it was a good way to challenge ourselves and keep escalating the tensions in Greensboro, increase the feeling that everything is about to bust out.

Conclusions

In a condition of adamant doubt you are asked for explanations, when all you want is for someone to explain something, anything.

And you are asked for purposes when you are learning to accept that a purpose is not going to emerge, ever.

And you are asked for a statement of intent when the head seethes with all the fluctuating statements of the past instantly and meticulously taken down and which you use constantly, with increasing derision, in evidence against yourself.

No conclusions. To find out what it feels like, what the possibilities are, **do it yourself.** Good night.

folkwar:

OF VERY NEW MUSIC

sidering the painting as a commodity, a spectacle:

"I wonder what it would be like," he ventured, "to own this painting, to see it on my wall every day, and know it was my painting..." He stared, perplexed at the violence of color and form before him.

"That's not what it's about at all, dad," I tried to help out. "The center of what makes art matter is far from here, from the art gallery. If you bought this, without knowing the artist or being a part of its creation, it would be just another alien form sitting around your living room, gathering dust with the other meaningless tourist souvenirs and trinkets. The most you could hope for then would be that it would pick up some associations from your own life, and to be frank, you'd have to take living a bit more seriously for that to happen. What mattered about this picture was when the artist was painting it, and his friends were over at his little studio in the Paris ghetto, showing him their work and arguing about principles of painting and trading ideas and insights, being creative and alive together. You can't capture that energy by owning this painting or any number of biographies and critical journals."

In just the same way, we punk rockers have a totally different relationship to music than most of the children of Western civilization—even those of us who don't play in bands. We have music being made around us all the time, it is about us, by us, belongs to us. We don't look at it as some alien force that appears from on high, and we aren't impressed by the high priests of the "popular music" that is made to keep music from being popular in the old sense of the world.

To quote a fellow CrimethInc. agent: "Music is now in the hands of the people. What shall we take back next?" Mark and I set out to broaden the territories of our community, to make forays into other fields that will hopefully be further explored and shared by others in the coming years. Anything we hadn't seen a precedent for at punk shows before was fair game: skits, reading stories and manifestos, acting out street theater (example: I am telling some folk tale of revolution,

Mark appears in police uniform, duct tapes me mercilessly to the stage, and begins throwing water balloons at the astonished audience. Spontaneously one, then many of them leap forward and wrestle him to the ground, and everyone gets lesson in breaking their passivity as Mark nearly gets his nose broken.).

The fundamental concept here is autonomy: not permitting any outside force, corporate, governmental, bureaucratic, cultural/traditional or what have you, to hold the keys to the kingdom of any aspect of our lives. Autonomy means taking control of the things in our lives—from music and technology to community decision-making and feeding ourselves. Mark's home-made musical instruments are a good example of this: they do things that nothing you can buy in a music store can. We have a totally different relationship to them because they took shape under his hands. This is what we call folk science. Just like folk music, folk history, folk art, and folk cooking, folk science it is a way to do it yourselves. What we've learned is that you have to participate in solving a problem for that solution to be able to empower rather than alienate you. Our little tour was a very, very humble effort to explore that idea and share it with people.

Addendum courtesy of F. Mark Dixon:

Brian, about solving problems: it is important for people to realize that while science has always focused on problem solving, the nature of our problems has totally changed. The examples of folk science aboard our truck were about trouble shooting in the realm of wasted time and creativity. The Sub-Sub Contra-Bass Blaster is a machine for creating inaudible bass, but it is also a machine for snatching its maker from the jaws of boredom with a process of production that requires so much time and focus that there is nothing left for the usual suicidal fare of sleeping, eating, working and being entertained. These are today's problems, and they are no less formidable than being chased by wolves or gathering enough food to eat.

EPILOGUE:

Where do we go from here?

There are so many ideas I wanted to write about it in this part—creating free housing and public outreach by setting up long-term “protest” occupations (disguised as sit-ins) on college campuses, arranging Bull Runs in the streets of the U.S. like they have in Spain (only with paper mache-clad kids as bulls...) as a fusion of the Noise Parade and the Reclaim the Streets models with something at once new and primal, doing audio/visual tours of bands playing with artistic or informative movies. But man, this new issue is due to be sent out for layout within the hour... I guess I'll have to wait until we can put these ideas into action, to see what others they can create in other people. In the meantime, I'll close with an account of what this stuff feels like to do, by one of my comrades.

POSTSCRIPT:

one boy's experience on the front lines of Greensboro havoc-wreaking

Fire &

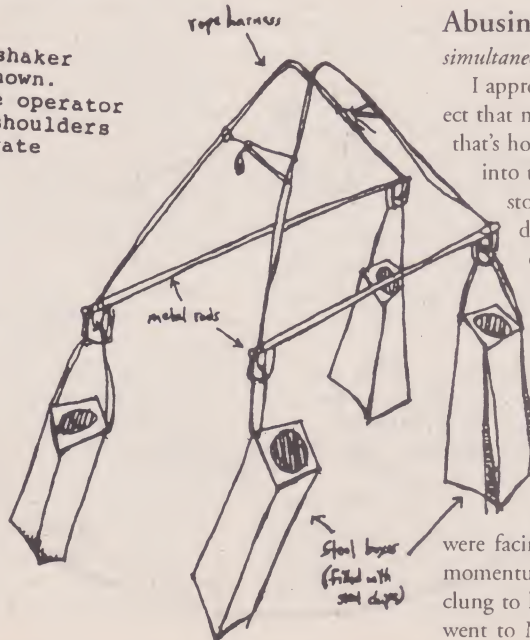
by Hester Prynne

Part One:

.....the sky is making that color, the birds are making that song, it is dawn, the street is quiet. I look down, listening, past the holes in my shoes, past the cracks of pavement, deep... And the rhythm of the Earth is pounding there. Walking home, I pass the landmarks: there's the Handy Pantry and there's the coffee shop, there's the record store and there's the parking deck... The telephone pole with our fliers, the post office box where I drop my letters... Breathing in, I can feel it, above me and beneath me, to my right and to my left: the world, its parts, myself.

It was the same sort of dawn not quite one year ago that I identify as the moment when things changed. It happened in the middle of a long journey (as it often does). Some of us had spent the night driving north out of Denver, on our way to Salt Lake City: stars faded into daylight, trees began to distinguish themselves as the blackness of night sky crept back from the dawn approaching, just beyond the eastern horizon, which broke, as we watched, and spilt across the sky. We pulled off on the side of the highway to have a piss break and gather our last moments of desert night... In the distance there was a field of giant windmills, spinning silhouettes painted black by the amber glow of sunrise at their backs. I looked closely at them for several minutes; they were so big... moving... seemed to communicate something inexpressible. There was little I could do at the time but cuss and take deep breaths, “Fuck!” I said, head shaking, “What the fuck.”

here the harness-shaker noise device is shown. as per design, the operator must contort the shoulders with walk to generate sound...



Abusing the World of Vision

simultaneous excitement, enthusiasm, and sheer terror

I approached him one day in the library on campus, “I have a project that might interest you...” I said. He looked up, ears perked; and that's how it starts. A crazy idea, quickly off the drawing board and into the realm of physical space. Then there are meetings, brainstorming, and we discuss tactics. By now, months later, the evidence is mounting that much more is possible than we previously suspected.

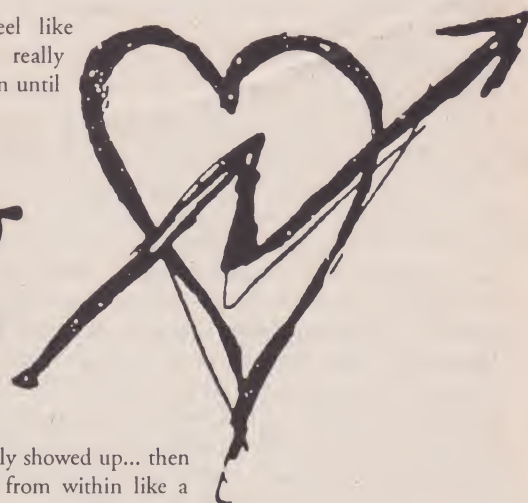
After one desperate night, I met Mark in the parking lot of Lowes Hardware. I'd had no sleep (of course) and I felt strongly that the fate of our project depended on the two of us making forward progress. First there was a mix-up with the trucks, next we realized it was Easter and the scrapyard was closed, then we couldn't decide whether to just buy the cloth or try to steal it or what... the whole morning amounted to a lot of running around and wasting time, inertia was wrestling against us. I looked at Mark, his eyes were facing forward. One foot stumbled in front of another and a momentum gathered around us. I didn't know him well then but I clung to him tight for I was drowning, the sea so dark, so deep. We went to McLeansville and I built several sets of wings from a thick,

industrial sort of foam that Mark dumpstered from an art gallery in Winston; and I began to believe that it was possible to continue on.

I started to think of it as a dance, as one grand coordinated movement through space and time. I thought of my dance partners, who were each alive in different parts of the city: one sewing up the last of the uniforms, one at his desk finishing the demands, and myself, welding in the rain out back of the Durabilt Compound in McLeansville, hoping not to get electrocuted. I looked at the instrument and thought of its design. It was a sort of harness type thing made of ropes and steel shakers. I pictured myself setting it down in front of some parader,

Charlottesville to see, in fact, how desperate they were for a show. It became obvious that I was unable to weasel out of it, so I told him: "Alright goddamnit. I'll think of something." I called Wilson St. and the House of Thieves and left messages, then went out for a walk to clear my head. I felt a wry smile crawl across my face when I came within a block of the Handy Pantry. And I remembered having an idea.

It didn't feel like anything was really going to happen until



Lightning

in Greensboro, North Carolina

"Here! Use this!" She would stare dumbfounded at the apparatus, "What the fuck is it?" she would say. "It's, um... well... you're supposed to wear it..." I say, "like, um... like this, here..."

Even to this day, I have a hard time articulating *why*, exactly, we decided it would be a good idea to make a noise parade through the streets of downtown Greensboro. Maybe just to prove to ourselves that it was possible? Maybe to shake things up a bit, to do something completely unexpected and unprovoked, hoping that it would speak to the town in a new way... Or maybe I just needed people, needed to know that people still live, that the desolation I feel is an illusion after all... But will the welds hold? And how long will the noise be heard?

Other Days...

is it not something in this cold, dreary world, to be loved?

Roses outside, shattered like glass: mixed metaphors and old issues of HeartattaCk strewn and soaked with black coffee – one cup too many. I have a candle here on my table that's burning down. Also a tape measure and a pair of scissors (next to my heap of emotional baggage). Just to the left of that is a book entitled, "Faces of Freedom, the Challenge of Transformation" which inadvertently got stolen one day from a church down the street during Food Not Bombs. On top of that is a "d.i.y. anti-depression guide" and a box of soon-to-be-ruined paintbrushes (because I've nothing to clean them with, nor the will to seek out such a fluid at this sickly-slow pace of morning sloth). And, of course, to the immediate right of that is the withered bouquet of my expectations, all that remains from the past week of haggard life in Greensboro. Beside that is a book of matches.

Greensboro is a Monster

RunHaveFun, just after "beer o'clock"

Some matter of weeks earlier, my friend Jeremy had called and asked me to set up a show for his band in Greensboro. "Sure!" I agreed and wrote down all the information on a slip of paper, which I promptly lost and forgot about completely.

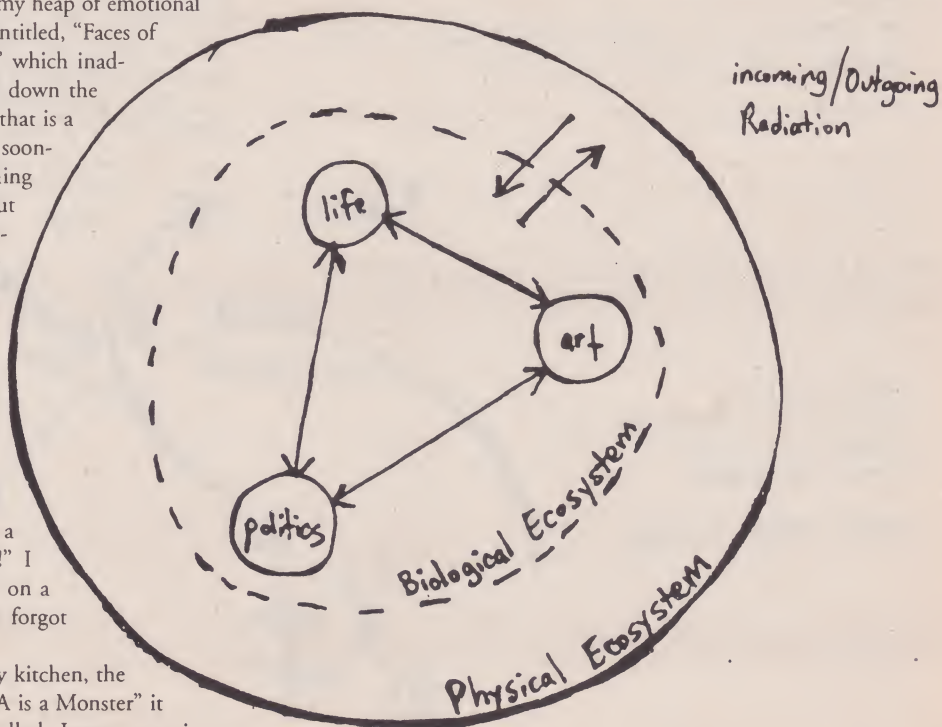
When that slip of paper resurfaced in my kitchen, the show was only a couple of days away. "USA is a Monster" it read mockingly, "June 10th" So I called Jeremy up in

the band actually showed up... then the panic rose from within like a great tidal wave of nausea and anxiety.

"Um, shit..." I said to them, "Maybe we better have a quick talk..." and the eight of us sat outside and discussed the ramifications concerning equipment, jail, etc. Standing in front of me, USA is a Monster was a motley crew to be sure; but they seemed oddly prepared to devour the task at hand. I watched for their reactions, there was a madness behind their eyes..

Shortly after 2:00 AM, the "music" began (if it can even be called that). I guess, knowing Jeremy, I was expecting something pathological; but I wasn't prepared for such a blatant, even violent disregard for melody and rhythm. It was horrendous, I felt as if the sound were reaching in through my stomach, tickling my spleen. They were in isle four, just in front of the beer cooler.

I was astounded when the cops pulled into the parking lot, noticed what was happening, told someone (without even getting out of the



car) to "keep that door shut" or some nonsense, and then just drove away. Inside, we had all commenced phase one of our *emergency response mission-abort plan for saving musical equipment from confiscation*; but then the cop left and we were all just like: "well, I guess you guys can keep playing." Personally, I hadn't even thought about how we should end the show. I figured it would end itself, one way or another. Eventually we just had to tell them to stop.

Other Days...

shatter my life or complete it

I am terrified by the way things happen. The wind feels wonderful on my face. This corner of the world is utterly without commotion, soft orange illumination, a plastic bag rustling... there are *other* places people gather, not this one. I am sitting quiet here, alone, thoughts are soft, calm; but by god my heart screams. I have the feeling of a man who is walking in a pitch-black hallway: unsure of where it leads, unsure if there will be obstacles in the way, unsure if he should duck his head, if he should step lightly, unsure of where he is going, unsure of where he has been, expecting at any moment to fall or to hit something, to sustain some mortal injury, and to die. But hoping, of course, hoping that soon his path will illuminate and all his questions will be answered, all of his uncertainty will be replaced by something else – but what, he cannot imagine. O flower in this barren world, O bright star in this empty sky, say something, say anything...

Nothing Exists, Only the Political

the new medium is movement, the new movement is our medium

I sat with my mother on the curb out front of Gate City Noise and she explained to me why she hadn't come to my wedding. "These things you guys are doing..." she began, "...these noise parades and downtown things..." I watched her fidget with a dirty cigarette butt, "they just make me uncomfortable." After she said that, I pretty much stopped listening. I mean what the fuck! My own mother! Can't even come for her own son's wedding! She thought it was a joke; I told her it would probably be her only chance...

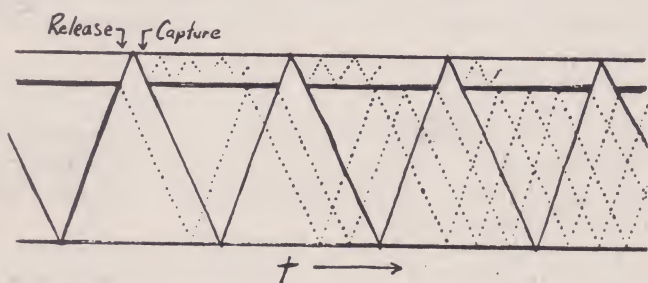
Then, just to rub it in, I told my mother the story of the paper airplanes. Oh! if there was ever such a sign of victory, it is this! I was relaxing and eating spaghetti when Bruce approached me, "Did you see these?" he asked. In his hand was a small paper airplane. This was about halfway through, somewhere between the limbo contest and the mambo line. "No," I replied, "What is it?" He pointed to an office window across the street, overlooking the festival below. Inside was a fluttering heart and an idle mind, stolen back from the tight grip of routine. Someone up there was making paper airplanes and throwing them down. We unfolded the piece of paper. "Leveling the Playing Field (1 of 2)" it read, "Lawyer was disbarred in re Pajeroski, N.J., No. D-224, 12/3/98 for, among other things, (1) using a 'runner' to solicit potential clients and (2) condoning runner's fabrication of client's medical claims..." Ha!

There will always be people who believe in getting caught. You'll run into them the night before your big project and they'll tell you things like: "better bring a toothbrush" and "be prepared to travel" – whatever the fuck that means! Once at a show, there was a guy who tried to convince me that Reclaim The Streets was a lame idea. He told me that, instead, we should just "try smiling" and go into the antique shops downtown to meet the old women who own them. He assured me that this would create the sense of "community" and "creative freedom" that Greensboro lacks. I thought he was a moron; but I didn't tell him to his face.

These people believe in society, they believe in cops, especially the cop *inside*. I believe in tact. I believe that with the right amount of finesse, a creative individual can do a lot of very impressive things without getting in any trouble at all. Always remember that we are dealing with people, even cops are nothing more than people: they have emotions, they have expectations, they can be manipulated. Funny things happen to people who become bewildered by the sight of something really bizarre. I believe it is probably an exact science; although I know nothing about it. I believe that when I get arrested it will be because I haven't been creative enough to overcome the cop-instinct. The cop-instinct is our real enemy.

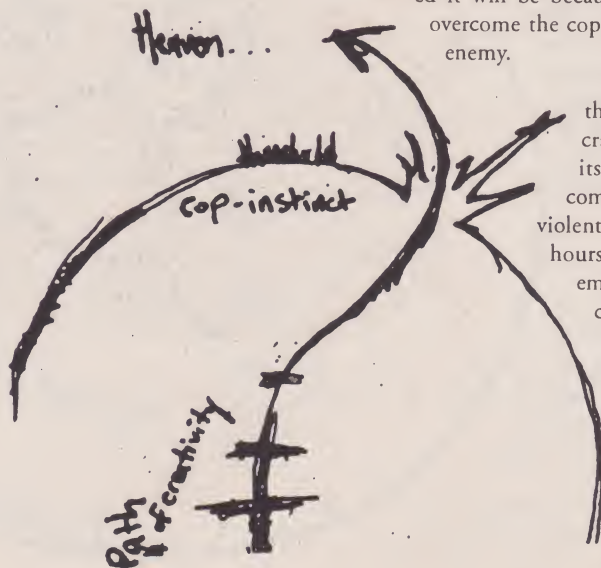
There is always an element of despair that must be planned for in anything crazy we try to do. As the project nears its climax, I expect myself to become a complete wreck of stinging nerves and violent anxiety. If I don't find myself a few hours before the event leaning over an empty pot of coffee, head in hands, chanting: "oh shit, oh fuck, this is it, oh god..." then I know the goals are not high enough.

If I die in my mind, then I die here soon after. If I convince myself that I am alone, then I will convince you to. Bitterness and frustration inhibit movement, prevents motion. Relaxation and broadview are essential for sustain-



*the development of momentum through personal action.
Helmholtz path, ripples in space-time.*

**basic faith
involves a certain
amount of risk
never xxxxxx
never trust a cop**



able productivity. The way my body moves through space creates and destroys bits and pieces of the surrounding environment. The way my body moves through space is a manifestation of my mental state. "Pressure" is restriction. Pressure is atrophy. The power to create pressure is the power of the human mind.

"Pressure" results from insecurity, which results from the desire to know the outcome. Releasing the desire to know the outcome requires faith. The destruction of pressure involves faith. Faith requires risk.

When I called Mark to ask that he bring his Geodesic dome to Reclaim the Streets, I knew there was a chance it would be confiscated. I believed that the shape of the dome would have an effect on the space such that it would deter the police from responding in a harsh manner. I'd seen what the dome could do, I'd seen how people change when they find it. I believed in the dome, it's such a basic shape. It speaks to people in a language they're not ready for. It communicates something primal, something essential... Anyway, I believed that the presence of the dome would create in the air exactly the kind of vibration we needed to keep the dome from being confiscated. One creates the other, the other escapes the one. There is a threshold over which creativity must pass in order to defeat the cop-instinct. To not cross that threshold constitutes a disaster. Half measures availed us nothing. Anything worth doing is worth doing right.

We threw open the door of the van and ran out into the street. I went straight for the bus of art students from Winston and began beating on the door, shouting like a maniac, "Go! Go! Go!" and "Now! Now! Now!" *Timing is everything. The first five minutes are crucial.* Bruce was right behind me; we started throwing traffic cones out of the way. I grabbed the first bag of flowers and ripped it open, started kicking them all over the place. Then the banner dropped across the street and I felt the gravity drift from my bones. The space was consumed without hesitation... a thirty foot inflatable plastic tetrahedron rose from the sidewalk, all of a sudden there were people everywhere, someone brought out the platform, and I ran shouting: "There's gonna be a wedding! Make way! Make way!"

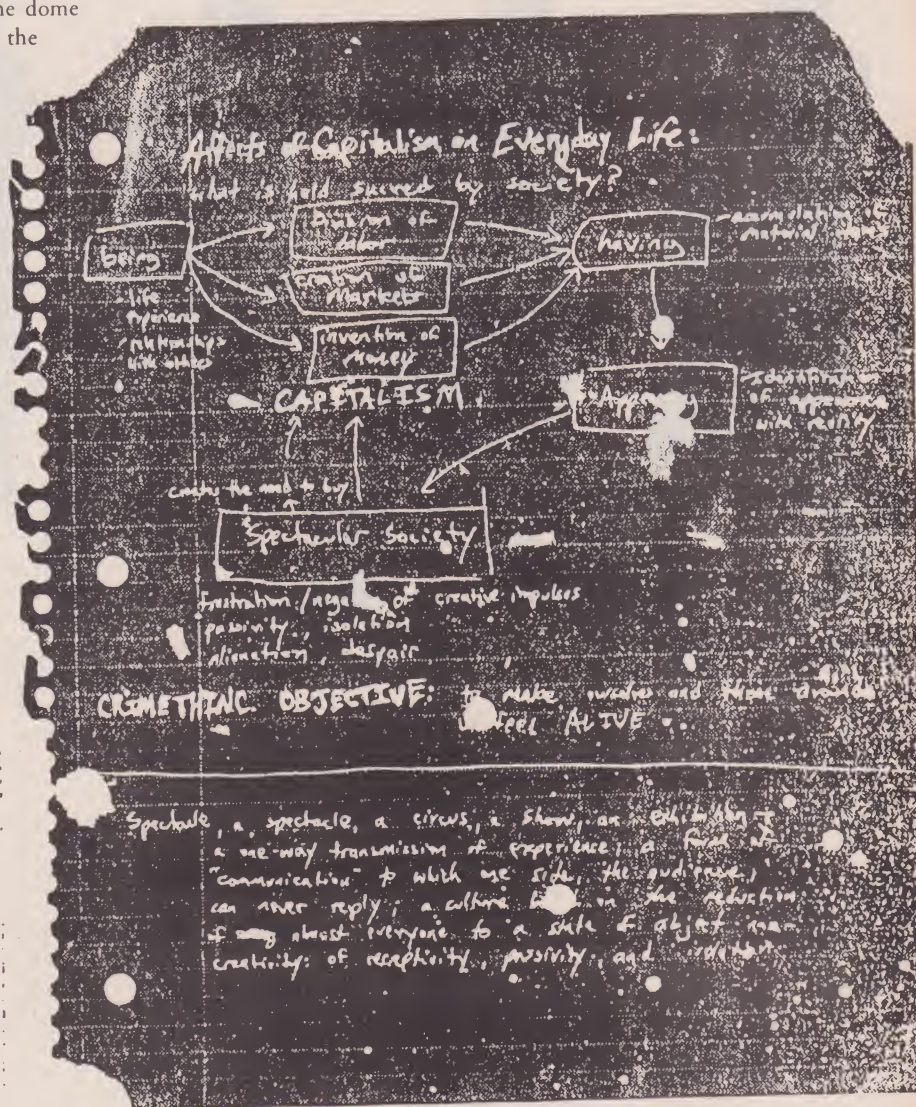
Our priest was a street poet with blonde hair and glasses, he nodded to signal the bridesmaids. The procession rounded the corner of February One, shouting in one unified and frenzied voice such a wedding march as I have never heard. The festival became a boiling cauldron, water balloons rained from the sky while Jeremy read his poem: our call to arms, our signal, past our point of no return. The mob was hard to

keep under control, "Wait till after the vows!" I shouted in vain. There was sudden movement in all directions, teetering on the verge of complete chaos.

My hand was shaking uncontrollably as I slipped the ring onto her finger. Behind us there were dancers, below us there was Earth, and ahead of us nothing but the sweet sweet now. And then the kiss: THE KISS. It felt as if the word of God had thundered through her veins and in one instant was passed to me by the touch of her tongue to mine. It was cataclysmic. I closed my eyes and listened to the sound of a new world being born, I heard the buildings crumble within, life became excruciatingly real and undeniable. When I opened my eyes, Reclaim The Streets had begun. And with it, the Greensboro renaissance.

A testament of gross self-indulgence supplied
by The CrimethInc. Crash Test Lovers

Correspondence: 1104 Buckingham rd. Greensboro, NC 27408 USA



Some hours later, a few of us went back to see what remained. There were still some flower shop scraps and various debris around, and Alex's painting was still up. There were two police officers left, the same two who had been there from the beginning. We watched them standing there, quiet, admiring the painting. Beneath their feet, chalk messages and drawings were scrawled on the sidewalk. "We live" it said. We live.

Everything we do from here on out involves risk. I vow not to let pass another day that is not an adventure of pounding hearts and racing blood. I vow to make this moment last forever. I vow to follow my heart through the black abyss. I vow to swim lakes of fire, I vow to crawl through pits of serpents, should they lay in my hearts path. Should my heart decree, I vow to dance, I vow to sing, I vow to crumble in despair. I vow to soar through the sky like an eagle, I vow to crawl through the dirt like a worm. I vow to love. I vow to make myself hard like stone, soft like a cloud. I vow to become like water, or to become like ice. I vow to scream when my heart screams. I vow to cry when my heart cries. And I vow to breathe, to let you breathe. I vow to never let go of life.



I N S I D E F R O N T C O L U M N I S T S

A SUBVERSIVE PLOT, A CHAIN OF EVENTS.

by F. Ullivit Buck, Minster of sciences

Two years ago I started work on my first vegetable garden. One morning, about a month later, I harvested my first vegetable, a radish. Crouching right there in my plot, I wiped the radish clean and ate it. It was the first bite of food I had ever eaten that was not the product of someone else's efforts. My first twenty two years, seventy three inches and one hundred and seventy five pounds were made possible entirely by the labor of other people.

At the end of this article, I give a few general tips for beginners interested in trying a garden. But instead of dwelling on the little I know from two summers' experience, I will focus on the why of gardening, a subject I have had many quiet hours in my garden to consider.

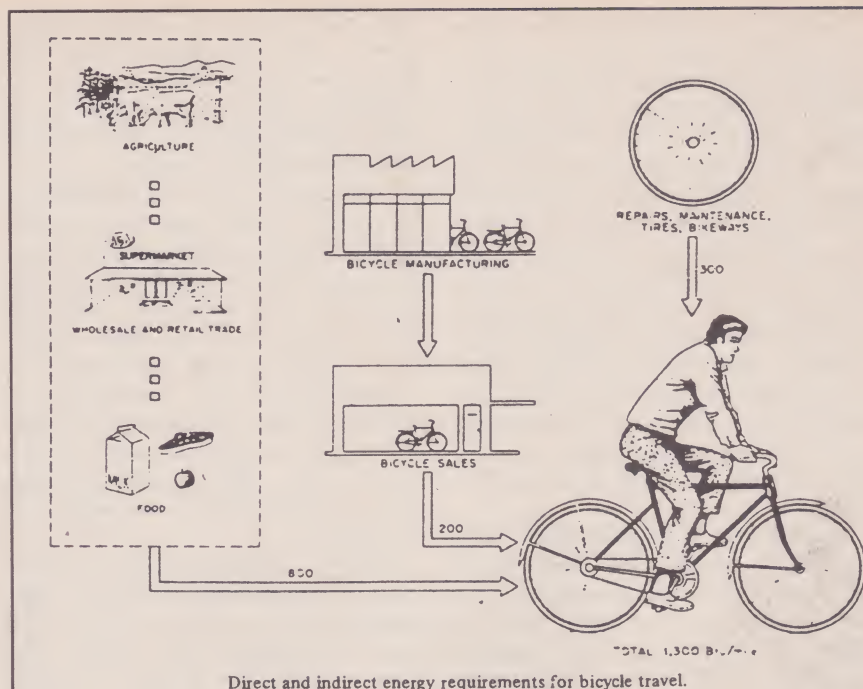
Its a well circulated vegetarian "party fact" that there are two things that happen to the energy of the sun as it moves up the food chain. The first is entropy. Our planet's only source of energy is the sun. Plants use solar energy to stack small molecules up to create large, high energy molecules. We call these big molecules carbohydrates, proteins, fats and vitamins. Herbivores eat plants and are thus two steps away from the source. Carnivores eat mainly herbivores and remain at least three steps from the source.

Each time food is consumed, large molecules are broken apart. When large molecules are broken apart the same energy that was used to stack them up is released. The consumer's body uses the released energy for body processes and for recombining smaller molecules into the particular large molecules it needs. Every time this process happens some energy is lost to entropy. Entropy is one reason that it makes sense to gather the sun's energy from its first solid resting place: plants.

The other thing that happens when resources move up the food chain is that they bring toxins with them. Toxins, both natural and artificial, follow materials as they move up the food chain. As energy is lost to entropy, the level of toxins stays the same. As a result, the higher you get in the food chain, the higher the ratio of toxins to energy.

At a minimum this information can help us decide what we should eat. But it can also be viewed as a system of logic that Universe uses to keep relationships successful and healthy. The same system of logic can be applied to other things.

For instance, the food chain is an excellent model for the movement of energy along the "trade chain." The trade chain is the series of exchanges through which the things we use flow.



Direct and indirect energy requirements for bicycle travel.

ENERGY REQUIREMENTS—PASSENGER TRAVEL

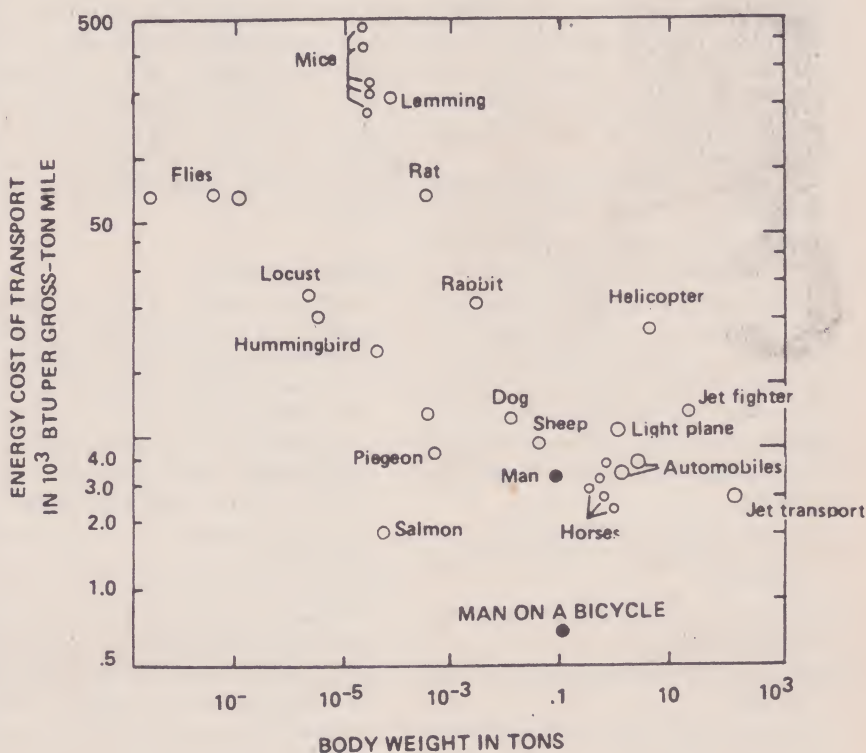


illustration c.1 & c.2: entropy

Entropy in the trade chain is known as inflation, taxation and inefficiency. Each time a product changes hands, each additional process it undergoes, it becomes more expensive. When the same thing gets more expensive that means a loss has occurred. This rule postdicts that highly processed products will have less value than other products. But sometimes this is not the case. If someone

made an exact replica of a Ford Expedition in their garage they would have to sell it to their next door neighbor for much more than the same item mass produced. Obviously, value and entropy aren't the only things to consider.

There's also toxins.

Toxins accumulate as energy moves up the food chain. Similarly, ethical problems accumulate with every transaction in the trade

chain. A bottle of Pepsi, for example, comes to its drinker via a chain of exchanges including research, developing, testing, advertising, bottling, shipping, warehousing and retail. On top of that is the lineage of its ingredients: South American sugar cane, petroleum for the plastic bottle, caffeine additive, caramel color, paper board packaging et cetera. Drinking a crisp refreshing bottle of Pepsi requires the labor of hundreds and the use of a staggering amount of resources. In a sense, this product has many of the problems a vegetarian would attribute to a steak. So even though Pepsi is strictly vegan it can easily be considered less "ethical" or more process-tainted than a locally produced egg and that's before you even begin to investigate the most pernicious deeds of PepsiCo.

Here is another source relationship worth consideration. External metabolism is the way we use energy outside of our bodies. The practice started with fire and to this day humans are the only species who metabolize externally. Furthermore, humans use far more of the sun's energy outside of our bodies (to sustain our world) than inside (to sustain our bodies). Among other things, the advent of external metabolism allowed us to thrive in areas where our internal metabolism is insufficient. The internal and external ways we use energy are inseparably entwined; their combination is what sets us apart from both organisms and machines.

As with our internal metabolism, our external metabolism occurs at varying degrees of separation from the source. When we heat and make electricity directly with the sun, we are instantaneous consumers of source energy. When we burn wood, we are using the sun's energy that was gathered and solidified by trees ten to one hundred years ago. Coal and oil are remnants of the sun's energy which are millions of years old. The longer the delay between energies arrival on Earth and its use by a person:

1. the more energy it takes to gather
2. the more equipment it takes to convert to useful form
3. the more money, big business and government is involved
4. the more damage is sustained by the environment
5. the more entropic loss is sustained between its arrival and its use.

So the wisdom that applies to eating low on the food chain also applies to external metabolism. In this case, it is important to stick close to the source with respect to time.

There is no telling how many days worth of stored solar energy we currently use each day but it is becoming increasingly obvious that our gross inefficiency and reckless consumption is both physically and spiritually unsustainable. The Earth receives an allotment of energy from the sun each day. This daily

ration could well be considered a logical upper limit for all of the Earth's energy using processes for one day. Why depend on our dwindling savings account of coal and oil gathered millions of years ago when we could spend your per diem of sunlight?

Considering the source of the things you use is another way to guide your activities. For most things the source system favors consumption of items produced by you or your friends first, your community second, and local or cooperative markets third. All with the overriding principal of avoiding the exchange of money. This principal allows for skimming of waste in the form of dumpstering, free food situations and theft from shitty big businesses. When considering energy, source awareness considers the energy's relative freshness.

Of course, the last thing I want to do is to create more rules about how to behave. Rules are unreliable. As you may know, some of the best reading material filters slowly across restricted borders and through unsuspecting mail systems, changing hands dozens of times while maintaining integrity. On the other hand, the growing supermarket trend thrives off of skipping steps in the trade chain. Keep your common sense sharp so you can recognize the exceptions. The most important thing to remember is that staking your voice in the world on your spending patterns is like resting your political activities to your vote... They are always grateful for your polite participation.

Back to Gardening:

Differing climates and tastes make it impossible to give specific gardening advice, but here's some general stuff I've learned.

1. Don't be intimidated. Despite a few beginner's blunders and one disaster that was completely out of my hands, my first two gardens have been surprisingly easy and fruitful. Kept weeded and watered, well-selected plants seem to take good care of themselves.
2. Well-selected plants usually means Heirlooms. Heirlooms means strains that have been hand-selected over generations to be sturdy, disease resistant and productive without a lot of intensive maintenance. Certain modern hybrids are selected for size and color of fruit rather than more important characteristics like the resilience of the plant, and therefore require chemical assistance. Obviously, these varieties are to be avoided. Particularly ambitious gardeners can develop their own hybrids the way it has been done for thousands of years. It is easy to find material in the library about how to save seeds from the plants that are the most successful in your particular climate and soil and plant them next year.

3. I have never felt a need for chemical fertilizers or pesticides. The rumor is that chemical additives are an imperative for success. Keep in mind that the agricultural revolution raged for thousands of years without them.
4. Do a little research at the library. Keeping your local climate and geography in mind, plan space and time to grow what you want. Don't be scared off by that five hundred page book that makes gardening seem like voodoo rocket physics, that book is for people feeding entire communities. You can do that next year.
5. It is way cheaper to start with seeds than seedlings; they are not hard to grow, you just have to start earlier and sometimes inside. Get your seeds from a store where they are sold by the ounce. They are much cheaper that way, plus the kind of store with bulk seeds is generally a place with knowledgeable employees. They will think it's cute that you are trying your first garden and will most likely be helpful.
6. Spread out your harvest. Plant in several waves to insure that you are not hit with too much produce all at once.
7. It can be helpful to get your soil tested for proper Ph and balance of nutrients. Where I live, this can be done free of charge by the State bureau of agriculture.
8. Proper mulching can save a ton of water and weeding. If you don't have a mulching material, use newspaper. After your plants get a couple of inches high cover the soil around them with several layers of newspaper leaving holes for the plants.
9. Almost anything that can be planted in the ground can be planted in a five gallon bucket. This is perfect for porches and rooftops. Buckets can be collected behind stores and restaurants. Drill holes in the bottom and add a layer of gravel before filling with soil.

THE VIOLENCE/NON-VIOLENCE QUESTION: HOW (AND WHY) TO TRANSCEND IT.

(reprinted: *CrimethInc. Special Bulletin for Maximum Rock'n'Roll*, volume 2, number 1)

There are about 1500 of us gathered there in front of the hated Millennium Clock in downtown Sao Paulo. The college kids, members of some Communist Party which has organized this, are there in great numbers, with their little membership stickers on their shirts; but plenty of people from other walks of life are there too: older, poorer workers, bohemian types, middle-aged anarchists and syndicalists, even about one hundred and fifty anarcho-punks. The last group is beautiful for me to see, growing up as I did in a country

where most kids in mohawks and leather jackets spend their lives sitting in front of shopping malls: yeah, they have mohawks, and leather jackets (decorated with more political slogans in Portuguese than Exploited skulls, however), but they also all wear bandannas across their faces, like old-fashioned outlaws, and carry backpacks filled with projectiles, gasoline, and paint. They're clearly not here just to chant slogans.

Everything is pretty peaceful at first. There's a radical hip hop group performing from the top of a painted up double decker bus, people playing drums and dancing, a few people trying to burn Brazilian flags (which are all made out of asbestos, it seems). Some of the kids, carrying signs, walk out onto the broad street (eight lanes—this is the second biggest city in the world) to stop traffic; they're pretty orderly, not really ready to get too crazy, and when the police line moves forward to sweep them back onto the sidewalk, they don't resist too much. But the police, having gained a little momentum, push a little further into the crowd than they are welcome, and a scuffle breaks out. They seize one young man, with the domineering pomposity that characterizes anything pigs do, and everyone rushes forward, pulling him away from them and shoving them back. The pigs brandish their clubs; a little space opens up between them and us, charged with a palpable electricity. Into this space, with a sneer of abandon that I recognize well, leaps a young punk kid, who hurls a rock at the face of the Clock which towers fifty feet above us all.

The floodgates burst. From all directions rocks and paintbombs and even molotov cocktails are being hurled at the Clock; the pigs pause, stunned for a second, then charge at us. One courageous soul dashes past them to throw fuel on a fire which has started at the foot of the Clock. People are screaming and shouting all around—none of us have felt this kind of adrenaline in a long time. Tear gas is suddenly in the air. The glass on the face of the digital readout of the Clock shatters, and the glowing numbers go out. The police raise their guns and fire shots over our heads, real bullets. A rock comes flying through the air and hits one of them dead in the face. He crumples like a rag doll.

But I'm getting ahead of myself. [George

Tabb, cat yer heart out!]

First, for those who have never been to Brazil, let me explain what this was about—then I'll talk about the implications. At the time of this writing, Brazil has just celebrated its "500 year anniversary"—that is, it's been 500 years since the Portuguese first landed there, killed all the men, raped all the women (the majority of the modern day inhabitants are descended from this, I'm told), and looted the land bare, before bringing in African slaves to work plantations so that MORE wealth could be squeezed out of the country and into the pockets of Western nations (and a very select few rich accomplice locals). It's histories like this that explain why nations like Brazil are so poor today, and why the Western nations that raped them are so rich (it has nothing to do with who was/is more "civilized"—the opposite, in fact).

Of course, the people who hold power in these nations today stand to gain more if foreign corporations come in and continue to exploit the locals (read as: "enable Brazil to join the global economy," etc.), so they are doing their best to make the Brazilians associate themselves, their history, and their interests with the European colonial powers rather than with the ancestors those powers slaughtered. When we were in Brazil, the most visible signs of this propaganda campaign were the Millennium Clocks: in the center of every Brazilian city, one of these fifty foot tall monoliths (decorated with a picture of the world, no less) counted down the minutes to the 500 year anniversary. All of them (like EVERY public monument celebrating the invasion of the colonists) had to be guarded 24 hours a day by gun-toting members of the military police, for obvious reasons. My friends in Belo Horizonte had thrown a lone molotov at the Clock in their city before, but to no avail, so you can imagine how good it felt for us to see the face of one of these seemingly untouchable symbols of capitalist domination smashed and covered with paint in Brazil's largest city.

Sure it felt nice, you're thinking—but did it do any good? How about the actions of the Black Bloc in Seattle, or Washington, D.C. for that matter? Now that things are really start-

ing to heat up in the U.S., too, shouldn't we be addressing which approaches really "work" (my word choice there is deliberate, as you'll see below), and which kinds of activism are "counterproductive"?

These are exactly the questions I want to discuss, but first let's get back to the events in Sao Paulo. There's a sudden moment of stillness, as everyone realizes the gravity of the situation. The Communist students (you knew they would reappear, didn't you?) take this opportunity to throw themselves, with a display of courage that is admirable for unreconstructed middle class kids, between the police and the rest of the demonstrators, and are shouting, pleading with the pigs. The next gunshots were going to be fired into the crowd, but they aren't. Grudgingly, hatefully respectful of each other's strength, the two sides face off across a line of truce formed by college Communists fearfully clutching one another's hands. There are some more scuffles, and more rocks are thrown at the Clock, but things don't escalate further. The wounded policeman is borne away, and maybe a half hour later the demonstrators take over the highway, with no resistance this time, to march back from the damaged Clock.

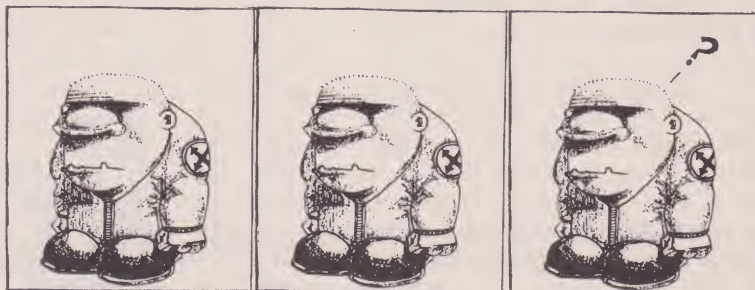
Through the second half of the demonstration we hear a fair bit of complaining from the Communist kids about those fucking anarchists, who don't know how to behave, and have screwed up yet another peaceful demonstration. Strangely enough, though, no one hears any grumbling about the college kids from the vandals and rock throwers. You'd think they would want to brag about how much more courageous and radical they are than everyone else, but no, they're quiet and respectful when it comes to their more peaceful comrades—despite the fires visibly burning in their eyes at the sight of cops assaulting their friends. Could it be that they understand how they benefit from the presence of the more "moderate" activists, and vice versa?

For if it had just been anarcho-punks at this protest, you can be sure that they would have been shot at, beaten, and/or arrested, and no one would have intervened. And on the other hand, if it had just been well-behaved college kids, the whole thing would have happened without anyone paying it any notice at all—

ALL BRUTE AND
NO FORCE

— A CRIMETHINK KOMIK —

brought to you by the Brian and Brian Conglomerate
in association with
Non-Brian Technologies (consisting of a Non-
Brian and two plants)



the powers that be wouldn't feel like they needed to pay any more attention than the bored bystanders, and the kids would have chanted a bit and gone home feeling unfulfilled. One of the most convincing analyses I've read of the struggle for black power (liberals can read this as "equality" if you must) in the 1960's claimed that the holders of power and privilege were forced to bargain with pacifists like Martin Luther King, Jr. because they knew that otherwise they would have to reckon with people like Malcolm X and the Black Panthers—people who were not willing to be nice and polite and non-violent. I think that's a good example of how non-violent activism and direct-action activism can complement each other well, and this demonstration in Sao Paulo was another good example. The college kids were there to present the position coherently and to communicate with the pigs when the need arose, while the anarcho-punks and others were there to make the issues REAL and pressing for everyone there, ready or fucking not.

I'm sure many of you are worrying right now about the "bad image" that vandalism, etc. gives us and our ideas. For the moment, I'm not going to try to defend terrorism, or to explain (again!) the difference between initiating violent relations and simply pushing back when you're pushed on—so I'll just concentrate on the question of the "image problem." I always argue about this with my college activist friends... they think that whenever we do things that are publicly visible, we have to make sure not to seem "too radical" or else we will scare everyone away. I think there is a difference between being radical and alienating others. Being accessible (i.e. making it clear that what you're doing is something that others can and will feel comfortable doing with you) is extremely important, but it does NOT necessarily mean we have to tone down our radical messages or actions—perhaps the contrary.

The problem with trying to be accessible to everyone at once is that different things make different people feel included or excluded. The same nice clothes that may make my college friends look good to their bourgeois parents when their protest airs on TV can alienate the fuck out of the poor people down the street from the protest (and which of those two groups do you think has the more revolutionary potential?). By the same token, putting a brick through the window of a building that belongs to the capitalists these same people know are responsible for the mess of their community (to quote the old Profane Existence article, the masses are NOT asses) might speak very plainly and accessibly to them. If we're trying to appeal to others, we must have flexibility in our approach, and recognize when the time is right for wearing suits and speaking nicely, when it is right for

smashing windows and setting fire to public monuments, and when it is right for both at once.

At the bottom of my friends' fears about seeming too radical—this is my guess, at least—there is a profound insecurity that is a bigger problem than any poor press could ever be. For decades now radicals in the U.S. have tried to downplay their beliefs, as if these were something to be ashamed of. This insecurity helps others to see these ideas as crazy, while the real nutcases on the far right get to talk about all sorts of nonsense with the certainty that the concepts they are throwing around (God, country, etc.) will be accepted as absolute values by almost everyone. Thus these motherfuckers can act so smug and confident about their bullshit that everyone is afraid to question it at all, lest they seem "extreme." I think it's time for all of us to be visible in our radicalism, confident and self-assured (without being snobbish or confrontational, of course), so that others will understand that our ideas are nothing to be ashamed of, and will not be ashamed of or try to hide whatever sympathetic feelings they have, either. If nothing else, being cheerfully, openly radical sure opens up access to a lot of ground between you and the so-called mainstream, ground that becomes safe for others to inhabit without appearing TOO crazy: "well, I'm not as far out as those CrimethInc. girls, but I do think there are some serious problems with modern representative democracy..." And it might well be that people haven't come to the radical left before because the solutions we were offering just didn't seem radical ENOUGH, given how disenchanted everyone is—ever thought of that? So as for whether smashing shit sends a message that is too radical—well, perhaps the more radical the better.

Also, it's worth mentioning that not every political action has to be done for the sake of how it LOOKS. There's something valuable about doing what you do for its own sake, not in order to sell your ideas (the way we're used to selling everything in this society). Without moments of authentic and emotionally honest action, like the assaults on the Clock in Sao Paulo or on corporate storefronts in Seattle, we can totally forget what we're trying to do in the first place as activists (which is work towards a world safe for free, authentic action,

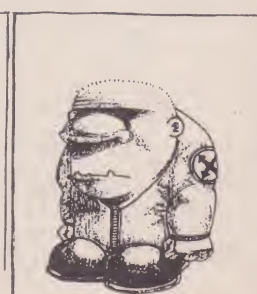
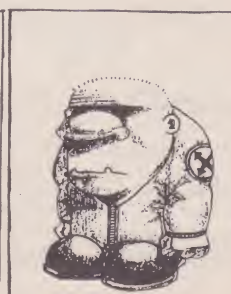
right?) and become totally lost in our role as salesmen, the branch managers of the revolution. In this sense, like it or not, the anarcho-punks and the Black Bloc are acting for all of us, simply giving voice to a different aspect of our desires than other activists.

Above and beyond how our activities are seen by spectators, the real crux of the issue is this: any resistance movement, call it "Left" or what you will, is only going to work if everyone who is interested in resistance can find a place for themselves in it. We can achieve this NOT by establishing one dogma about methods and ideology, but only by finding ways to integrate the different methods, needs, and values of different people into approaches that work for everyone involved. It's not very anti-authoritarian, or even humanitarian for that matter, to prescribe the "one true path" to revolution and demand that everyone else follows it regardless of their differences from us. If we can't find a way the Black Bloc and the middle class student activists can work together, we'll be stuck back at square one, where we have been for the last thirty years: the same old endless infighting, the pointless squabbles and blood feuds that make us look ridiculous and alienate everyone else—because people want SOLUTIONS, not new teams to join.

That's why politics has been off-putting for most people for so long: because the majority of the people who HAVE involved themselves in it have done so not because they genuinely wanted to find better ways to live and get along, but out of an insecure need (created by the capitalist impoverishment of our lives and selves) to establish an identity for themselves. An identity is always established in contrast to those of others, of course—so, although he probably didn't recognize this, your old-fashioned political activist actually had a stake in others NOT joining him in his cause. That way he got to be the smart one, the noble hero fighting for everyone's freedom, while they, the dumb unwashed, waited for his help—or despised him and his glorious ideas, "not understanding them." The truth was, everyone else could sense that he was acting more at the behest of his own insecurities than out of a real desire to build bridges to others or live authentically for himself, and therefore assumed he didn't have anything of value to offer to their real lives.

In building the new, powerful resistance

ALL
BRUTE
—AND—
NO
FORCE
a CrimethInc. comic
—1998—



that recent events have demonstrated IS possible, we need to leave the "activist identity"—and ALL identities—behind us. Yes, it's important to talk together about what will work and what won't, and to think carefully before we act or declare support for others' actions; but we have to be more ready to listen to each other, and to accept each others' differences (no, I'm not saying we should welcome Nazis, for you fucking morons out there). But the whole "violent activist" (or vandal or whatever you want to call it) versus "nonviolent activist" thing isn't going to help any of us get anywhere, it's just another of the false choices we're used to in this so-called democracy (Pepsi/Coke, Clinton/Bush, competing football teams, etc.). Instead, let's think about what we can gain from each others' different methods, and how to unify them into something mutually beneficial—for it is such interlocking, mutually beneficial relationships and methods that are themselves the model for sustainable lives in a revolutionary world.

As one of my fellow CrimethInc. workers once said: "Anyone who isn't on both sides of the issue is obviously against me from some direction." Scene unity, yo.

CrimethInc. Black Writers' Bloc, 2695 Rangewood Drive, Atlanta, GA 30345 U.S.A.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION: PROTEST AND THE STATE

by Eric Boehme

Street demonstrations and property destruction have had a storied past in American history. Striking directly at the powerful British Tea Industry, indirectly at Parliament and the King, the Boston Tea Party was a form of political participation that addressed the same issues as anti-globalization protest. Protesting aims to put pressure on government either directly through violence, or indirectly through public opinion and institution-building. Protesting predominantly is issue specific. In other words, protesting builds pressure for incremental change, to enact public policies. The supposed uniqueness of anti-globalization protest revolves around the very ambiguity of what is being criticized. What policies or programs would protesters generally agree upon if given the chance to have an impact? The spectrum

might range from a stronger state and government to a radically decentralized participatory democracy.

Today the means of delivery for raising the voice of the people in protest is the mass media. Media coverage of the Seattle protests made Clinton respond and claim a moderate position on strengthening the state against corporations. In this case, exposure by the media benefited protesters supporting incremental change in the state. Generally the media frames protesting against the state as either a violent confrontation or a street party. Violent confrontations receive less legitimacy as protest in the eyes of the average American. Furthermore, public opinion often supports the use of state violence to "protect property." Framing the protest as a street party, the media delegitimizes the protesters voice, framing the participants as inarticulate, hedonistic, and marginalized.

Protesting seeks to create a crisis of legitimacy between citizens and the state. Outside the usual forms of political participation such as voting, campaign volunteering or contributing, protesting seeks to influence an institution by questioning either its workings or its very premise. Protesting aims to bring some voice to the people, some input for the direction of political and economic institutions. Whether that voice wants institutional reform or institutional transformation, protesting speaks the dissatisfaction of the way one's life is organized. Public opinion is sought and the state may face a crisis of legitimacy to which it responds with either incremental change, radical change, or reaction and repression.

Accepting incremental change means accepting the fact that the state has a legitimate monopoly on violence. Violence is in effect regulated by the state. Without a strong state, the competition of the market heaps subtle levels of violence upon us in terms of environmental devastation, increased "risks" of living in advanced industrial society and class distinctions. Actual violence occurs without a strong state as the struggle for resources pits races, classes, and genders against each other. State building also means institution-building, developing specific programs to alleviate and channel the effects of violence. Yet states protect and do violence to their own populations. Either through the

subterranean violence of law or the blatant creation of public distinctions through specific policies like segregation, states regulate violence.

Protest often seeks to criticize, limit, or overthrow the state's ability to regulate violence. Accepting incremental change means realizing that states enact particular policies that build and support particular institutions. Institutions are useful for regulating violence. Unions support the state. They support building the state to enact better regulation on working environments, enforce wage laws, and protect workers from the competition and violence of the market. Many environmental groups support the state. They would empower the Executive Branch to enforce strict environmental standards and pursue litigation against polluters, reducing the potential for violence through environmental destruction. Some anti-corporate groups support the state's ability to regulate commerce, tinker with the economy, and develop the institutions of civil society to protect against violence. Nader even came to prominence through groups trying to direct the state to regulate a kind of violence done by consumer products.

While this means the state can exercise violence upon its own people, it also means that protest can pressure the state to punish the excesses of corporations and curb the worst effects of consumer culture. For those who support the state, the sword cuts both ways. Accepting a realistic possibility of incremental change, one legitimizes the political institutions of this country. Public opinion often supports protesters with agendas of incremental change, as in the anti-war and Civil Rights movements show. Legitimizing and empowering the state to enact change, protest can make a difference. When public opinion supports protesting, elected officials notice and begin to enact legislation. Accountability results. The voice of the people is heard.

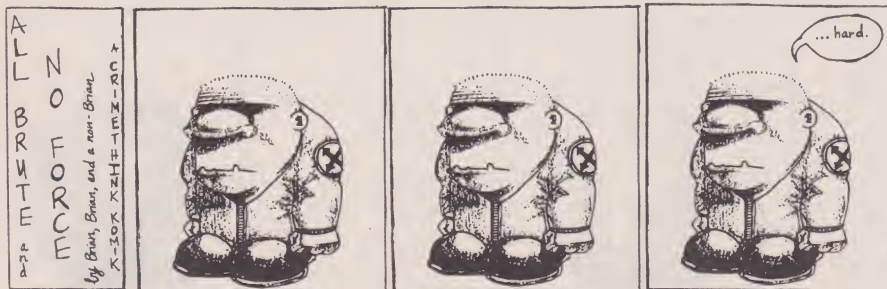
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Editor's response: Don't seek incremental change in the State—erase the State!

Eric, I'm sorry we didn't get to discuss this together first, rather than my thoughts on your article going straight into *Inside Front*, but this is the final night before it all goes off, so it seems there is no alternative. I hope you won't fault me for saying my piece here.

I think the most valuable thing about the anti-globalization protests of the past year is NOT the "pressure they put on the State" to do things for us. I believe that the State having power over our lives is itself a fundamental problem, one which is essential to the misery of modern man, and I don't want to have to run to one



bully (the State) to protect me from another (the corporations). The State may limit some environmental destruction, just a little bit, but as long as the hierarchal distribution of power (human society as competition rather than cooperation) on which the State is founded exists, the ones who are merciless enough to claw their way above us in the hierarchy game (the corporations, who do this by cheating us out of the same resources they use to maintain their psychological and practical stranglehold on power) will have the basic ability to keep destroying shit and fucking us over: because they can buy that right in the courts and senates, and we can't.

The "voice of the people" is NEVER "heard" by the State—the existence of the State is simply the condition of the voice of the people being suppressed. Sometimes we may make them give us a little ground, so they won't be in danger of losing control—that's all that happens in the cases of "incremental change" you speak of. The Boston Tea Party was the harbinger of a full-scale revolution, you'll recall, not a small change in British policy. We desperately need to stop accepting the "divine right of kings" and governments and corporations to hold the power, and get it back where it belongs, in our hands.

Of course, to be able to do this, we'll need a revolution in the way we get along and care for each other. You suggest at one point that State control prevents us from fighting among ourselves as we compete for resources; I see State control as the ultimate expression of the hierarchy created BY us fighting among ourselves for resources. When we can learn to share rather than fight, States that hold power over us will be unnecessary.

Therefore: acting directly and autonomously to prevent the corporations from going about their destructive business isn't interesting to me because it might enact "incremental change" (i.e. REFORMISM—leaving the State in place to dictate our lives for us, but asking for a longer leash and a cleaner cubicle)—it's interesting because it is a chance for people to learn about using their own power to do things together, rather than deferring to some State or authority. It is through experiences like these that people can get the experience they need to figure out how to utilize their own abilities to get out from under the control of the much-talked-about Powers That Be.

And so I also want to say: fuck the power of the media, too. I'm not opposed to the efforts of those who want to use the media to work towards specific ends in the short run, but in the long run our freedom and survival as a species (seriously!) depend entirely on whether or not we can shrug off hierarchical distribution of power, information, and the power to communicate information—that means rendering the existing "mainstream media" obsolete by creating alternatives and helping people see the benefits of simply ignoring the networks out of existence (which may include burning down some billboards).

Your article does do an excellent job of indicating some of the serious drawbacks of protest politics. Protests, unlike actions (example: the Seattle protest became an action, when it succeeded in achieving the objective of temporarily disarming the W.T.O. ...a wider-ranging series of actions like this would constitute a war of free women and men against their oppressors, not snivelling begging to the Higher Powers), assume the existence of a Master, of whom requests are being made. What I think we really need to do now is use whatever resources we can get our hands on to Do It Ourselves, negating the power of government by simply not recognizing it (and fighting it whenever we have to, but only when we can gain from that fight)—and for this to work, the most important question of all is: how do we find ways to encourage others to join us in doing this?

WHY I LOVE DUMPSTER DIVING

by anyone, anywhere

Nothing compares to the feeling of elation, of burdens being lifted and constraints escaped, that I feel when I slide that lid back and hop inside a dumpster stocked with possibility, when the mountains of trash produced by this filthy society cease to be mere refuse and become materials. Dumpster diving is the ultimate expression of tact and savvy, it is pure evasion. Everything that sucks about capitalism is immediately inverted when the late night dumpster diver finds her score. Poverty becomes abundance. Loss becomes gain. Despair becomes hope.

Tactics:

The first thing is to find out who in your town is wasteful. I have found that newly opened businesses in yuppie parts of town are often unaware of the wonderful things they throw away. They make good targets; but you have to be careful not to piss them off. A disenchanting yuppie is twice as likely to pad lock a dumpster as a shop owner from a more working class background. Many yuppie shopping centers will be ripe for the "double d" but have security guards that patrol the area. It can help to disguise yourself with an apron or a name tag. When questioned, look extremely annoyed (in true yuppie fashion) and say: "I'm taking out the garbage, you moron," or something to that effect.

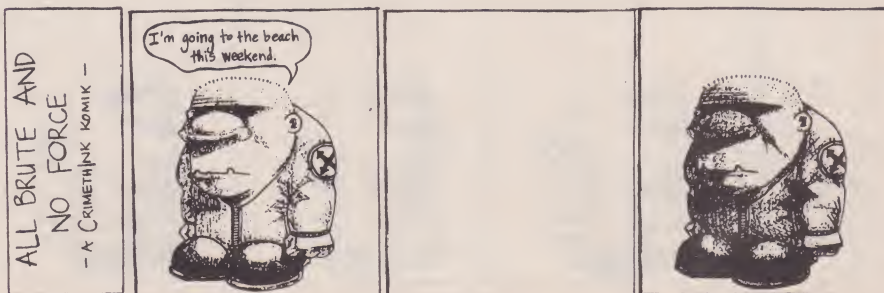
If you live in a college town, it should be obvious. College kids throw out more useful garbage than perhaps any other class of people on Earth, especially at the end of a semester. Near the end of spring, the campus here in Greensboro is swarming with scavengers of all kinds. A fellowship exists among us, but there are no rules, no traditions in this game of findtkeep; some secrets are shared, others we keep to the grave.

Successful dumpster diving is not only a question of *where*, but also *when*. It involves precision timing, especially when it comes to frozen goods and other perishable items. There was storm here not too long ago that cut out the power for a few days. Many businesses were throwing out their frozen goods because their freezers were failing. This constituted an opportune moment, prime for the savvy dumpster diver to collect many otherwise unavailable items. Moe and I, for instance, were able to dumpster 10 frozen pizzas, 5 apple pies, 12 packages of Morning Star corn dogs, 6 boxes of Boca burgers, and 16 quarts of almond bark Tofutti, not to mention nearly 13 back issues of *Seventeen* magazine (so that we could work on Moe's love life). It took us a total of 3 and half hours and roughly 6 trips to and from the dumpster on foot. We hoarded it all and fed ourselves from the cache for roughly two weeks.

Psychological Effects:

Among other things, dumpster diving is a powerful anti-depressant. In the middle of one desperate night, I left the house in disgust to go for a walk and try to clear my head. I was listening to Black Sabbath and grumbling bitterly to myself when I ran into my friend Nirmala on Tate Street. On a whim I mentioned, "Hey! wanna go dumpster diving?" She had never been, but she was ready to go. We left the world of despair behind and walked to Friendly Shopping Center, where I took her on my usual rounds. In the end, we walked away with: 1 bag of potato chips, 1 garden salad, as much bread as we could carry, 3 bags of cookies, and oh my god the flowers! We got flowers! We took them back to the apartment and made them into a bouquet on the back porch; it was so romantic, I felt like french-kissing Nirm just being caught up in the moment!! But I didn't...

While we were behind the florist sifting



through the scraps, a Wackenhut Security officer pulled up in a white ATV with green police lights. "I'm gonna have to ask you to leave," he said dryly. Completely swept up by the idea of beautiful dumpstered roses and tulips, I sauntered up to the Enemy and, saying nothing, offered him a white carnation. He refused: "I'm allergic to flowers." His eyes never met mine and his hands never let go of the steering wheel. We gathered our flowers and left the scene; it was obvious to us all what was going on.

On the other hand, dumpster diving can be risky for the recovering bourgeois. Once I was climbing out of the dumpster behind a bread shop, drooling and giggling (of course), and just as I was leaping out, two of the bread shop attendants came out the back door. They looked at me, I looked at them, then we both looked at the huge bag of bread I was toting like Santa Claus. "I... uhh..." started to explain but the two went back inside before I managed to get out my doctoral thesis on free food. They looked a little appalled, I felt a little weird. It wouldn't have bothered me much except that I recognized one of them to be the little sister of a kid I was in drug treatment with a number of years earlier. I shrugged it off and set about my way. Before I could make a clean break, however, the two emerged once again, this time with a loaf of fresh potato bread to give me. "Um, thanks," I said. I don't think she recognized me.

Sustainability:

I try not to be noticed, but war is war. In my experience, it always serves the dumpster diver to go unseen. I usually make my rounds after store hours and try to clean up the dumpster a bit, leave it in better condition than I found it. However, if the store owner becomes openly hostile, I say fight back. If they padlock the dumpster, squeeze a tube of super glue into the key hole and leave a lengthy manifesto with death threat.

Superstition:

First and foremost: never be afraid to get inside the dumpster. The dumpster gods do not like window shoppers. Second: if a dumpster appears fruitless, do not assume it will always be so. The dumpster gods smile upon those who show persistence. I had to go to the CVS dumpster once a week for months

before I finally found it filled to the top with fresh ice cream bars. Third: if you find something useful, *take it*. The dumpster gods deserve respect, keep them appeased and all will go well. Last week I found an umbrella, on a day as hot and dry as every other one this summer; today, it's been pouring rain torrentially since we woke up, and I've got to go to the bus station.

Warnings:

Some of us have had a problem with this, that's why I bring it up: you've got to watch out for scabies. It was common among us for some time to acquire our sleeping arrangements from a mattress store down the street that would throw away the old mattresses their customers brought in when they got their new mattresses. We have also been tempted by the many foam cushions people leave out with their trash on Thursday nights. Sometimes these seemingly dreamy cushy cushions are infested with little bugs that get in your skin and try to eat you. This is a condition to avoid—be careful.

Another thing to watch out for is rat poison. Most common in larger cities, shop owners often pour Clorox or other lethal substances onto their edible goodies out back to deter the presence of our fellow dumpster divers, rats. Sometimes you can smell it and sometimes there will be discoloration on the packaging. Be sure to inspect your score and stay away from the sketchy ones.

"Dumpster juice." It's a bad thing. Sometimes you just don't need to go any deeper.

Scavenging:

Trash picking is a fine art, it takes experience and intelligence to cultivate your skill. Something changes in the mind of a scavenger as she becomes expert, something strange and hard to define. Where others see garbage, she sees opportunity. Where others see junk, she sees valuable materials. There is a moment in the life of every serious dumpster diver when she realizes that her hands and feet have super power and are capable of incredible things, if they are in the right place at the right time, with the right idea. It is a mastery of the resources at hand that gives the scavenger her power. To the extent that she can see the unseen, to the extent that she can match her

wild imagination with the sea of trash before her, is the extent to which the dumpster diver can realize the true possibilities hidden from the rest of society, hidden in the trash.

Some items obtained:

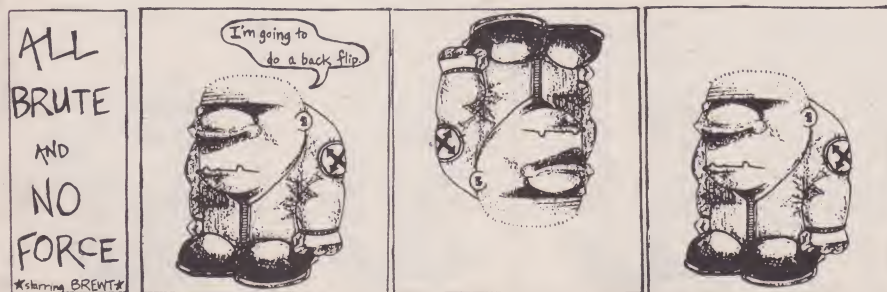
- one 15'x 6' sheet of industrial museum foam
- twenty pounds of steel shavings
- over one hundred VHS jewel boxes (for video project #1)
- one pair of white mule work gloves
- one custom guitar amplifier
- mountains of bread
- rivers of coffee
- miles upon miles of romantic Christmas lights
- one container of shark cartilage supplements (among other hippieyuppie health products)
- "The Enchanted Caribou" (children's book, found in Toronto)
- did I mention bagels?
- flowers, oh the flowers
- one greasy massage table
- one "frozen" pizza (slightly moldy, eaten after three days baking on the dashboard of the Catharsis van)
- twenty-five banana flavored power bars
- silk-screening ink
- various home furnishings
- one Dutch bass player
- more Ben and Jerry's ice cream than is healthy for any human

If you're not careful...

epilogue (backlash):

In the summer of 2000, I found myself caught up in a great purging, an elimination of the physical objects surrounding my body and choking up my home. It started as a simple room-cleaning, one Saturday afternoon around 1:00 PM. By 2:00, things had changed: I was throwing out cassette tapes and dirty clothes. By 2:45 I was throwing away stacks of things I meant to mail to people (effectively sending them through the other postal system...). Soon I realized this was more than a mere physical cleansing of my dwelling space; it had become something primal, something *that had to be done*. At 3:00 I started in on the home furnishings, and then the pots and pans. By 9:00 AM the next morning, my house was completely empty. I threw out all of my belongings as well as all my brother's (who was away for the weekend). I threw out the shelves from the refrigerator, and then dragged it onto the street as well. The experience was simultaneously terrifying and liberating.

A few minutes later, I looked out the window and saw my friend Jason digging through our trash, my old sneakers in one hand and the thrill of discovery on his face.



RIMBAUD, VERLAINE, MATHILDE, AND THE HATLESS PRIEST.

by Liz, Visible Woman

Dear Brian,

I can't write a column for *Inside Front* after all. I wanted to a lot and I really did try, but I'm finding that it is just beyond me. I think it would take about four years of deep psychological analysis and another four years of silent meditation and maybe four years after that of solitary travel to get to the bottom of what I really feel about freedom and responsibility—or maybe that's not it exactly: independence and interdependence. No, that's not it either—and I guess that's the first problem. The thing I wanted to write about doesn't fit into a neat dichotomy of action and reaction or yin and yang. In fact, the more I examine my problem the more it refuses to stand still for definition at all. F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote "The test of the first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function." At least on this project I have ceased to function.

I'll try to explain what I wanted to do so you can see the difficulty. It began with the piece in *Days of War Nights of Love* about Arthur Rimbaud. Do you remember it? "Rimbaud wreaked havoc throughout Paris, knocking the hats off priests in the street, verbally and physically assaulting the popular poets Verlaine introduced him to, and destroying Verlaine's marriage." As the book tells it, Rimbaud's life is an invigorating account of independence and adventure, a kind of inspired selfishness, a life lived entirely in the wild borderlands of human possibility. But as I read it I began to wonder: what about Madame Verlaine? How would the story sound if she were telling it? She was, you know, almost the same age as Rimbaud—16 when Verlaine met her and began courting her (courting her, I should point out, with the same relentless obsession that he later pursued Rimbaud). She wrote poetry herself; not good poetry, it's true, but her own. It was poetry that attracted her to Verlaine, ten years older than she was and already balding and unromantically working in a city office. Her first words when he was introduced to her were "I like poetry very much, Monsieur." You can imagine how short a step it was for a 16-year-old girl from loving poetry to loving a poet, especially one who would slip little poems, lovely sensual little poems, into her hand as he was leaving her parents' house. Who knows what magnificent future she imagined they would share.

My idea was to write in Mathilde's voice—I wanted to write a little dialogue for her and a priest, one of the priests who had had his hat knocked off in the street. My imaginary Mathilde tried to describe the intoxication of

those early days with Verlaine. "I saw windows opening in all the stuffy drawing rooms of France," she said. "I saw highways unrolling at our feet, bathed in golden light. It seemed that we would spend a lifetime dancing naked together across the rooftops of Paris. Can you remember"—she asks the priest this—"what it feels like to be young, to yearn for freedom, to be filled with that aching desire to have everything matter? To long so deeply to translate everything familiar and ordinary in life into a new language?"

Of course in real life Mathilde's marriage was hard from the very beginning. Verlaine, already a little frightened by his own excesses and most particularly by his addiction to absinthe, had married an idea, not a woman—he wanted an angel, a redeemer, a mother, a muse—and he didn't have the capacity to liberate Mathilde from his own romantic imagination. They were married after a year of exquisite, urgent, unfulfilled desire (this was 1870 remember) but almost immediately he rejected the flesh and blood reality of his young wife. She apparently disappointed him in bed and he returned to his absinthe drinking, beating Mathilde at night and begging forgiveness in the morning in floods of weepy, sentimental remorse. Poor Mathilde!

Then came Rimbaud. Mathilde actually met him first, if only by a few minutes. Rimbaud, you may remember, had been sending his poems to Parisian poets—although at 16 he had explicitly rejected all poetry that had gone before, he still longed for recognition. Verlaine sent him train fare to Paris and went to meet him at the station, with no idea that the poet he was looking for was a boy in homemade clothes and rough hand-knit stockings. They must have walked past each other on the platform; in any case, Verlaine waited for the next train and Rimbaud made his own way to Mathilde's parents' house where she and Verlaine were living. So it was Mathilde who was the first to welcome Rimbaud to Paris.

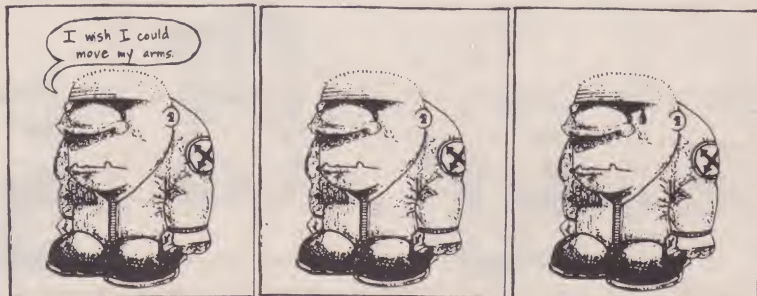
What did she think of him? He was by all accounts an attractive boy, tall and blue-eyed, with tender skin and big hands and big feet, although in the photographs I've seen he looks sulky and severe. All the biographers suggest that Mathilde and her mother were taken aback by his crude manners, but my

Mathilde—the one I wanted to invent for you—was more complicated than that. She was hugely pregnant at the time, emotionally shredded and patched back together by Verlaine's capriciously alternating kindness and cruelty, lonely, frightened, and still very young. Perhaps Verlaine showed her Rimbaud's poems; perhaps she simply took them out of his coat pocket while he lay snoring on the bed, but however it was I think she had seen them. To be certain, one half of her was repelled by Rimbaud's rudeness, selfishness, and lice, but the other half, my invented half, was half in love with him. Not long before he left his village home for Paris Rimbaud had written a letter to a friend that was to become the famous manifesto for a new poetry, in which he called—you've heard this quoted many times, I'm sure—for "a long, immense and reasoned deranging of all the senses." But there is another passage in the letter, quoted less often: "When the endless servitude of woman will be overthrown," Rimbaud wrote "when she will live for herself and by herself man,—hitherto abominable,—having given her her release, she will be a poet, she also! Woman will discover some of the unknown! Will her worlds of ideas differ from ours?—She will discover strange, unfathomable, repellent, delicious things; we shall take them, we shall comprehend them."

Rimbaud joined the household. Of course the arrangement didn't last. Mathilde's father, who had been traveling, returned; the next month the baby was born and Rimbaud moved out. He derided Verlaine for his bourgeois devotion to his wife and new son, and soon Verlaine was out every night again with Rimbaud, falling in love with him himself. I see one last meeting between Rimbaud and Mathilde: a strange one. I imagine Rimbaud returning to the house to get something he had left behind and encountering Mathilde in the hall. She has just come from the nursery; her dress is still unbuttoned and her hair is loose. Rimbaud blocks her way, and when he reaches for her she does not resist. He opens her dress and leans over, takes one of her breasts in his mouth, and he bites her—hard, so hard that he draws blood, the red drops mingling with the white milk. She cries out and runs away, pulling her robe around her. They never meet again.

That scene is my invention (although

This strip brought to you by the BRIAN & BRIAN CONSUMMATE IN ASSOCIATION WITH NON-BRIAN TECHNOLOGIES (consisting of a New Brian and two pants). Ingredients: All Bristle and No Fowl. No artificial colors or flavorings. No calories. 100% D.I.Y. Processed on machinery that also processes peanuts and other nuts. SELL BY DATE: 3/1/86



Columns

Lucky Number

Rimbaud's casual cruelty is not—remember that Rimbaud once drew his knife across Verlaine's palm simply because Verlaine had offered him his hand). Not long after that imagined scene, however, Verlaine and Mathilde had their own well-documented final meeting. Verlaine and Rimbaud had left Paris together; Mathilde followed them to Brussels and met Verlaine in a hotel room—perhaps in search of “strange, unfathomable, repellent, delicious things” she presented herself to him naked on the bed and they spent the afternoon in lovemaking. Verlaine had always believed that his time with Rimbaud was an interlude, that he would return to the security of Mathilde's comfortable household when he was ready. Now he decided it was time: he and Mathilde boarded the train together, still scented with each other's sweat, but as they pulled away from the station Verlaine fell silent, looking out the window. When the train stopped at the Belgian border he got off and ran away, sending a cruel and insulting farewell by the stationmaster.

That was the last time Verlaine and Mathilde met face to face, although for years Verlaine kept begging for a reconciliation. He went on to become one of France's most revered and distinguished poets; Mathilde remarried, a building contractor this time, and passed out of history. As for Rimbaud, the book outlined the rest of the story: “Rimbaud, disgusted with Verlaine, who claimed he couldn't live without him, decided to leave. In desperation, Verlaine shot Rimbaud, wounding him in the wrist. The police came and Verlaine was jailed for two years, on charges not of assault but sodomy; meanwhile Rimbaud escaped to his mother's farm, where he completed the body of poems that was to change poetry and writing itself forever. Then, at the age of eighteen, Rimbaud put down his pen and announced that he was done with being a poet.”

Have I explained my dilemma at all? It's partly this: secretly each of us believes that we are the central player in the drama of our own life, and that everyone else is just part of the supporting cast. In this drama, however, Mathilde was not allowed to choose her own part: without consulting her, Verlaine and Rimbaud cast her in the allegorical role of “middle-class respectability” and then proceeded to systematically kick her to bits. In

my imagined dialogue she tells the priest “Their freedom put me in chains.”

The priest was such a small part of my dialogue that I never bothered to even invent a name for him, but he did have one important thing to say: he tells Mathilde about an afternoon when he was walking down the street and Rimbaud ran by and knocked his hat into the mud. “It was awful,” the priest says. “The hat was ruined and I had to proceed to my next appointment bare-headed with every person in the street staring at me. But”—this is the important part—“do you know, when I look back at that spring that is the only afternoon I remember? All the rest is lost in routine and duty, but when I think of that one extraordinary afternoon I can feel the sunshine and the wind, see the startled expression of the passers-by, hear the carriages passing. It was, perhaps, the only hour that season when I was truly alive.”

So would Mathilde have been happier if she had never married Verlaine? Would Verlaine have been happier if he had never met Rimbaud? He certainly wouldn't have been as good a poet—in the months that he and Rimbaud shared a series of cheap rooms in Brussels and London his poetry leapt off the page and became the poetry that is reprinted in anthologies. What about George, Verlaine's baby son, abandoned by his father? He grew up—this is documented in the biographies—an unhappy, selfish, alcoholic man, his father all over again but without the poetry. Could Verlaine have saved him?

The three central players—Verlaine, Rimbaud, Mathilde—have taken over my imagination. There is Rimbaud, the dark angel, dedicated to impulse and desire. There is Mathilde, forced to be a plaster saint, representing convention and respectability. And there is Verlaine trotting between them, never quite able to choose. He's the least appealing of the three, but the truth is he is the most like the rest of us—dabbling in freedom, dabbling in convention, trying to find some way to hold onto both. I know that you yourself lean more towards Rimbaud than Verlaine. What, therefore, would you advise a 16-year-old who wanted to follow Rimbaud's example? Steal her parents' ATM card and take a Greyhound to California? Break the lock on the music store door and take all the instruments? Drink anything, smoke anything, embrace

anyone among the broken glass and weeds down by the railroad tracks so long as it deranges the senses? Burn it up, burn it out, kick it down, use up your poetry as fast as you can?

Instead of a dialogue I'm left with scraps of paper covered with questions written at random moments—stopped in the car at a red light, standing with my grocery cart in front of the frozen food case. I'll assemble a few for you: Must following your own desires always hurt other people? If it must, do you still have a responsibility to other people? Is freedom isolation? Does being a genius give you special rights? Can you be a genius without assuming special rights? Can you assume the rights without being a genius? Do you owe something to the world for the choices you make? And what is happiness? Is there value in orderliness and responsibility? Is the only way to reverse a mistake to walk away from it? Mustn't we always remember that other people are also fluid and growing, with their own sets of desires that sometimes contradict our own? What if part of the pleasure of freedom is taking more than our share? How do we know what, and who, to sacrifice? And, finally, is poetry—art—worth it?

So, Brian, that's all—I'm really sorry, but I just can't do it. I hope you can find something else to fill the space.

Love, Liz (406 North Mendenhall Street, Greensboro, NC 27401)

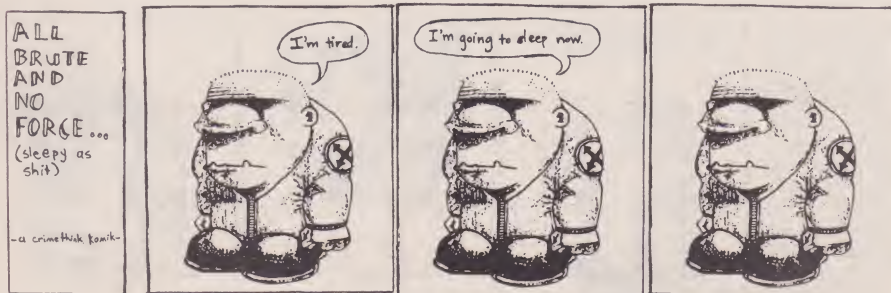
THE POSSIBILITY OF PERFECTION

by Eric Boehme

I've been holding these standards for years now, like some secret personal ad written on my heart. You: Dionysian, passionate, intelligent and soft, decisive and political, cut from this cloth, veggie and vogue, attractive and secure, outspoken and funny but never demure. Me: Apollinian, insecure, seduced by the form, cautious but curious, the calm and the storm, compete and sometimes play fight, stay up bleary all night, body and mind, committed. . . But I never could get past committed. In everything I do, commitment. To myself, and to you. But how can I negotiate it? Commitment means having standards, having perfect blueprints to fight for, to pursue. Does having standards of perfection, for myself and the people I love, inevitably doom all of my relationships to substandard copies? How can I imagine the possibility of perfection between us, that I would one day find some-one. One, who would match my secret personal ad?

Body

Can you, without any hypocrisy, criticize the beauty myth and the objectification of potential sexual partners but still think physi-



cality and attraction are important to a relationship? You live in your body, a body with desires created through your social environment. You're attracted to certain people, certain looks or body types, you're not attracted to others. You harmonize well. Fitted deep into arm crooks and bent elbows, back of knee-scents, and protruding shoulder blades. Desirous body, you battle the mind. You consume all in your path. A brief glance. . .but you know body, you know the first test has been passed. Leave me alone mind, you know this is how we were raised, images of beauty, images of perfection. Masterful pornographic perfection.

You desirous multiplicity, many sources create your pleasures. Yet which sources should I trust? Which origins are untainted? You've tried to change your origins, deny the social construction, the daily existence in the society of the beauty myth. Why do you so desire to be with the beautiful? The secret personal ad includes attractive. It must. Should you be ashamed? Seduced by the form, the cheapest manner of ignoring the mind. Yet pleasurable nonetheless. Tearing against your friendships, you, body always looking elsewhere. You, masterful body, flit and echo, experiencing without cessation, digesting and forgetting, cutting a swath miles wide. Always already moving to where the grass might be greener. Objectification dictates fluidity. Bodies desire objects. Is that how you are? Is that the secret you must accept?

You body, volatile and violent. Pain becomes you. You inflict it on others too, objects. Just, only, merely, barely, slightly bodies for conducting pleasure. You body, consume others. But digesting hurts because you body, are all alone. To stop consuming body, you must be hurt. Perfect secret personal ad, to find you, you must hurt me. To stop for a moment to say beauty doesn't matter. But can it ever not matter? Irony that you use beauty to soothe that hurt, body. For it is beauty creating violence to body, the never-ending motor of your desire.

Mind

Can you live the life of the mind, shaming your body because of the fucked up ways desire has been socially constructed? Can you imagine the possibility of perfection? You body consume, but you mind, possesses. Knowledge. . . of information, of secure relationships, of possibilities, of perfection. Bodies never know perfection, bodies know degeneration and death. You mind, imagine perfection, creating perpetuities of possibilities. Minds think desire can be fulfilled. Bodies know better. You mind, controlling and binding, anxious to keep, to hold onto, to remember, to store away.

You mind, try to possess the beautiful, to

hold it/them down, to capture the perfect stillness of frozen time, through the perfection of your mediated gaze. The mind's eye. You hold the beautiful, picture perfect and still, never moving iconic on a pedestal. You want to remember, not forget. You create the illusions. Mind, you think you lack beauty because your knowledge tells of the violence and the terrible instability of body. You try to possess, to stabilize, to hold and reassure because of that horrible knowledge. You mind, wish you could forget.

Trust

Paradoxes rife with contradictions, trusting body you do feel closeness. You might one day be able to trust. You lay and sigh, you know trust is a feeling not a thought. You body, trained not to trust, trained to fight or flight, your wish is the stillness of complete trust. The stillness of never moving, trusting, because you body, want to be cradled and at ease. Yet body, you must pursue ecstasy, you must move outside yourself as body. Orgasmic individuality, you body destroy trust.

Mind, you too might one day be able to trust. You add up the history, you grip and remember those times that body was cradled. You know reality is never perfect, you know form never matches content. But you mind, wonder if perfection is possible. Mind, you're trained to stop and consider, you press onward. You destroy trust. You tightly grip the secret personal ad, your glance strays, looking for perfection slipping out the corner of your eye. And the picture-perfect lock clicks closed the heart.

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PORNOGRAPHY AND THE REPRESENTATIONS OF THE EROTIC: A RESPONSE TO LIBERTINAGEM

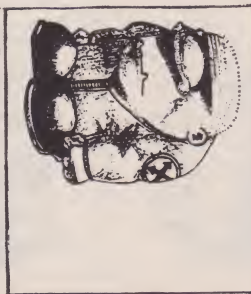
by Ferdinando P. Villa

Pornography is under constant attack, not only by the censors of the Christian right but by the liberals as well, turning this art (yes, art) into something clandestine, shameful, guiltful, steal-

ing all its libertarian aspects. The conservatives' argument is that pornography is dirty, an insult to good behavior; we assume we don't even need to counter this argument. The liberals' argument is that pornography is automatically sexist, degrading, and exploitative; this argument shows a great lack of knowledge, and, even if a little more hidden, this same disgusting morality seen on the Christian right. Yes, they're right in one point, mainstream pornography sucks, it is sexist, it is degrading; as such, we have no interest whatsoever in its use. In this same way, it is also true that mainstream music almost always sucks—but basing ourselves solely on this argument we wouldn't assume that all music sucks, ignoring all its subversive potential and all DIY musical experimentation that doesn't find in profit, fame and propaganda its main objectives. Following the same logic, there is DIY porn based on the subversion of values, on the experimentation of the erotic, on the coherence of pleasure, as an art, made by women and men alike who found strength in breaking social taboos and exploring their desires without guilt. Between 1500 and 1800, the first erotic writers and painters were part of the so-called heretics, free-thinkers, and libertines, who constituted the dark side of the Renaissance, the Scientific Revolution, the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, and used pornography to subvert political authorities and social relations. Centuries later, the modern libertines who see strength and self-realization in sexuality are not so far from that. Sexuality and eroticism is one of the most perfect art forms, one of the only ones where we can give ourselves to the moment completely, one of the most beautiful forms of contact between two human beings, therefore destined to be some of the most beautiful artistic expression. To the moral watchdogs: attack the true reactionaries, explore your desires without guilt or limitations; it's a lot more fun and liberating.

This proposal of a radical use for pornography was presented by the Brazilian band/collective LIBERTINAGEM in their debut release. While the LIBERTINAGEM members surely had good intentions when they came forth with the piece above, and, more importantly, talked about eroticism (do I hear giggling in the back?) inside a sexist and heterosexual environment which is, underneath the rebellion catch phrases, very conservative and still unable to break away from the old

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Christian/Judaic morals, still unable to liberate its sexuality, there are a few problems in their proposal and in the concept of pornography itself that need to be further addressed and discussed.

The writing above seems to deal with pornography in a historical perspective, when they talk about the "heretics, freethinkers, and libertines, who constituted the dark side of the Renaissance, the Scientific Revolution, the Enlightenment, the French Revolution," and, credit given where due, pornography (more specifically the murdered, burned and tortured who dared to experiment new and radical ways to enjoy life) deserves its place for bringing up the fact that people have fucked, like to fuck, and will always be fucking, regardless of who, where, or when. But back then things worked in quite a different way, the world was dominated by religious mysticism and a unitary pre-determinism not a bit interested in the co-optation of desire. The kings and priests of the old world hadn't found out that people could be profitable. If plagues, famines, and horrendous wars wiped out their kingdoms, people could just be expendable—the right to consume hadn't reached everyone yet. That was before mercantilism and market laws spoke louder than God's voice, it was before advertisement was born to convince every citizen of the need to consume a specific product for every feeling allowed to be felt (and for those not allowed as well: at every point in history there was always a black market). This was before Penthouse, before the discovery of the feminine body as a marketing strategy for an audience of masculinized, dumbed-down men who spend way too much time drinking beer and watching football. It was before the societies of diffuse spectacles were born, before representation came to be more important than essence, before everything was reduced to appearances. The old priests and kings were more interested in the word of heaven, the unitary mode of existence centered around pre-determinism, than to divide up that share and sell a slice of the market to every good citizen. If it is so, could the same circumstances of before be applied today, when images of unhealthy bulimic women are being used to sell every imaginable product on earth, when sex shops make a fortune selling products specially designed to improve your life and sexual per-

formance," a world of Barbie dolls, phone sex, online pornography, anorexia, Monica Lewinsky, Jerry Springer? To base pornography's worth today in its merit centuries ago is like saying Jesus Christ was a revolutionary (he was a political prisoner after all, wasn't he?). It's undoubtedly important to have a historical perspective and to know the other history, the one they didn't teach us in school, about the men and women who found out that life was much more enjoyable if you just stop tormenting yourself with morals dictated by somebody else and start to have pleasure, about how we can learn a whole lot by looking at the way these people expressed this kind of terribly repressed sexuality—not to mention it can be just plain beautiful to look at. Bodies can be wonderful. But it's even more important to know how to bring this to the present—nothing is static, and to treat it as so makes it all the more dangerous. It can be very dangerous to talk about pornography in a time when sex became just another product, one more sector in the quantitative organization of our carefully constructed lives. It can be very dangerous to talk about erotic representations in a time when images have come to represent every sensation that was previously experienced by the individual himself.

By reading the LIBERTINAGEM writing, one can clearly point out that it was written exclusively through the eyes of an author, of a creator of the erotic art on trial (them being a band, it's not hard to see why), and not through the eyes of the individual experiencing it—this point of view was kept entirely out of the picture. The author of a piece of erotic art can have numerous reasons to create an image, a representation of his or her sexuality. Maybe she would like a visual sensation of a sexual fantasy that has been tormenting her for years. Maybe she sometimes likes to express her own sexuality in other ways besides sex—maybe this can work more or less like an orgasm or sexual relation. It doesn't really matter why; human beings have always created images to express important happenings in their lives or in their imagination, and the sexual area of our minds is undoubtedly very fertile and worth being dug out. But in the process of creating an image and making it public, its author automatically creates a relationship to anyone experiencing this image, and over what foundation are these relation-

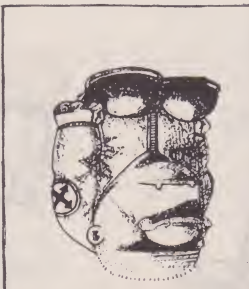
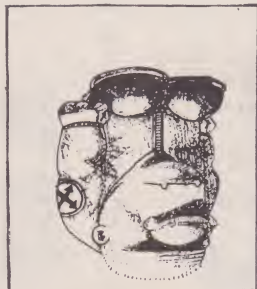
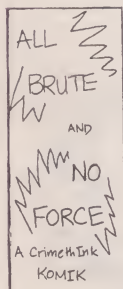
ships formed?

What are our relations to images and erotic representations? Why do they excite us? How do we use them? These questions were left aside of the original writing, and although too complex to be answered by this pretentious sex addict, I intend to dwell a little deeper on these and other questions that might come up when dealing with pornography and the representations of the erotic.

Erotic images are mainly used to stimulate our imagination (some people have a rather—um, bizarre use for them, but that's another story). Having visual contact with these images, we can create whole fantasies and scenarios where we are the absolute masters of everything that happens. In fact, this is the image's greatest advantage, in a society that's based on non-communication (or mis-communication), images cannot talk back to us. Images consent to everything we demand and desire. Images do not disagree, impose barriers, or get headaches. In short, it's a perfect world, where we and our images can fuck in peace in the craziest of ways, and among these four walls there is absolutely nothing to stop us.

But there lies the bigger problem. The image becomes an entity in itself, disconnected from reality, a fetishized and unreal object. If, for example, you masturbate using an image of Pamela Anderson's incredibly fake tits, or even your girlfriend's (the subjects used here are masculine because men in general tend to use more images to fulfill their sexual fantasies; the reason it happens would generate enough discussion for a whole new writing, maybe next issue), you're NOT having a real, complex relationship with Pamela Anderson or with your girlfriend. You might be looking at them, thinking about them, but your relationship consists in a merely objectified relation to separate and unreal entities.

In the real world, would Pamela Anderson even pay attention to your existence, would your girlfriend agree to what you're thinking? Maybe not (in the first case, most definitely not), but these imaginary entities would. And when we reach the point where we're spending more time worshipping a TV model practically nonexistent in real life, when we spend more time using images as escape valves for our most intimate, secret and unfulfilled fantasies than we do trying to learn how to communicate with our partners, being in touch with real bodies and complex individuals, exploring every unknown territory of our lovers' bodies, trying to bring up and work out the mutual fulfillment of our desires and fantasies, something is deeply wrong here. It can be quite scary to see what pornography can do to people. A friend of mine who used to work in a video store tells me about a single lonely middle-aged man who every week returns six porno movies and rents six more, infallibly.



Try to imagine this man's life—you don't have to be a genius to guess that, if he is occupied with a porno video 6 nights a week, there's not much room left for real human interaction and sexual contact. The time and resources spent on pornography also don't give much room for activities that are intellectually stimulating and bodily exciting. And while this man can be sure that his sexual representations and blonde hooters will always be on the shelves of the video store every time he gets a hard on, chances are that his problems, fears, and sexual anxieties will only increase and trap him in this artificial hell as he sinks himself deeper and deeper in a sexual uni-dimensional world of black and white social interaction.

But, as LIBERTINAGEM suggests, this is how all mainstream pornography operates—and we have to fight its evil ways with some kind of revolutionary and D.I.Y. pornography. They are right on one point, this is how mainstream pornography, being part of a bigger whole of division, appearance, hierarchy and market rules, operates. The mainstream sex industry is just like any other corporation on the planet, it exists exclusively to make profit, no matter at which costs. And maybe there is a certain value in magazines such as *Fat Girl* that, as the name suggests, brings very daring erotic photos of naked fat lesbian women, bodies the beauty standards say should not be photographed naked, should not be acknowledged as sexual, let alone published—and that are anyway in this great publication, going against every unhealthy image of blue eyed, bulimic blondes. But doesn't it create another problem? Doesn't it just expand our choices of having an alienated relationship to skinny women or fat women? Isn't this another aspect of the liberal thought that to be free means to have as many choices as possible? Isn't this why they fight to have Ralph Nader running for president, the "rights" of gays and women in the hierarchical institution of the armed forces—or D.I.Y. pornography?

Maybe this belief that is reinforced by LIBERTINAGEM, of some kind of conspiracy against pornography is making them stand up and defend this poor, lonely image cowardly attacked by all sides by liberals and conservatives alike, when maybe we should just leave pornography aside as part of the spectacle and look for some more fulfilling forms of eroticism. It's very easy to be caught up in this porn stance because at first it might seem like some kind of pro-sex, pro-freedom fight, and who wouldn't want to support these causes? But maybe this pseudo-libertarian fight would just create an illusion of freedom—a temporary relief that we are a little more free as long as we have the "right" to produce atomized porno. But is this the freedom we want?

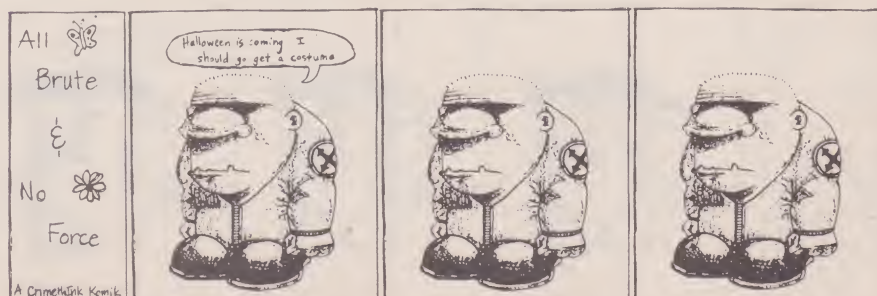
However, we have to consider: is pornography inherently harmful? LIBERTINAGEM manages to prove that the argument used by

liberal feminists that pornography is automatically sexist doesn't work anymore for us. A quick flip through the pages of a magazine like the mentioned *Fat Girl* would prove it to be anything but sexist and degrading. But LIBERTINAGEM's argument doesn't prove that pornography isn't inherently harmful because it always creates an objectified and unreal relationship. Liberating can turn into alienating just as easily. A D.I.Y. image is still an image, it still belongs to spectacular categories and objectified relations. So if images are inherently problematic, and if it is consensus that they will always exist in the specter of artistic expression, does this mean that certain spheres of life (such as sexuality) shouldn't mix themselves with images? Is it possible to use images in any healthy way? If the image is used solely as a stimuli to the imagination, a stimuli to a desire lost inside of us to be then realized with real lovers, can we break the image's spectacular status?

In my opinion, images are inherently harmful *while images*. Which means that, while the object created continues to be a mere representation, an entity separated from reality, an escape valve for our forbidden desires, images contribute directly for non-communication and non-realization of life. The actual problem does not reside in the image per se, but in the society that created the need for such images, and why they are needed. The spectacular relation of the image does not operate independently—it reflects the society which it belongs to. Therefore, if the system has created this artificial necessity of sexual representations and false relationships, the images we create and experience normally and without interference will correspond to this function. The whole problem is when a creation of our own escapes our control and becomes an independent entity, thus taking control of us and the way we experience the world. It's the old principle that the human being alienates itself when it becomes the attribute of an abstraction that it created itself, but no longer recognizes as such, becoming instead an entity in itself and turning the human being into its object—God, the State, or images.

When images start to construct our desires for us, to be the subject of our relations for us, when the definition of sexuality is determined by someone else for us, it's time to take our lives back. And the only way we can achieve it

is to work our way towards a society that collaborates for the mutual fulfillment of our desires, not for their destruction; for the realization of life, not its suppression; for some kind of cooperation that would still allow us to be individuals so we won't have to rely on images and representations to guide us to the sensations this world can offer us. Images should exist solely to be deconstructed, dismantled, transformed, used according to the reality of each individual (if desired). The only acceptable image has to be shareable, imaginable, expandable, accessible, free. Only when we abolish this system of market rules and hierarchical power will an image (or anything else, for that matter) cease to be a product, a commodity, and become free to become an active participant in the fusion of art, sexuality, and life into one. I think by now it has become obvious that this system does little for our happiness, that any image created will correspond to its alienating function, so what are we waiting for? Me and LIBERTINAGEM are not in opposite sides—I still believe sexual art has place in life, that when we find life we will also find control to give enough wings to our deepest desires and their realizations. I don't want my erotic stories to be someone's fetish, someone's escape valve, because they could never do what I write about in real life. They are way too important to be commodified so easily. I want them to be weapons, words inflamed with passion and desire ready to explode. But first, we have to create conditions for our sexuality to flow freely, beyond any constraints, free of alienation, co-optation, or exchange value. To think what could happen if we could live our sexuality however way we wanted, whenever and wherever we wanted, it gives me more than enough reason to risk everything in the name of the extreme sensuality of being truly free. Therefore, lovers, paint, roll over paint with your naked bodies, make love over the Mona Lisa, write, let the pen be guided by your most intense orgasms. There is no image in the world, no representation, no matter how real or how virtual it is, that beats the smell of a lover's body, bodies rubbing, hands slipping through curves and cavities, lips touching, tongues sliding, sounds of pleasure being exchanged. If we can work our way through some kind of life that attracts us, perhaps we can also work our way towards some kind of anti-image,



that reduces images to their base form—useless, dispensable. Like witnesses to a terrorist action, they are only useful while they can spread the myth. Afterwards, their existence is pointless.

It is said that Henry Miller wrote with his penis. Did you know that when he died nothing was found between his legs but a fountain pen?

contact: through *Libertinagem* address (see reviews section)

CAPOEIRA, THE DEADLY DANCE

by Robin Banks

My first exposure to capoeira (pronounced ka-po-AIR-uh) was in the martial arts video game Tekken. There was a character in the game called Eddy Gordo whose style seemed a bit like breakdancing, a bit like kung fu, and a bit like acrobatic tumbling. When I finally found out that Eddy Gordo's fighting style was called "capoeira," I knew that I had to find out more about it. Here's what I learned.

The History

Capoeira was developed hundreds of years ago by renegade African slaves in Brazil, who were influenced by ancient African martial arts such as sanga. They had been captured and enslaved by Portuguese imperialists, who then sold them to Portuguese settlers in Brazil. Some of the slaves escaped into the mountains which surrounded the Portuguese plantations, and it was there that they honed the craft of capoeira. The escapees would then sneak back to the plantations and teach capoeira to the other slaves.

This is the main reason why so much of capoeira seems like elaborate dancing and ritual—any martial art practiced by slaves was a threat to the slaveowners, and so the slaves concealed their skills within graceful dances, music, and chants. Eventually the slavemasters caught on, and any slave found practicing capoeira could be put to death. However, the slaves continued to practice in secret and passed their skills to their children.

In 1888, the Brazilian government abolished slavery; four years later, it criminalized capoeira. Due to economic hardship and racial discrimination against the former slaves, jobs were scarce, and as a result many capoeira gangs sprang up. These gangs, known as mal-

tas, were hired as thugs by the wealthy. Business owners would hire maltas to rob or trash rival businesses; elite criminals would pay maltas to beat up groups of cops. The maltas never used guns, knives or any other weapons—only capoeira. Eventually, capoeira became associated solely with criminals and gangs, but despite (or maybe because) of this, it continued to grow in popularity.

In 1920 capoeira was legalized in Brazil and the first capoeira school was opened twelve years later. For decades, capoeira remained within Brazilian borders, but by the 1970s capoeira masters (mestres) were moving to other nations and opening their own capoeira schools. It has slowly grown in popularity, especially since the movie *Only the Strong* (not to mention the relatively recent movie *The Quest*) was released, not to mention the debut of Eddy Gordo and Tekken. Capoeira will be an official sport in the 2004 Olympic Games.

OK, now you know the roots of capoeira ... but still, what is it really all about?

The Art

Capoeira was and is a game, a dance, a ritual, a musical performance, an exercise, and a form of combat. Practitioners of capoeira, known as capoeiristas, are also musicians and singers.

When practicing or fighting in formalized matches, the spectators and capoeiristas form a circle (roda) around the two fighters. The roda is headed by a group of musicians and singers (the bateria) who provide music, rhythm and poetry to accompany the battle or practice session.

The bateria begins its music and the capoeiristas begin their fight. In formalized capoeira (practices and matches), it is against the rules for any part of your body to touch the ground except for your head, hands and feet. If you are knocked on your ass or fall on your back, you lose. The vast majority of capoeira matches do not involve bodily contact—it's mostly a matter of feinting, dodging, turning, leaping, and otherwise faking out your opponent. Capoeiristas are considered highly skilled if they can humiliate their opponents by repeatedly pretending to strike vicious blows instead of actually causing injury.

I was unable to find much about capoeira in the context of street combat—for example,

do the capoeiristas pull their punches or kicks when fighting cops? Do they spend time doing flashy tumbles and cartwheels, or does capoeira become more focused and brutal when your life is at stake?

I'd like to read more about the lives of early slave capoeiristas as well as the early mestres such as Mestre Besouro, who was notorious for fighting cops and escaping capture and death. If anybody finds some decent books on capoeira, please write and let me know (robinbanks@disinfo.net).

The Scene

Why is this article in *Inside Front*? What does capoeira have to do with hardcore punk? Think of the parallels—a group of people form a circle with musicians at one end. Dancing fighters (or fighting dancers) leap into the center of the circle, coming quite close to physical contact but always just barely missing. When the dancers do inadvertently strike other dancers or bystanders, they are considered clumsy buffoons, and the best dancers are those who display great skill and form without actually injuring anyone. Sounds like a hardcore show, doesn't it?

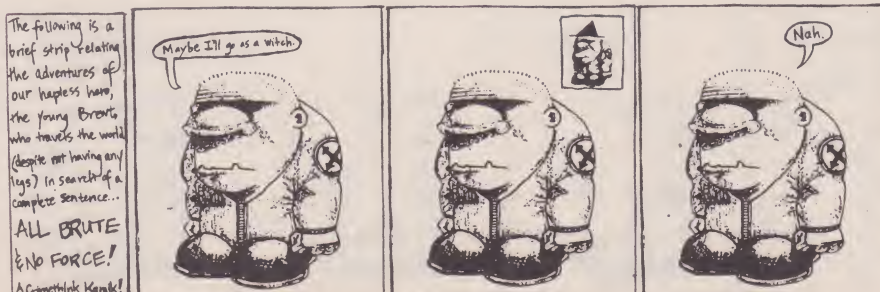
The very idea of a deadly martial art concealed within an aesthetic medium like dancing is fascinating. It's a great metaphor, too... what deadly ideas are contained within the aesthetic ghetto of hardcore punk, and how can we apply those ideas to our daily lives? Capoeiristas may learn their skills in capoeira classes with ritualized music and singing, but in the streets they retain their deadly kicks, acrobatic grace, and self-confidence bestowed by capoeira. What lessons do we take from our own rituals of song and dance? Is hardcore punk just another aesthetic commodity and subcultural ritual like country music and line dancing, or is there something greater contained within, something we can apply to our daily lives in valuable ways?

FELA ANIKULAPO KUTI: THIS IS HOW IT'S DONE

by Robin Banks' Monsanto-manufactured duplicate, Robin Banks

From Africa to America to the Kalakuta Republic

Fela Ransome-Kuti was born in Nigeria in 1938, son of a Protestant minister and a teacher. His upbringing was typical of the Nigerian middle class—as "good Christians" and good citizens, they strove to fit into the power structure imposed by white imperialists. When he was twenty, his parents sent him to London to study medicine, but Fela instead studied at the Trinity School of Music for five years. He formed a few bands which played a style of music known as "high-life," a sort of



light, danceable African pop. Fela blended high-life with jazz to form his own unique sound.

Nigeria was liberated from British colonialism in 1960. Three years later, Fela returned to Nigeria and formed a new band, Koola Lobitos, with several other Nigerians who had studied music in England. At this point Fela was not at all politically conscious; he was slowly becoming a successful musician who wrote popular love songs, and his idea of fulfillment was to be a wealthy pop idol.

In 1969 Fela decided to take Koola Lobitos to the United States for an extended tour, where he changed the name of his band to Fela Ransome-Kuti and Nigeria 70. While in Los Angeles he met a Black Panther, Sandra Isidore, who opened Fela's mind to the politics of Malcolm X, the Panthers, and other black radicals. They stayed up late, engaged in a passionate argument about radicalism and Pan-Africanism (the idea that all black people are Africans, as opposed to Nigerians, Ghanians, Egyptians, Jamaicans, or African-Americans; an idea espoused by many reggae artists including Bob Marley and many hip hop artists including Dead Prez).

By morning, a seed had been planted in Fela. Sandra loaned him several books which he read and re-read avidly as his United States tour concluded. When Fela returned to Nigeria he was a completely different person. The band changed its name again, from Nigeria 70 to Africa 70, reflecting Fela's new Pan-Africanist beliefs. Fela also changed the name of his nightclub to The Shrine, where in addition to performing his new conscious music he would also give lectures on radical politics and Pan-Africanism.

Fela had dubbed his estate the "Kalakuta Republic" as a sort of joke, but by the early 1970s it became very serious. He declared the Kalakuta Republic's independence from Nigeria and many of his fans (who lived in the same neighborhood!) followed suit and joined the Republic. The upper crust of Nigerian society (consisting of white businessmen and their Nigerian allies) began to consider Fela Kuti a threat.

Against the State

Fela changed his name to Fela Anikulapo, which means "he who carries death in his pouch." From this point on, nearly all of Fela's songs were politically charged. Some were sarcastic or humorous jabs at government or police and some were direct attacks on specific officials or policies. He developed a new style of music which became known as Afrobeat, a combination of traditional chants, trumpets, piano, and drums, all blended smoothly in free-form jazzy jams. One of Fela's songs would take up both sides of a long-playing record; the first side was an instrumental build-up, and the second side

featured his vocals. Fela also considered the recording of a song to be its obituary, and after a recording session he would rarely if ever play that song in concert. Because of this, Fela's new style never found much success in the United States, where audiences wanted recognizable three-minute pop hits, not thirty-minute improvised jam sessions.

In Nigeria, however, Fela's music was an enormous success. He was more popular than ever, but instead of accumulating his wealth and cultivating an image as a playboy-musician, he used his money to develop the Kalakuta Republic (for example, he built a hospital on his land and opened it up to the people!) and hire more musicians. The name Africa 70 now meant the number of musicians, singers and other performers on stage during Fela's concerts.

Fela was repeatedly beaten, arrested and interrogated by government officials. The attacks increased as Fela and his ideas became more popular. As Osofisan says in his brief biography of Fela, "In Nigeria, power has always been, since Independence at least, in the hands of a certain elite, made up of men who got their wealth through being the local agents of white companies. Fela's message, that we should stop serving the whites, that we should develop our own black resources instead, was a direct threat to this ruling class. His message, that we should turn away from the colonial religions, because they had been and were still the instruments of enslaving our minds, turned the numerous Christians and Muslims against him."

The End of the Kalakuta Republic

A crucial event occurred in 1977: a thousand government soldiers attacked the Kalakuta Republic and burned it (along with the hospital, the Shrine, and many other facilities). During the attack, all of Fela's musicians, supporters and allies in the Republic were severely beaten and many were arrested. Fela's mother, by now a radical Pan-Africanist feminist in her own right, was thrown out of a window by soldiers and ended up dying from her injuries. Fela and his supporters later put his mother's coffin in a bus, drove the bus into a military compound (crashing through the gates, avoiding machine-gun fire from the guards), and laid the coffin at the front door of the Nigerian general responsible for the

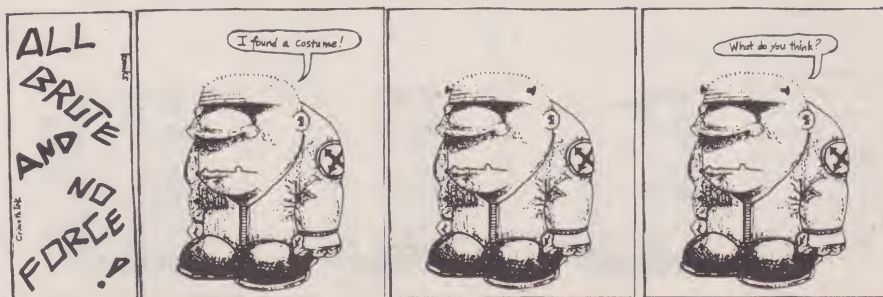
attack.

Fela and his people moved to Accra in Ghana to escape Nigerian repression and to plan a world tour in response to the government attack. On the first date of the tour, which was one year after the destruction of the Kalakuta Republic, Fela performed in a packed stadium in Accra. The first song he played was "Zombie," his satire of Nigerian soldiers, and fighting broke out between his fans and police in the stadium. The fighting turned into a massive riot. Fela and his band were arrested and sent back to Nigeria after being permanently banned from Ghana.

Upon arrival in Nigeria, Fela and his group began squatting in the offices of his record label, Decca, for two months. Then Fela moved to Ikeja and formed his own political party, Movement Of the People, which was almost immediately banned by the government. Fela tried for years to build Movement Of the People and get elected but was continually thwarted by the government through legal means and through violent police repression. A succession of military coups crushed any hope for democratic elections, and so Fela gave up on his campaigns for office.

In 1984 Fela was imprisoned on false charges and served twenty months. He was released when the judge revealed that he had jailed Fela solely because of political pressure from the top down. When Fela got out he formed a new band, Egypt 80, and began touring the world. His politics were as radical, passionate and powerful as ever, and his repeated world tours helped spread the popularity of Afrobeat and Pan-Africanism. He ruthlessly criticized colonialism, imperialism, and United States/European policy towards Africa. One of his biggest hits at this time was "Beasts Of No Nation," a song about Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan (which wasn't actually released on LP until 1989).

Fela continued agitating against Nigerian government regimes and foreign colonialist powers until his untimely death from AIDS-related causes in 1997. His funeral drew over one million mourners, many of whom believed that Fela was actually murdered. Fela's son, Femi Kuti, is also a musician and activist. Femi founded an organization called Movement Against Second Slavery (MASS) which is not a political party but rather a



direct action group which works against corrupt government and corporate interests.

I was introduced to Fela Kuti's music and legend by the band Bread and Circuits, who include samples of Fela's music on their Ebullition CD and explained a bit about him in their liner notes. The first Fela Kuti CD I got was "Coffin for Head of State" which is about the government attack on the Kalakuta Republic and the murder of his mother. The other song on the CD is "Unknown Soldier," which refers to the government report on the destruction of the Kalakuta Republic. The report attributed the illegal attack to "unknown soldiers." Fela's response is to sing of revenge: "Unknown police/they kill nine students/we get unknown civilians/they kill two soldiers."

Fela's family is re-releasing his LPs as CDs. Most of the CDs have only two songs on them, each song being around fifteen to forty minutes each. I recommend "Coffin for Head of State/Unknown Soldier," "Let's Start" and "Black Man's Cry."

Sidebar / Footnote:

What can we learn from Fela Kuti? He was wildly popular and revolutionary at the same time—is this possible in our country, in our culture? Personally I'm not sure, though I lean sharply towards saying "no," simply because our consumerist/capitalist culture has an amazing capacity for absorbing, defanging and repackaging everything imaginable, including hostile attacks on the culture itself. An American Fela Kuti (can you think of any candidates for this title?) would have to be on a major label, tour constantly, release songs instantly to cope with the here-today-gone tomorrow nature of American politics, struggle daily to resist commodification, avoid bullshit legal harassment (trumped-up drug or tax charges, for example), and also build a real political movement, not just sing about discontent and revolution.

I think it's also important to realize that Fela did not spring from his mother's womb as a mature musical genius and political radical, but to recognize that he (like all of us) went through several phases of growth. It wasn't a spontaneous bolt of lightning that caused Fela to become a radical; it was a single late-night conversation with a new friend who encouraged him to read a few books. All radicals

should learn something from this—talking with friends or acquaintances can completely change their perspectives, not just on politics but on their daily lives. Do you write off non-radicals? Then you're making a huge mistake. Talk to people—friends, family, strangers—share your ideas and analyses with them. Don't be an elitist asshole either by not listening at all or by talking only in haughty, inaccessible, academic language—don't use radical code words like bourgeoisie, class war, syndicalism, imperialism, etc.—in fact, don't use any "ism" words at all! Please, fly out into the world and set a dozen hearts on fire. Maybe you will befriend and inspire the next Fela Kuti. You never know until you try.

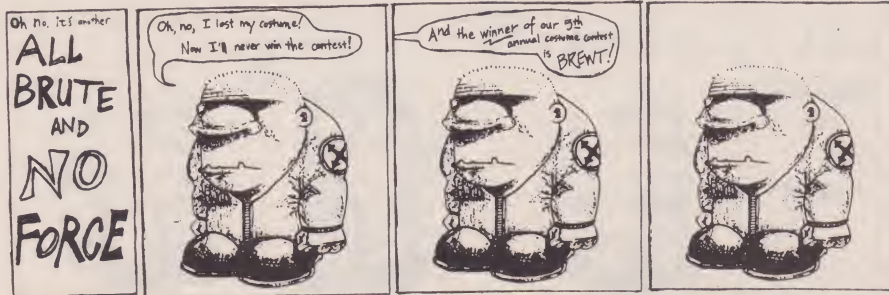
DEATH: FUN FOR EVERYONE OR JUST A PAIN IN THE ASS?

by Greg Bennick

I want you to imagine the character "Pig Pen" from the Peanuts comic strip by the late cartoonist Charles Schultz. Foreign readers unfamiliar with the strip would do well to imagine a dirty young boy surrounded wherever he went by a three-foot diameter cloud of dust. Do you have the visual in mind? Excellent. Now, for our purposes tonight, replace the dust that surrounded Pigpen in the comic strip with the odor coming from my body in real life, in this moment, as I type these words. As I always aim to provide the reader with the most exacting sensual experience possible, please allow me to describe the odor for you: it is a blend of cigarette and marijuana smoke, human sweat, a touch of beer, and some other unidentifiable tidbits thrown in as well. "But Greg," you might ask, "Why, if you are of the committed drugfree variety, would you be smelling of the long-forsaken weed or beer?" The answer, dear reader, is because I attended tonight the event of the decade thus far...the single greatest night of Dionysian bliss one could ever hope to find in this new millenium...the one thing which could pull me out of my recent state of existential dread (to be explained later) and into the direct heart of life itself. Yes, you guessed it: tonight I went to see Iron Maiden play at the Tacoma Dome.

I find it difficult to describe in words just how much I love Iron Maiden. There is no other band in the world which embodies the creativity, innovation, ridiculous premises, and sheer metalness contained in these six (yes, count them, six!) British lunatics (The current tour features all three guitarists from their last few years together onstage with bassist Steve Harris, frontman Bruce "Tattooed Millionaire" Dickinson, and drummer/psycho Nicko McBrain for a total of six Maidens for your simultaneous viewing and listening pleasure). They had it all, from fire and explosions to feet up on the monitors for guitar solos, to lights and moving sets...whew! "But Greg," you ask, "What was the show itself like? Would you tell us, in the CrimethInc tradition, of what the experience FELT like, what PASSIONS were aroused in you as you stood within that Temple of Metal?" Well, it was like being thrown back to 1985: a sea of long haired white guys in various KISS, Motley Crue, and Metallica shirts talking loudly about how they were ready to rock, dude. On the way in, I mentioned to my friends that the difference in the crowd now as opposed to '85 is that many of them probably held stock options for dot com companies and were simply posing for the evening as metalheads. Rather quickly however, as we drifted through a sea of humanity beyond description - filled with interlocking devil horned handshakes and cigarette lighters ready to punctuate the ballad filled darkness of the arena - it became obvious that at least some of the people there were the real deal: the true metal maniacs of yesteryear, the Bill's and Ted's of a bygone day. I wondered where these people had been for the last decade or so. I realized that though I'd seen them from time to time around Seattle, I'd just not had the chance to observe them in their natural habitat or in as concentrated a space as I was able to observe that night. The most frightening thing I saw by far was a metalhead of about 35 or 40 years of age standing WITH HIS SEVEN YEAR OLD SON, both wearing matching Queensryche t-shirts and jeans. "My god," I thought, "They breed." This was a terrifying thought, and it was one that had not occurred to me in 1985: that metalheads actually produce offspring. It is for the best that this was a new thought. Had it crossed my impressionable teenage mind during the 1980's, it would undoubtedly have sent me into a state of panic comparable only to Nostradamus or the National Enquirer in terms of an apocalyptic vision of what the world might in fact become.

As for the band themselves? Six forty-somethings wearing jeans and white high top shoes with three of the six in Iron Maiden t-shirts, bless their little hearts.



Bruce Dickinson was amazing on vocals, sounding even better than the records...HE should be giving lessons to all of us hoarse hardcore singers. Rumor has it that Bruce is a world class fencer in his spare time. Can anyone confirm this? I was ready for the show. About three years ago, at a Trial show at Gilman in Berkeley, a guy came up to me with a gift. It was a set of cassette tapes he had made for me featuring every song, outtake, and B-side Iron Maiden had ever recorded. That guy, wherever he is right now, is proof to me that Nietzsche was wrong: Good and evil *do* exist: GOOD=that guy, and EVIL=anything which harms worries or concerns him until the end of his days. He should be knighted, bronzed, canonized, or all three.

I left the show feeling very alive...in fact tingling with life...or was that the effects of residual pot smoke? (Perhaps I should quantify/clarify my self-proclaimed straight edge title with something more specific and accurate: "straight edge except when receiving second hand bong hits from metalheads"). Arriving home to my beloved Cynthia, I could not begin to express my joy. After all, how would someone who went through a finite metal "phase" (metal is forever, my love) listening to Kix and Extreme EVER understand what it was like to kickbox in the center of a pit of metaloids during "The Trooper"? Forget it. I can only hope that she and I continue to connect on other levels, since metal, in all of its splendor and glory, seems to be out of the picture for her.

"But Greg," I hear you ask, "What is this column really about? Surely you can't expect to retain our ex-worker collective attention for even one more paragraph if all you keep typing about is middle aged metalheads, one of which you yourself are quickly becoming?" Ah true, my friends, and so I refer you to the title of this column. I had spent quite sometime trying to decide what to write about, given the intensity of the last column and the implications of the previous ones. The problem is that I live in a state of writer's block. I do not find "writer's block" to be an occasional occurrence which inhibits my process of putting words on paper. Rather, I live in that state, constantly unable to write, and the rare "writer's unblock" is what actually frees me to pour ideas onto the pages of zines worldwide. With that, I offer you the following:

"The idea of death, the fear of it, haunts the human animal like nothing else, it is a main-spring of human activity - activity designed largely to avoid the fatality of death, to overcome it by denying in some way that it is the final destiny for man." -Ernest Becker.

I have been obsessed with death recently.

In a way, perhaps "obsessed" is not the right word as I have not been only able to think thoughts of death and dying. Rather, it would be more accurate to say that many of my actions are influenced by the foreboding feeling that my eventual death is a reality, and inescapable at that. I suddenly *feel* time, rather than just experiencing it at a distance. I was walking recently with a college professor friend of mine who just turned 50. I told him that I often worry that I am not living fully enough, that I am afraid to die, and that I need to come to terms with death in a more comprehensive way somehow in order to feel alive again. He stopped walking, turned to me and yelled with a smile, "What is wrong with you, man? You are having a fucking midlife crisis at age 29! You are 20 years too early!" Good advice, and I guess that is what friends are for, but it didn't heal me completely by any means.

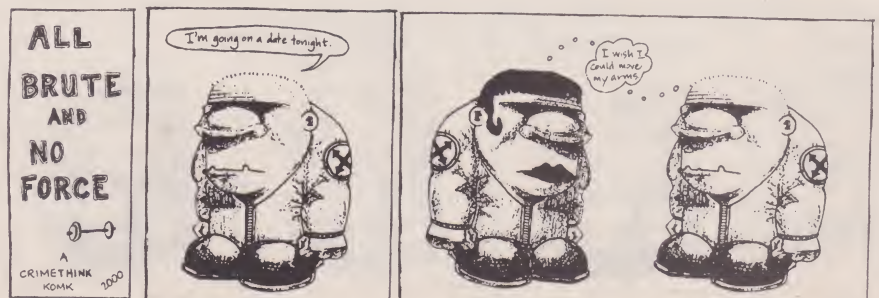
The quote above is by Ernest Becker. Becker wrote a book called The Denial of Death, which I would ask you to remember if you remember nothing else from this column. Find the book and read it from cover to cover and let me know what you think. Keep in mind that Becker was a student of Freud early on, and his descriptions of Freud's ideas in Chapter 3 should be pushed aside a bit in favor of focusing on the book's central theme. Freud was a sexist jerk; Becker a genius who went far past Freud in terms of overall vision. Becker explained that the world is terrifying, with the cause of the terror being death itself and our fear of it. He said that the basic motivation for our behavior is our biological need to control our fear of death, which he saw as the primary anxiety facing us in our lives. This is an anxiety that Becker argued we attempt to keep unconscious because it is so overwhelming. He suggested that we attempt to overcome death by constantly involving ourselves in a social hero system which makes us believe that we will actually transcend death by participating in something of lasting worth. Becker called this the *causa sui* (cause of the self). Ultimately, in his second book, Becker described the social implications of this "immortality striving" and its effects on society. He argued that our attempts to destroy terror and ugliness through involving ourselves with projects

seen as the highest good ultimately had the paradoxical effect of bringing more ugliness and terror into the world. We would trample and destroy all of those around us in our attempts to transcend this existence.

The implications of Becker are overwhelming. If we are motivated constantly by the fear of death, and if we deal with that by involving ourselves with projects that we hope will insure our immortality, then what is that to say about such seemingly basic tasks as writing this column? Couldn't it be argued that the reason I have pursued this task so consistently, worrying when I couldn't decide what to write, was because psychologically my entire existence depended on the outcome of the challenge? And I am not joking. What if the psychological implications of not completing this column on time were that I would be cast aside and not remembered by future generations of people on this earth because I had failed to provide the world with something lasting? Becker suggests that art is a result of that immortality striving. He would suggest that a root cause of creation by the human animal is to craft life into a tangible form which will outlast the body, which of course, is finite.

Becker suggested that we are in continual competition with one another as well through our immortality projects. He suggested that what we fear is being left behind while another attains the transcendent, and as a result, we do whatever we can to insure that we are the one who survives, who wins, controls, and dominates. Again the implications here are astounding. What does this say about all those who flip people off while driving (he/she who gets there faster or more efficiently wins the race), or succeed in business (he/she who makes the most money wins the race), or for that matter - and in order to stay focused here - those who kickbox during "The Trooper" at Iron Maiden concerts (he/she who clears the most space on the floor and frightens the metalheads wins the race)?

Ultimately, the effect of thinking this way can be restrictive. Reading Becker put me into the aforementioned state of existential dread, where I worried about death and thought about it clearly for the first time. Or rather, for the first time in my conscious mind. I found myself concerned with what



Columns

Lucky Number

I perceive as a societal lack of acceptance of death, an ignorance of it so to speak, and an unwillingness to contemplate or face it on any widespread scale other than for its shock value in the media. There is a distancing which happens in media representations of death. The images we see play on our fear of death and our wonder about it, but do not directly address the issue. We all suffer as a result. The restrictive element enters when we consider the implications of Becker's thought: if I am motivated by a fear of death, and if my actions are inspired by a psychology far deeper than I can readily perceive, then what is the reason behind even getting up in the morning? Why would I engage in activities throughout the day no that I know that everything is a defense mechanism against my fear of death? Ah *mes amis*, before you let yourself get roped into this mode of thought and end up laying face down on your sofas across the world crying in paranoia and pessimism, let me offer a few thoughts. Understanding and appreciating Becker and fully integrating what he has to say is entirely a matter of putting him into perspective. This is where the greatest challenge lies. Now that we are aware of death and our fear of it and what that fear implies, the question becomes: how will we deal with this information? My process has not become one of identifying EVERY example of death-anxiety-driven-action in my life and negating it: that would literally be impossible, as EVERY action is driven by death anxiety. (Wait! Don't run to the sofa yet...there is still hope!) Instead, the answer is to be found in balancing out my fear with a sense of wonder at the process of life itself. The process involves making myself aware of every moment of life and of fully experiencing it, and more importantly of crafting my life and the moments within it into art itself, and then offering that art to the world at large for them to experience, enjoy, discard, or embrace. The act of creation and of experience is what we have in this world, and learning to fully understand that *in the context of our imminent death* is what I now feel to be the task at hand for me, and hopefully for the people around me.

Wow, sounds like a party! Hey everyone, come on over to Greg's house! Let's contemplate death, pain, and suffering! Yay!

Hooray! Yippee! (...there are the sounds of noisemakers and party favors in the background...children singing in chorus...rainbows in the sky...a cake in the shape of a decaying corpse...etc...). Sorry, must be the residuals from the show tonight.

Anyway...this actually brings me to the next section of my little treatise on demise. What do we do with the information Becker has offered us? Your faithful editor and I were recently discussing life, love, and van break-downs, and in the midst of that I said to him "Do you know what I would be doing with my life right now if I could do anything at all? I don't even think that I would be juggling. I would be spending my every waking hour preparing for my own death." Joy, bliss, death! Really though, I think that something is missing from my life, and that is a greater comprehension of death and a preparation for it. Socrates, from my understanding, advised people to practice dying. Becker agreed. As I am not an anthropologist, I know little about what other cultures have done or are doing in terms of role playing their deaths. (Any insight would be appreciated folks!) I think that establishing a means of communicating about death would be a first step to a new broad based social psychology. Admitting that we are afraid, and examining our projects as extensions of our fear would be a good first step. Sharing information openly about custom and death ceremony would be a good second step. I might go so far as to suggest role playing, or even reinstating ritual into our lives, the symbolism of which would bring us psychologically more in line with death itself.

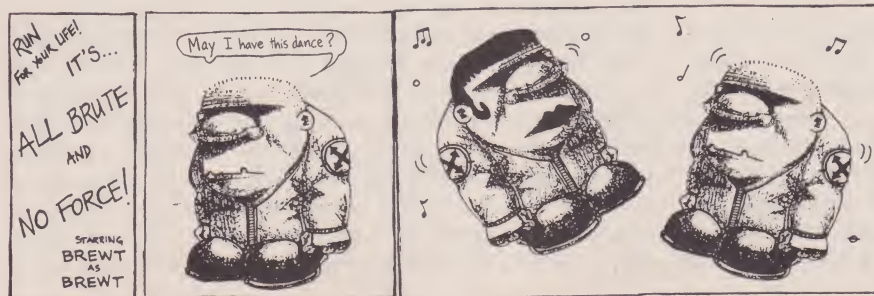
Recently, Bill Moyers did a four-night-long special on death and dying on PBS. From what Cynthia said, the shows were very intense, and well needed. I taped them but was only able to watch the first few minutes of one night's broadcast. I saw something striking in those few minutes. Before the show began, a man came onscreen and told viewers that if they were troubled by what they were about to watch, that there was a number offered which people could call to discuss their feelings. While this foresight (and the series itself!) is to be applauded, I was struck with how limiting the offer really was and how it clearly

represented a troubling aspect of our culture. The offer was not a suggestion to create local support groups, or an idea to share thoughts with friends, neighbors and family. It was an offer to solve the problem, so to speak, through a phone call. What are the implications of this? It was yet another example of people hiding behind technology, social construct, or character in order to solve problems that they have been taught not to admit to those around them. Becker might suggest that this tendency stems from a desire to not appear weaker than anyone and thus continue to maintain an appearance as a formidable opponent for immortality conflict. I wondered about the people who would call in, and actually should have called myself. I wondered if they would be linked directly to a person who would become their confidante for a number of follow-up calls as well, and maybe offer to meet in person to really establish some connections and valuable human interaction on the matter. Doubt it. But this is what we need. We need to meet eye to eye and face to face and admit that we are scared. We need to start thinking about the personal construct of 'character' and what it represents, and the group construct of 'society' and what it represents in terms of death. I would suggest that both are distancing tools. We need to explore or examine death and its implications on our lives. At least I think that I need to. Anyone else interested?

Out soon: a new issue of a great zine called *No Longer Blind* from Australia, which will include columns and articles by a number of good people about intensive personal politics. The writings will be much like what I have been writing about in the last few *Inside Front* columns (email nxlbx@yahoo.com for more information on contributing or getting your hands on a copy). Also upcoming: I am always on the lookout for people to help raise money through benefit shows or any other means for the Western Shoshone Defense Project. Contact me for more information at xjugglerx@yahoo.com and check out <http://www.alphacdc.com/wsdp/>.

Well, it is now time to shower ten pounds of Iron Maiden residue from my body and go to bed. Write me anytime about anything from any of my *Inside Front* columns, and thanks for reading. This column was written under the influence of the new In Flames album "*Clayman*" which is more metal than your grandma's soup kettle. Check it out (The *album* that is. Leave your grandma and her kettle alone.)

Talk with you again sometime soon my friends.



All Brute and No Force is continued on page 137

In our society (punk included) music is often mediated several degrees from its 'immediate' creation. For example, at a rock show, there is a degree of mediation that is physical, the sound vibrations are transmitted through amplifiers. But there are other, even greater mediations, like the roles we're supposed to play at a show. On stage (usually literally above everyone else) there are the 'musicians', the creative specialists. The musicians are supposed to fulfill this role – they are supposed to be well dressed, witty, talented, and are even expected to have answers to all our questions. Down below is the 'audience', who in affect are supposed to worship these specialists. This audience is generally passive, though a few swaying motions are permitted back and forth in the dark. This hierarchy between 'musician' (creative specialist) and 'fan' (passive consumer of said creativity) acts as a form of mediation. So, you and three of your friends sitting around playing acoustic guitars together on the sofa is a less mediated musical activity than you watching a rock band with six hundred strangers in some club. I'm assuming here that the less mediated the creative process (the less alienation), the better.

IF: I saw you play two weeks ago at the Cradle here in Chapel Hill at the Daemon/ Mr. Lady Records Showcase and it clarified for me quite a bit what I like so much about seeing The Butchies play. During your set, when Amy Ray (of the Indigo Girls, who was on tour promoting her record label, Daemon) came up to play with you, a contrast became clear to me: What Amy was doing was Rocking, with a capital "R." She has been around rock n' roll for a long time, and it's obvious she's an expert. However, to me it seemed that a few minutes before, the Butchies had been attempting something different – Yes, you had been rocking, but with a crucial difference – Namely that a distinct humor was involved. It was with that humor that to me it seemed that you were playing around with that role of the Rock Star (the kicks, the Rock Faces, etc.) and thus exposing it for what it is – A role. I believe that this sort of play has the potential to subvert that role (by exposing it and it's alienated nature, and then by refusing to take it seriously) and consequently subvert the hierarchy of Rock Star/Audience. I think the Butchies achieve this, at least during certain moments in the show. I believe that this subversion allows myself and others to connect to you – you know, as three human beings being passionate and creative, instead of just seeing another rock band.

I'm interested to know, insofar as you agree with me, what tactics in addition to humor have allowed the Butchies to have that "im-mediate" emotional connection – Which ones have worked? Which haven't? What do you consider the largest object in the way of this emotional connection? Why is this connection important to you? What are some personal examples of when this "emotional music connection" has been most immediate, either as musicians or audience?

M: Well, humor always works for me. You gotta be able to laugh at yourself. Try not to take yourself so seriously. I feel that's what the Butchies do. We remember that we are performing for people who wanna see us... so why not put on a good interactive fun show? I don't think I can act like nobody is out there watching me. I gotta be like "Hi, how are ya?" "How's the family?" Be friends. I guess it doesn't work if no-one wants to be involved. They don't want to participate. A voyeur. I really try not to let it get to me. I don't want to force anyone to do anything. If that's how they are feeling or if that's

how they want to interact, that's fine. Be yourself. No pressure. One of my favorite shows we did was at Santa Cruz. Before we played there was an open mic. So people who came to see the show could "perform" as well. We saw some great performances. I felt really connected to the audience. Like it was some warped family reunion. I definitely want to do that again. Maybe a Butchies tour with no opening act just open mic... hmmm...

A: I don't know about "tactics". That sounds a little fake. We are ourselves on stage, which is funny, honest, open. I think it's important to pay attention to the crowd. We are watching and get inspired by our fans. When the crowd is not willing to be open with us, that's probably our largest obstacle. We don't get up there to entertain ourselves...playing wouldn't be as much fun if it wasn't for the fans, so when we connect, everyone is happy. My favorite show was probably in Bismarck, ND because the kids were so excited and open that we got really energized. They never get those kinds of spaces where they can be themselves, so it's really important for us to play there.

IF: It's been clear to me at every Butchies show I've been to that you have created a successful Queer Positive atmosphere. I often feel totally alienated at punk and hardcore shows, not necessarily because they're not queer positive (unfortunately very few are), but they often don't offer *any* kind of positive space. Usually I feel that social rules are even more strict than elsewhere, you can't dance, or you can only dance a certain way, you can only talk about certain political topics or not talk at all, and on and on. If your not crossing your arms with an emotional-less expression on your face you are some kind of freak! Or so it seems. That's why I've found the Queer Positive spaces at your shows so appealing – that space allows you that breathing room to be yourself, at least to a significant degree more than when you're walking down the street. Additionally, I don't think in any way is a Queer Positive space alienating to straight people. It obviously, at least at your shows, includes almost everybody. We all feel queer, even if isn't necessarily is about our sexuality, and I'll assume that's why most of us came to punk rock – to have that space where we can be comfortable being queer, freakish – to support others who feel alienated from the "mainstream." But we also come together to create a new world, where we



can be queer *and* beautiful. I believe that is what's changing our world: intentionally creating autonomous spaces like a Butchies show. Those nights of freedom raise the stakes for all of us involved, and I find myself demanding more and more. I want these spaces linked, and I want them more frequently.

How have the Butchies managed to create these spaces? How connected is that with who the Butchies are? What other "spaces" beyond shows do you believe are connected to this same experience? What tactics have you seen work and not work in the creation of such autonomous spaces? When was a moment in your lives when you felt most *free*?

M: Again, I feel very strongly with being yourself. We are queer. That's what are everyday lives are about. We are real. So we talk about what is going on in our lives. If that makes people feel safe than that is totally awesome! You ultimately know if such and such space is safe for you. Not all queer spaces are safe for all queers. That's unfortunate. So, it's up to you... how you feel. If you trust the situation. Find the space that feels safe for you. They do exist.

A: We create these spaces by being open and honest about who we are, and by not putting up with the attitude you see at a lot of shows. This is really important to us, because the world is so full of hate, we need a space for positivity. I try to create these spaces wherever I am, by not letting coworkers say homophobic things, or whatever else. When I came out was probably the moment that I felt most free, because the most confining thing you can do is be in denial about yourself.

IF: One could say that the Butchies were born from the seeds of the Tree of Riot Grrrl. Sleater-Kinney, on their new album, sing the following lines in the song "#1 Must Have": "Bearer of the flag from the beginning/ Now who would have believed this riot grrrl's a cynic/ But they took our ideas to their marketing stars/ And now I'm spending all my days at girlpower.com/ Trying to buy back a little piece of me." I believe SK addresses here one of the most important issues for those of us who are attempting to create revolutionary music. Namely that our creativity and great ideas are in so much danger of being co-opted by what I'll call an alienated system of commodity exchange – which really means the danger of us (our bands, scene, etc.) becoming just another product, like shoes. Do you think there is a danger of the capitalist system saying it's okay for you to be lesbians or *anything*, so long as we can market products and sell them to you – or even more dangerously: Capitalism expanding itself to the "lesbian market"? – "The more markets the merrier. Think of TV shows/ news reports/ records/ movies/ soap we can sell now!" I know this is a complex issue. We want to see "ourselves" represented around us – but do we really need their TV shows to validate us, especially when we'll still be slumped in front of the TV? Do we really need to see our music on MTV or SPIN, if we're just going to be one more image/product for someone to buy into? Even if that image is Queer Positive? How have the Butchies played into this scheme? Do you feel that our "culture" is in danger of being co-opted by some greedy assholes at some corporation?

And even if we are creating our "micro-capitalist" economy (which we are to a greater extent than in years past), where all the money is in queer hands, or punk hands, or whatever, aren't we still just selling one another *products*? I want music (and ideas, and all art) to be more than just a commodity, and though we can transcend this sometimes at shows and through sheer imagination with our record players, I'd like to think that there's another way. *Pure music — emotion — heart*. I've seen this a few time in action, but only a few. Do the Butchies see a way out from here?

M: You totally hit the nail on the head... this is a very complex issue. I think of the queer kid in Anytown, USA who doesn't have access to queer music. They have no support group at all. Until one day he/she picks up a copy of SPIN. Sees some review of a queer act and thinks to him/herself... wow, that's me. I'm queer! Then he/she picks up the CD of such band. Finally a support group! The doors have opened. How can I say that that is so awful? Is it?

A: Sure it's weird to see companies marketing things to us, and making us another demographic. However, at least they are acknowledging our presence. The capitalist system is a good indicator of the wider community. In order to get our message out, it's necessary to be accessible, and if doing that is buying into the scheme, then I guess we do. The most important thing to remember is that ultimately we have control over our community, and we can suppress being commodified. In order to transcend the "microcapitalist" economy through out record players, aren't we buying into it? It's difficult at best for people to receive information unless it is disseminated. Product costs money, be it from the consumer or from advertising dollars. I see no way out of this.

IF: In your liner notes to the more recent Butchies album Cara Hyde writes, "...Every time we write a [queer] love song, every time we take control of our own lives and our own potential – every time we kiss – it is a revolution!" Beyond being a word used to sell us cars, what does the word revolution mean to you in your day-to-day lives?

M: Holding hands with my girlfriend at the grocery store. Not being afraid to be myself. Trying to challenge myself and others to not be racist, classist, xenophobic, homophobic. That's revolution.

A: In my life, revolution means rotation. as in "the car tire went one revolution". Seriously though, by being ourselves and being open, we are revolutionary.

To get in touch with the Butchies contact them at the record label (which one of the Butchies co-owns) Mr. Lady Records, PO Box 3189, Durham, NC 27715-3189 or send an electronic message to: mrlady@mindspring.com (www.mrladyrecords.com).

In this interview the Butchies were:

Alison, who strums the Bass guitar and sings.

Melissa, who pounds drums and is responsible for between song banter.

Bruce, who asks leading questions and dances in the back.

Kaia, who plays Guitar and croons – Kaia didn't get to respond, but we forgive her.

Theory of De

It's been a year since the events during the Seattle meeting of the World Trade Organization suddenly made demonstration activism seem like an effective way to make things happen. There have been a lot of other attempts to shut down meetings in the months since then, most of them not as successful. The honeymoon is over. In recent months we have learned that just showing up and blocking intersections is not going to recreate what happened in Seattle. The police are ready for us now, they know our strategies, they have our planning meetings bugged, they have a media blackout arranged so no one will even hear about our attempts. It's time to decide whether we want to abandon the demonstration approach for another thirty years, or find new ways to (re)vitalize future demonstrations. When you're creating through the medium of revolution, you have to always keep ahead of inertia (especially when that inertia is represented by the F.B.I.). What follows won't be a comprehensive guide (that's impossible!) or even a thorough introduction (which would be indispensable!), but I hope it can remind others to think these issues through themselves.

Before we get into this, let's go over why participating in these big demonstrations can be worthwhile in the first place. A lot of the people who deliberately choose not to go to demonstrations argue that the events in question do not represent their particular "issues"—or favored methods. For example, my friend in Germany stayed home from the Prague demonstration because he thought the protesters wouldn't do a good job of communicating with the local civilians. This boycott of a demonstration rests on the assumption that a demonstration is one mass event with a single mission or platform. Instead of staying home, my friend should have gone to Prague and worked to create the pieces that he saw as

missing. After all, demonstrations are going to happen whether we go or not. Boycotting may be valuable in the case of hopelessly petrified institutions like K-Mart or the vote. Demonstrations, on the other hand, are not institutions, they are a forum. As such they have the power to be fresh with each materialization. The anarchists who made Seattle so important didn't stay home because the Revolutionary Communist Party was involved. Instead they came and, D.I.Y., threw their own party, with a lowercase "p!"

When people are going to be in the streets trying to make things happen, the rest of us have two options: we can leave them to struggle on their own, imagining that our absence will speak for our qualms, or we can seize the opportunity to shape the event. We should view demonstrations as a chance to create the situations we want, not just to vote with our presence or absence for some particular method of organizing. Unless we can find something more effective to do somewhere else, there's no reason we shouldn't be there.

A demonstration is different from almost any other project we could use that time to work on. A public demonstration means thousands of people see our work with their own eyes. In a mediated world we cannot forget the power of direct visibility. The interactions spawned by this contact are far more valuable and meaningful than the scraps of "coverage" the corporate media may or may not toss us.

Participation is also an excellent way of raising issues (from globalization to animal rights) in the eyes of people we are close to. This is important because often these people will not be involved otherwise. Family and friends who hear about our activities become aware of important issues as an extension of their concern for us. At the same time we can use the forum to reinvigorate ourselves: it's easy to come to accept the most horrific

tragedies as normal things, until you try contesting them.

Of course it's also an opportunity to fuck shit up for those fucking it up for us. When we *demonstrate* that the monster has weak spots other people will be inspired to do the same. On the other hand, when others try to demonstrate this and have a hard time, because people like us are withholding our fresh ideas and participation, it reinforces the illusion that the monster is invulnerable—when all it would take to dispel this might be another couple participants with a secret plan.

There are other reasons to participate in these mass demonstrations, that activists don't usually talk about as much. The demonstration is an opportunity to collaborate with people from outside the circles we usually travel in. If we're going to make this cooperative anarchist thing work, we'll all need lots of practice with this. (Remember: there is nothing that pleases the motherfuckers more than infighting among the people. It is perhaps their greatest weapon against us.) Furthermore, demonstrations can become conferences where we develop plans, have fun, see friends from far away, meet new people, fall in love. Far from the blockades and handcuffs, we sleep on the floors of strangers (who are soon to be friends), and over the meals we share, we exchange stories and ideas. The smallest of these details is as important as our most radical long term goals.

Now, back to the subject. The people who came up with the strategies that worked in Seattle had been developing them for many years. Just like the band whose ground breaking music is repeated until it is a cliché, our masterpieces often become monoliths that loom from the past, trapping us in ritualistic attempts to resurrect them. Preoccupation with precedent can prevent us from finding the new innovations we desperately need.

monstrations

A preface to all the scene reports about demonstrations, supplied by F. Markatos Dixon

Now that chaining ourselves together across intersections is not so fresh and vital, a responsibility lies in our hands. Those of us who have been coming to these events unprepared, hoping to be directed by the ones "in the know," must bring our own plans to the next event. We, who have *not* been central to the organizing over the last few years, may actually have the most to offer. Our minds have not yet been filled with years of plans, failures, expectations and assumptions that are difficult for the experienced to shake off. What *we* need to shake off is our passivity. Each of us must prepare as if the success or failure of the whole demonstration depended on our contribution.

This decentralized approach will be the most effective for a number of reasons. It's impossible to infiltrate—if the F.B.I. had to discover the secret plans of every single person headed to a demonstration, they wouldn't have a chance. The affinity group model has been a good start towards this end, but it could be taken a lot farther, particularly if the individuals who have been hanging back in these groups waiting to be directed brought their own plans instead. ["But it would just be *anarchy!*" shriek the old-fashioned communist organizers, to which we respond, "Exactly!"] Of course we should not act in total disregard for what others are doing. The most effective approach will be one in which everyone answers to themselves while planning original approaches that complement those of their friends. I'll give some examples of this below. The old guard are going to stick to their predictable stuff, anyway, and it's going to keep on not working. Instead of just arguing about their methods we would do best to introduce something new and fertile.

It was the introduction of fresh elements that made Seattle so effective in the first place: the anarchists destroying property, the radical cheerleaders, the infernal noise brigade. Countless unique individual projects which

no one expected created a situation that no one could control or predict.

OK, on to specific examples. The number one cliché we have to avoid: going to fucking jail. Movement after movement has started in this country, gotten going, and then collapsed when mass legal trouble scared off half of the participants and embroiled all the resources (money, time, patience, you name it) of the rest in court cases. The lawyers and judges are surely the segment of this society with the very least potential to be radicalized! Why waste all our energy on them? Let's keep it in the streets, where it belongs. For countless reasons, getting arrested is just a bad idea—especially in this atmosphere of media black-outs, getting-caught is martyrish at best. Abbie Hoffman (who went through this whole thing three decades back) once commented: the trick is to find things to do that *aren't illegal yet*. Or just not to get caught.

My favorite example of fully legal mayhem remains the time Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin shut the New York Stock Exchange down just by walking out onto the visitors' balcony and dropping money down to the stockbrokers. The crazed capitalists, well practiced in the ways of short sighted gains, abandoned their posts to collect falling dollars—precipitating a stock market crash for the day! Had Hoffman and Rubin tried to barricade the market by chaining themselves across the doors at 5 a.m., they probably wouldn't have succeeded, they certainly wouldn't have had as much fun, and even if it had worked I wouldn't be writing about it over thirty years later.

Now let's use the Philadelphia Republican National Convention protest (which I attended as the kind of unprepared automaton criticized above) as an example for some things that could have been done differently.

Had I known how much more my creativity was needed than my mere presence, I would have tried one of the following ideas,

which Brian and I came up with after it was too late. One of the main things we were all trying to do was block traffic, and delay the beginning of the Convention. There we were, trying to block traffic with our bodies, when we all know what blocks traffic best: more traffic! If everyone who came to the demonstrations by car had simply driven them very slowly into the area where the hotels were, stopping to ask for directions at every block (perhaps with clever art on our cars, like floats in a parade), traffic would have been effectively halted. The beauty of this plan is that if they chose to arrest people, they'd have to tow their cars out of the jam, which would just make matters worse!

Hell, we could have done that and still have had plenty of people left over to do other things. Here's another idea, which could easily be applied in any traffic-blocking demonstration. Usually the people in blocked cars are regarded as unfortunate victims (if not apolitical car-driving assholes!), and nothing more. Why not take the opportunity of these traffic jams to communicate with them? A radio transmitter that can reach car radios within a block or so can be built for around \$10, and it's legal. Take one of these to the next demonstration in a car (so it won't be confiscated), and hitch it up to a tape loop explaining what we're doing and why. When you get stuck in the traffic jam, friends will be ready at the curb with signs reading "FOR INFORMATION ON TRAFFIC DELAYS, TUNE TO 98.9 FM." We could make the next demonstration into a pirate radio convention, with twelve different stations participating (each with its own message). This way, formerly useless, mad or bored motorists become the guests of honor! At least when the newspapers the next morning say "the protesters' message was unclear," the drivers will know that's just bullshit.

More on traffic: Let's say you don't have two hundred people with cars to gum up traffic; if

Demonstration

you had ten people who were ready to get a little crazier, you could achieve the same effect. Have a few benefit shows, and raise money to buy each person a clunker car that's on its last legs. We could have found hundreds of them in Philadelphia... long old American cars just begging to "break down." Purchase them under fake names (or whatever you gotta do), then at the assigned minute, ten old cars breathe their last breath in the middle of ten crowded intersections, paralyzing traffic for hours. Maybe the drivers have escape routes planned; or, if they're gutsy, they'll just stick around insisting that they don't know what's going on (in that case, they could use their own cars, with no fake names). Even if ten people get charged with "conspiracy to block traffic" it is still preferable to four hundred people getting charged with assault for being beaten by police because they created a human blockade. If you're an expert and you really want to increase the tension, you could rig a device to set your old junker on fire (cars sometimes burst into flames you know!), and—talk about demonstration ambiance!

Or let's say we couldn't get our hands on any cars at all. Let motorists deliver them! Did you know that if you clog up the exhaust pipe of a car, it shuts down? Potatoes are ideal, just pound one in, way in, so its good and lost. In a matter of seconds you've got your blockade provided by some unfortunate motorist or truck driver. And happily for those of you with qualms about "property destruction," the offending tuber can eventually be extracted with no lasting damage... slashing the tires, on the other hand... works too! If we'd managed to enact a few of these plans, the delegates would have had to take the fucking subway to get out of the downtown area, and that would be the last thing they'd want to do with hundreds of demonstrators (with plans of their own!) on the streets.

While all this was going on, it would really

just take one person who had planned far enough in advance (and gotten a nice enough haircut) to have infiltrated the Convention itself to go to the basement and cut the power on the whole event. Or, since all the police in the region were at the Convention center or waiting downtown for the demonstration, it would have been a perfect time for a group of people to appear in a totally different part of the city, free to wreak the havoc that everyone would be talking about for years.

One interesting new tactic surrounding the Philadelphia Republican National Convention occurred almost spontaneously. At the time, Brian and I were on the road with a performance project of folk lore, science, music, home made instruments and a large inflatable teddy bear. As it turned out, our somewhat inconvenient itinerary began in Philly and ended up buzzing around it like a moth. Our periodic returns to Philly combined with close contacts with highly involved individuals there put us in the position of becoming folk media. We ended up incorporating news of the demonstrations into our performance. Every where we went people were desperate for real news of the events. We provided the information we could within the performance and in several instances ended our show by beginning a discussion about the demonstration. The discussion gradually lead to important local needs and issues. By the end of the discussion, we had provided national news to a local audience and learned of local news—all from first hand sources. In addition we were able to send out e-mail updates. We have evidence and reports of many of these being forwarded around the world. Distrust of the media is not uncommon but it is quite uncommon to be in the position of being a first hand authority on an important issue that the press is actively blackballing. With a little more planning, the role we ended up playing for the Philly Demonstrations could be covered

in a much more thorough way.

These are just a few examples of dumb ideas my friends and I have tossed around. There are a thousand other starting places. Next May Day, instead of doing that march carrying signs down the street, break up and have each person start a conversation with someone—that's much more real, much less of a spectacle. Bring yo-yo's to give out for everyone to play with at the next protest—it'll make us feel less dumb standing around there. Invent games, be tricksters, do things no one can understand (that's what our leaders do). Come up with crazy alliances between totally different groups that could come together for one moment to make things happen that *nobody* could have imagined. My wildest dream is that one day we can coordinate one of these mass demonstrations to coincide with a citywide police force strike. They have reasons to be discontent too, you know, not the least of which being that their masters are always forcing them to be assholes to us. If we took to the streets one day and the rank and file of the police force stayed home in protest, that could be the first day of something bigger than any of us have ever seen...

Regardless of our methods, our collective activities hold unlimited promise for transformation. It is during the brief moments of clarity, when a demonstration stops being self conscious, that we begin to wonder why they ever end. You know, fat cat murderer C.E.O. motherfuckers proudly flaunt their ideology of power on the streets *every day*, and in front of the very people they exploit! These demonstrations are a chance for us to be "out" about what we believe, too: rather than hiding in our punk and political ghettos, as if being conscious and concerned was something to be ashamed of, we adventure, we get a taste for what real *action* feels like, we test the possibilities. And the possibilities are big; all this revolutionary talk seems pretty dumb until you live through a moment when it comes true.

ns of theory

The first time I really experienced what it was like to change a little piece of the world, my life was altered forever.

Postscript:

"But What About Local Activism?"

A lot of people point out the drawbacks of these mass demonstrations and then say we should just be concentrating our efforts in the places we live. Well, of course we should—and a lot of us are, otherwise the broad base of individuals who join in these demonstrations would not exist in the first place. At any rate, there is certainly no need to choose one over the other.

It is crucial, above all else, that we do not stop doing outreach to others. It's that outreach that made what we're doing possible. I'm sure the Powers That Be would like nothing more than to see the small number of radicalized people remain small. Cut the spearhead off a spear, and it's just a stick—we need to remain active in the places (like the much-maligned punk community, and even the college activist scene) where we first learned about activism and anarchy, so others will too. These need to be augmented, not replaced, and certainly not fought against. We need to find local environments and communities where interaction and action can take place. But concentrating on local activism doesn't mean that we can't also work together for big events that unite us from across the world. This system of cross-pollination is critical if our activism to remain fresh; in fact, it is at these gatherings that people exchange the new ideas and inspiration which travel back home and keep the fires burning.

I'd like to conclude with a couple more ideas of what we can do at home to "get the message out." I wrote in the features section about trying to provide for the needs of the community in anarchist ways (without necessarily using that word!). With our energy

applied that way, our communities won't have to meet so many needs through the usual (Christian, etc.) channels. Through our example, people will learn about the alternatives to old process of doing things. A good case study is the B.R.Y.C.C. house in Louisville, Kentucky, a vast building my friends opened (with a \$150,000 grant from the city!) to be a "youth center." They have a 'zine and book library, a radio station (which is, in effect, a record library as well), an art gallery, punk shows, poetry readings and Food Not Bombs. All of this is organized by young people acting autonomously and getting involved in radical shit in the process. The city government has no idea what it's funding there, and my friends are filling a space in the community that would otherwise just be occupied by assholes.

Something else the readers of this magazine can do to make the alternatives to the capitalist nightmare visible (when the big demonstrations aren't going on) is autonomous media. There is more to this than just 'zines—wheatpasting and graffiti writing are good examples. If we make our own media to reach people outside our communities, then we don't have to beg the media barons to do the job for us. Instead of photocopying 'zines, put the ideas that usually remain within our circles on posters and wheatpaste them all over the streets of your town. People will see them for the next three months, and even after the text is unreadable they'll see the remains of the flier and it will make them remember what was there before. If I had a wheatpasting recipe committed to memory, I'd print it here, but I'm sure you can find one easily enough. This kind of adventure is a fun and empowering experience for people who do it. It means deciding for yourself what your town should look like and spending your time and effort to make it so. This is radically different from the methods of slave masters like Nike who simply

spend loads of money dumping their an-aesthetics on our towns. Remember, we have more ingenuity than they have cash. Aside from being an invigorating experience for the "artist," the results of autonomous media and street decoration will encourage others who see it. Maybe they thought they were alone in their discontent until your efforts started showing up. Maybe you think you are alone in your discontent... until someone begins to reciprocate.

Another option, beyond wheatpasting and hand spray-painting billboards and walls, is stenciling. Here's an idea: If you want to safely stencil an image all over the sidewalks of the world, cut the bottom out of an old back pack and attach your stencil in its place. You'll look like you're just rummaging around in your back pack when you're actually spraypainting through the bottom of your auto-media portable decoration machine. Then, there's stickering. If you live in the U.S., it's easy to make free stickers that are hard to remove. Go to the post office, where free stacks of priority mail stickers will be available. Make a stencil and spray paint a design on the stickers (you could even have a big design that was formed by a number of stickers together). You can put the stickers up (on the front of newspaper machines, at bus stops, on stop signs: "Stop being bored/eating animals/etc.") so fast that it's practically impossible to get caught.

Anyway, all these examples are just to encourage you to be thinking about this stuff yourself. You've probably heard most of these ideas before, and surely you can come up with better ones on your own. The thing is to focus on doing stuff yourself, coming up with your own approaches—that's the best way to have fun, and save the world, all at once. See you on the streets (*not* in the jails, if we can all help it!)... your friendly neighborhood folk scientist, Dr. Frederick M.D.

AFTER PHILLY,

I'm sure all of us feel excited, empowered and full of revolutionary electricity over the recent events in Seattle, DC, and Philly. If for no other reason, the FBI and local police are really acting like the movement is a true threat to the establishment, and shit—maybe they're right! But as we can all see from one event to the other, the police tactics are changing, and we need to change along with them if we hope to keep effective. So, I think we must analyze what has happened.

In Seattle, none of the authorities were ready for what happened, not only did thousands of truly peaceful protestors (read: fencewalkers) show up, but there was a new addition to the scene, "the violent anarchists" who, although their number was small, managed to lay waste to much of downtown Seattle, and turn the event upside down getting national and international media coverage and sparking debate at every office water cooler, where just minutes before they were talking about prime time TV sitcoms.

But in Philly and DC things have changed. It is obvious to anyone that Seattle was a wake up call to the FBI who instantly began the ol' COINTELPRO (counterintelligence program) and started monitoring and infiltrating the groups that are involved with the protests—after all those boring years after the radical sixties they had none of their own citizens to persecute and now, wow, we get to break all kinds of laws, and lie, and get away with it again! All in the name of defending the status quo! Woo hoo! It must be a great time to be piece of shit FBI motherfucker.



And we made it easy for them to watch us and fool us: we made no secret about when and where we planned on showing up, we even set up websites for them, we went to the same buildings day after day to organize, and since our large groups were composed of members of other groups and individuals it was easy for them to infiltrate.

And the results are clear enough: Seattle, 0 arrests for the "violent" anarchists, and no arrests prior to actually participating in the action(s).

DC and Philly: there were many preemptive arrests, clearly the sign of police and FBI infiltration and surveillance. Also, because there was time to prepare, there were many plain clothes police on the streets, dressed very much like protesters, and as you were about to light that Mercedes on fire, the fellow revolutionary standing behind you who you thought had your back is really radioing the police four blocks away. Disaster.

And, now that we are seen as a enormous threat, the justice department has begun using every tactic at its disposal to keep us locked away in cages with the occasional beating, or in extreme fear of such a fate. False arrests, outright lies, denial of the very laws and privileges that they claim to support, such as no access to lawyers and ridiculous bail amounts.

Take this situation from Philly: In what turned out to be only an hour before the major protest actions in Philly were to begin, the police and FBI raided (with a full SWAT team as

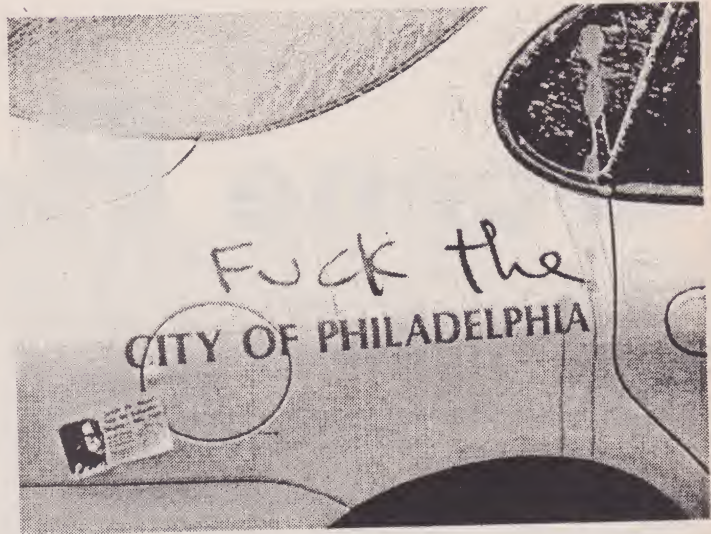


IN CASE YOU HAVEN'T HEARD ON THE STREETS, THE FBI ANNOUNCED IT LAST WEEK IN PHILLY— THERE IS A FUCKING WAR ON.

WHAT'S NEXT?

part of the action) the Puppet House which had been used as a meeting place for helping organize the protest. They had a warrant, issued in the time-honored FBI/Nazi tradition of an anonymous tip that C4 (a U.S. military plastic high-explosive) was on the premises. This of course was a lie, and in fact due to the intelligence of those working at the house, there were no weapons or drugs at all! The 70-odd people who were in the building were arrested (and most are still in jail a week later) on various bullshit misdemeanor charges and the police and FBI confiscated basically everything they had there. Now, keep in mind these people were in the building lawfully, not breaking any laws. The police have stated that they had things like chicken wire, plastic pipes, chains, etc. that they claimed were to be used in protests, and thus were labeled as IOCs (Instruments of Crime), and possession of such is, of course, against the law. It is clear that they had inside information about the group and what was to go on that day (most likely provided by infiltrators) and timed the raid just before the people in the house were have started a major protest. Hence we have what is basically a preemptive gestapo police raid on people who have broken no laws.

In case you haven't heard on the streets, the FBI announced it last week in Philly— THERE IS A FUCKING WAR ON.



coverage to the protests in the future. And that is what has happened, if you blinked, you would have missed all the coverage of this last week of police brutality and FBI raids.

So, the primary objective of the protests failed—this is not to say the protests were a failure at all; all those who participated feel empowered, and with a new, healthy resolve to take action. But now, 400 of us are in jail, eventually having to give money to the system for our freedom, with our names, fingerprints, and photos in the FBI's files, on the relatively short list of people to watch out for—which is not a good thing. And some of the unfortunate might be in jail a lot longer, charged with felonies and bails as high as \$450,000.

I ask you this, is it easier to smash the windows of ten luxury cars and set them afire when there are no police around, or when there are thousands of them roaming around in groups of 12 concentrated in a small downtown area? Is it easier to assault an abusive police officer when it's 5 on 5, or when it's 5 on 500? We should not be willing to sacrifice our bodies and our freedom in ill-advised, poorly planned direct action that goes unnoticed by everyone who was not present.

If the FBI expects you to show up, then you better figure out how to not get caught, or better yet—burn down their office while they are looking for you protesting in another state.

The time has come to start acting like the serious threat to the status quo that we are being made out to be. When my time comes, I want to earn every dollar of my \$1,000,000 bail!

No more sheep intentionally carrying protest signs to the slaughter shouting now meaningless slogans. Work at night, with your friends, in small groups and set the world ablaze with passion and beauty!

-No Surrender Cell



So, how should we handle these new twists and turns? First, we must ask what the advantage is in protesting these large events because the disadvantages are many. It is assumed that these events are chosen because they are covered widely by the national mainstream media, and as such protests are sure to get attention. Outside of this I can see no reason to choose these events for direct action. In Seattle, this tactic worked wonderfully, we caught the whole nation off guard, and it showed— there were front page stories and it got tons of coverage on television. But in the Philly protests it has been a different story. Clearly, the networks had some serious meetings (with, I would guess, a fair amount of input from corporate sponsors, not to mention the corporations who own the networks and newspapers) and it seems obvious that a decision was made not to give

Scene Report



This is now just our second attempt to do a scene report section that transcends the tedium of bands/labels/distributors/etc.—again, not to say that kind of knowledge is useless, but others are offering it, so we consider it our role to offer something else. Please don't interpret this as news reporting, or even historical snapshots—these reports are first and last the testaments of individuals trying to recapture their own inexpressible moments of life, holding out the shreds of memory that remain to you as possible blueprints from which you might continue to weave your own tapestry of life. This is a map to lost hours in the lives of strangers; but we hope it might help you to find your way to wild new hours and days of your own. Just remember that you can't do the same thing twice: neither the W.T.O. protest in Seattle nor the first kiss of your childhood are coming back, so don't hold fast to old methods if you want to make new things happen. You can't get in on the joy and glory of what others have done by imitating or following examples—but the present is always greater than the past, and if you create revolutions for yourself in the moments to come, whether with caresses, bricks and plate glass, or boldly putting your words and body between the violent and the beautiful, those instants will outshine whatever displaced "historical importance" the events chronicled here are supposed to have.

There's a focus on the demonstration activism of the past twelve months here, since there are a lot of things that are brand new about it. If people are ready to keep being creative with it, to learn from all the events of the past few demonstrations, and explore how to be even more ready that the authorities for the next ones, this could be a way for us to gain momentum and power in our efforts to take our lives back. If we don't learn from our mistakes, we'll dissipate our energies following futile formulas and crashing into the brick walls of defeat. Don't read these accounts as a celebration of what has happened, but as a question you must answer: what next?

And another thing—looking over these reports, Gloria pointed out that they're pretty much all about visits, "vacations" in other people's lives. Even our demonstrations have largely been political tourism, in which we descend upon a foreign city and try to act on the forces of evil who are also visiting it, with no reference to the people who live there and the daily routines of their lives—which are what we really have to address, eventually, if we're making truly radical change, not just trying to get the governments or corporations or whatever to "change things for us." What would be really beautiful would be if the next time I pick up a punk magazine and flip to the "scene reports" section, I see fifty reports from people talking about all the crazy transforming shit that they have going on in their hometowns and neighborhoods. It's the same for all of us punk rockers as it is for my bourgeois parents: go on "vacation" to "get away from it all," and you'll run all around the world trying to get far enough away, carrying that insidious "it all" with you every where you go. Start with some maniacal idealism and new ideas in your home, and you can find yourself in a totally different world in two weeks, or two seconds.

See you in one of those worlds, next time. your loving editor, Brian

PART ONE: DEMONSTRATIONS

THE WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION MEETING IN SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

This is a story about some things that I did and saw and felt during the protests against the World Trade Organization in Seattle in November and December of 1999. I have done my best not to romanticize or exaggerate any of this, and I didn't make anything up. I have tried to make this as accessible as possible, and to avoid using activist jargon as much as I could, but it would still help to have some prior knowledge of what happened in Seattle last winter and why before reading it. I have made little effort to explain what exactly the WTO is or how tens of thousands of people came together to stop it, simply because that has already been done elsewhere, and better than I could ever hope to do it. This is just my story, and I hope reading it empowers you in some way. I strive to make very day of my life as fulfilling as these ones were and I hope to help create a world where that would be possible, soon.

The Power is Running

I can't do it. I can't. I can't tell you what this felt like any more than a bird could tell me what it feels like to fly. I can tell you my story, but it's only my head talking. My heart can't write, and my guts don't have lips. I cannot truly explain how it felt to taste ecstasy in every breath as the invincible forces of privilege and coercive power finally lost control, to stare down the world's most ruinous and abusive bullies and watch them blink, to fall in love with tens of thousands of people at once, to not know what would happen next, to become dangerous. And that is a tragedy which haunts me as I write every one of these words. Because if somehow I could share with you what I felt for ten days in Seattle you would never settle for anything less ever again. You would kick in your TV, run outside buck naked, tear up the freeway with your bare hands, flip all the tanks upside down, and dance with panda bears through the streets. The barbarians would emerge from exile to knock down Heaven's door and the dead would rise up from their coffins and cubicles. And once you got a taste of the sublime joy of reclaiming control of your life and your world, of regaining your lost kinship to a human community of which you are an integral component, of realizing your wildest dreams and desires, you would do whatever it takes to make it happen again.

Monday Nov. 22 – Thursday Nov. 25: I left

for Seattle from Columbus, GA on Monday, November 22, on a greyhound, alone, already hungry, with no money and nothing to eat. Six hours later in Atlanta my bag was whisked away to a different bus, leaving me with no warm clothes and nothing to read, either. I stared blankly out the window at the bleak, diseased wasteland of concrete and smoke and cars, at the trees and fields and hills and rivers, at all the cities I had never seen before. Chattanooga, Nashville, Louisville, Indianapolis, Gary, Chicago. I scrounged what little food I could at bus stations, but by Tuesday night I was hungry enough that I was starting to get mean. In Chicago a grizzled old man gave me a sandwich, which I ate, and a dollar, which I gave to another grizzled old man. I stared and thought and tried to sleep. Milwaukee, Madison, Eau Claire, Wednesday morning in Minneapolis. Haggard young women with kids, disgruntled truckers, teenage runaways. Fargo, Bismarck, Billings. The North Dakotan whose car broke down in Minnesota who couldn't afford to fix it. Butte, Missoula, Coeur d'Alene, Spokane. The grizzled young man who bought me a waffle in Montana because he hadn't seen me eat in a day and a half. I fell asleep a few hours past Spokane in the Cascades and woke up, Thursday Nov. 25, at about midnight, in Seattle. I staggered off the bus, met my mysterious liaison Ms. J, and was miraculously reunited with my long lost bag. Fifteen minutes later I was standing outside of the 420 Denny Space, a nerve center of sorts where I found dozens of people bustling around with saws and paint and walkie talkies, plotting and planning and building. This was a very good sign, but after 78 hours of Greyhound time it was also pretty jarring. I was utterly exhausted, ravenously hungry, and in no condition to conspire yet. I caught a ride south of downtown to the Roasted Filbert, a cavernous, dusty, unmarked warehouse with concrete floors, no windows, and a purple door; which was serving as a refuge for everyone who showed up at 420 with nowhere to stay. I found a space inside, curled up in my bag, and passed out listening to warm bodies breathing all around me.

Friday Nov. 26: At dawn I ride back up to Denny with four others from Filbert. None of us know each other. Downtown the towers glitter in the distance like decorated tombs, spectacular monuments to wealth and power that loom overhead just as the institutions they embody loom over every aspect of our lives. I know that we are flying under their radar, and that we are not alone. For the first time in my life those almighty towers, and all

that they stand for, look vulnerable to me. Up at Denny the bustle and activity of Thursday night has multiplied exponentially. I help out with the kitchen and the dishwashing, finally get some food, and spend most of the day getting my bearings. Around dusk Critical Mass issues out of 420. I ride with some woman on the back of her bike since I don't have one. Later I just run. We ride around and around the upscale shopping districts downtown, taking over whatever streets we want, whenever we want, without any authorization or permission, singing, dancing, howling, and conversing with anyone who will listen. Someone begins chanting "We're gonna win! We're gonna win!" and for the first time in my life I believe it. Much to my surprise and delight, I chance upon Mr. X in the midst of Critical Mass. I have only seen him once since I spent much of the summer of '98 in a van with him. He is in Seattle with Ms. X and X-Dog. Our reunion is cut short, however, when a psychopath in a fancy car tries to run us over. Mr. X screams like a banshee, jumps onto the hood, slips a piece of cardboard under the wipers and over the entire windshield, pounds three big ass dents in the hood with his fist, and disappears into the night. Later we invade the Washington Trade and Convention Center, where the WTO summit is supposed to be held, and ride in circles through the foyer for quite some time before a security guard punches someone in the face and the police finally manage to chase us away.

Saturday Nov. 27: I spend all morning and early afternoon at Denny. The 420 Space is serving as a welcome mat, training grounds, mess hall, and nerve center, and it is turning into a complete madhouse. Countless meetings and workshops, endless training and skill sharing, and ceaseless cooking, cleaning, eating and welding all rage perpetually and simultaneously under Denny's roof. More and more people pour in throughout the day, and it is beginning to get difficult to move around inside. I leave late Saturday afternoon for the Hitco space to make lockboxes. Hitco is every bit as wild as Denny. While others hammer away at mammoth puppets and matching sea turtle suits we set up an assembly line and build hundreds of lockboxes out of PVC pipe, chicken wire, framing nails, tar, sand, yarn, and duct tape. We turn them out late into the night. I ride to 420, walk to Filbert, and sleep covered with tar.

Sunday Nov. 28: Sunday morning Denny is an utterly unfathomable zoo. I learn that Saturday night banners were dropped all over downtown, one from the top of a crane over I-

5. At noon a parade complete with giant puppets, street theater, radical cheerleading, and an anarchic marching band rolls out of Seattle Central Community College (SCCC). The street party is a roaring success, reclaiming downtown for hours and railing fiercely at all manifestations of corporate dominance. Unfortunately I miss it. I go back to Hitco around five to finish the lockboxes, unaware that the festival is still bumping. I get back to 420 around eight and run across Ms. C. We are eating dinner when we catch wind that a mass public squat is about to be opened on Virginia St. The word is free shelter downtown for anyone who needs it during the protests, and for Seattle's homeless after. About forty of us steal through the night to recover a fragment of the world that has been stolen from us.

913 Virginia St. The door opens, and two masked heads emerge from the darkness. "GET IN!" I run through the door, up the stairs, through a wooden hatch, onto the second floor. The door closes behind me. The building is enormous. This floor could harbor a horde of barbarians. The power is running. Androgynous ninja elves scamper about everywhere around me, hammering away furiously on a thousand different projects. I board up windows at a breakneck pace with a tireless Danish carpenter. Plywood, 2x4's, chicken wire, black plastic, anything. Next room. The cops are coming. They're about to fire tear gas through all these windows. No they're not. More rooms. Yes they are. Cover all this up so they can't tell how many of us are in here. No they're not. "WHO THE FUCK LET IN PHOTOGRAPHERS? I'VE GOT FELONY WARRANTS IN WASHINGTON STATE!" The cops are coming. Two rooms left. No they're not. "KEEP THOSE FUCKING PHOTOGRAPHERS IN THAT FRONT ROOM! SOMEBODY GOT TALK TO THEM!" Yes they are. We're done. No they're not... There are two doors one in front and one in back. The former can be opened from the inside by dismantling the contraption that braces it. The latter, where Mr. N has constructed a virtually impregnable barricade out of toilets, concrete, rebar, plywood, and an iron fire door, could only be opened by a tank. The doors are adjacent to two stairwells, one in front and one in back, which lead to either end of a long winding hallway that connects about ten rooms. The rooms are vast and spacious, with 25' ceilings, gigantic windows, and giant stages and lofts of various shapes and sizes. One has been furnished with an ample supply of food, water, and medical supplies. Someone runs out of another, arms raised in triumph, a crescent wrench in one fist and a plunger in the other. "THE TOILET WORKS!" In yet another Ms. I and Ms. S arm a security team with short wave radios. Every window on this floor is boarded up

except for those in the front room — where earlier we gave a full fledged press conference before banishing the blow-dried talking heads of the corporate media altogether — and nothing inside can be distinguished from below. The third floor is essentially identical to the second, except that none of the windows are boarded up and there is a ladder to the roof in the back stairwell. There is no way to approach the building that is not visible from the roof, where someone stands guard with a short-wave radio, waiting for the inevitable. Here come the cops, this time for real... We assemble in The Spiral Room and send Mr. G outside to negotiate, agreeing that he will not accept, refuse, offer, or request any proposal before we have all consented to do so. The cops say we need to let in a fire inspector. They need to know if we are posing a fire hazard to ourselves. After much discussion we consent that this is complete bullshit. They don't know the layout of the building, they or how many of us are inside, or how sturdy our barricades are or for that matter if we all have machine guns or not. They want to inspect the building to determine how difficult it will be to raid. When we refuse they cut the water, then the power. By this time a bizarre circus has gathered below. Reporters, Feds, and undercover agents film us, and our friends from 420 and the Independent Media Center film them. We hang banners and signs from the roof and windows. Mine says "RESISTANCE IS FERTILE". Outside, Mr. G wrangles with the cops. Inside we are embroiled in an absolutely endless meeting regarding their ever-changing promises and threats. As it gets later and later we are left with less friends and more enemies, who make less promises and more threats. The situation becomes increasingly tense, but they never move in on us. Around four they finally leave, swearing that they will return at eight with the landlord to chase us out. I sleep with one eye open, and wake up four different times to false alarms. The cops are coming. No they're not. Yes they are. No they're not.

Monday Nov. 29: Throughout the morning a crowd from 420 and everywhere else gathers outside, beating drums and singing. The cops return at eight with the landlord, block the doors, and refuse to let anyone in or out. Around noon we manage to get a lawyer inside. He tries to cut us a deal. We will occupy the building until Friday, then hand it over to Share/Wheel, a homeless advocacy group, who will convert it into a free shelter. The landlord claims he will get sued if someone gets hurt in his building. We write up a waiver clearing him of any liability for anything that happens inside. He refuses to sign it. This all takes hours. The negotiations break down completely by late afternoon. The landlord wants us disposed of. The cops slaver in antic-

ipation. Around 5:30 they swear that in thirty minutes they will kick down the doors, beat ass, break heads, and arrest everyone inside. They will let anyone who is willing to leave out now. This is our "last chance." Nearly everyone opts out at this point, understandably having no desire to spend the 30th in jail. They promise to tear ass up to Denny and return with as much backup as they can scrape together. I know that whether this is our "last chance" or not there are nowhere near enough cops outside to actually raid the building, and I cannot fathom why. Later I learn that crowds have amassed all over downtown. Some have surrounded The Gap, some the Westin Hotel so that the WTO delegates can't get in to sleep, and some have attacked a McDonald's, breaking some windows. About 15 of us remain inside. There a lot of people out front, but not enough. The situation looks bleak. At 6 the riot cops show up. We decide that there is no longer any way to defend the building, and that there is no point in making martyrs of ourselves. Except for Mr. B, who says he will hide in the rafters and hold out alone if he has to. We dismantle the barricade at the front door and run outside. We are greeted with a wondrous sight. The cavalry has arrived from 420. Somehow hordes of people have slid in between the cops and the door, and more stream in from all around. Everyone goes berserk. We pound and bang on everything we can get our hands on, howling and dancing and taking up most of the block. Mr. B is up on the roof, roaring at the top of his lungs with his arms raised to the sky as if all the indomitable power of the avenging squatter demon is running through the marrow of his bones. The cops are at a loss. Every time they try to give us an order or command we just dance, but when they try to charge their van across the block to disperse us we surround it and slow it down to a crawl, then beat and kick and rock it while the couple inside squirms. It is all they can do to limp their wounded warhorse through to the other side before all the little elves flip the damn thing over. The cops leave. Pandemonium reigns. Up on the roof Mr. B roars in triumph, and the walls tremble in the top of the toms. I suspect that the cops are not prepared to start a riot on Virginia St. when so much of their force is downtown protecting the world's most ruinous and abusive corporations and the delegates who represent them. A fragment of the world has been recovered, and it is safe for now. About forty people run inside, and I run back up to Denny. A few hours later, right before I leave 420 for the night, I run into Ms. X and X-Dog. She tells me that Mr. X is in jail. She is trying desperately to bail him out before the state discovers exactly who he is and what he has done. I promise to keep in contact with her and to do all I can to help. Before I fall asleep back at the squat, beneath

a window, with the glittering banks looming over me, I remember the time Mr. X told me that there were only two things that he would never do. He would never hurt anyone, and he would never take anyone's food. His captors do both, and some day they will suffer the consequences. They have locked Mr. X in a cage, and tomorrow it's time for payback.

Tuesday Nov. 30: I wake up before dawn and walk to SCCC, where the festivities begin. Before long I am surrounded by thousands of friends, and at seven we set out for the Washington Trade and Convention Center, where the summit is supposed to be held. As we near it we fan out, taking over the surrounding streets and blockading entrances to the building. Everything you can imagine turns into a barricade. Bodies, puppets, lock-boxes, a fifty foot tripod, barrels full of concrete, dumpsters, cars. We begin to form a human chain around the convention center. In an amusing display of either arrogance or stupidity the delegates all wear matching beige suits and big ID tags that say "DELEGATE". Whenever they try to approach the building we stop them and chase them off. Without the protection of their armed servants they are as powerless as a brain without a body, and their expressions are priceless as they run away. Before long the chain is complete, and the only ways in are through parking garages, hotels, and underground tunnels. We cut these off one by one. I dart around by myself, patching up holes where blockades need help and trailing delegates to their secret entrances. I dog one for blocks, grinning malevolently at him as he searches in vain for a way into the convention center. He finally gives up and asks a cop for advice, and I listen in rubbing my hands with glee. "How do we get inside?" "Well sir... right now there is no way to get inside..." The opening ceremonies of the summit are "postponed", and then canceled altogether. This is when the cops begin to riot. They have failed their masters miserably and they are pissed. I run up to the barricade at 5th and Seneca, which I hear is about to be attacked. The cops, sporting Darth Vader suits and unmarked raincoats, have formed a line across Seneca. Behind them there are five or six more on horses and a couple with big ass guns. We push a line of dumpsters in front of them so that they can't trample us, and form an enormous immovable knot so that they can't drag us away and arrest us. The cops flip on gas masks and begin to fire tear gas into the crowd. Others blast us with jumbo tanks of pepper spray. One throws a can of gas into my lap. Ronald McDonald and his band of merry devils run amok through my organs, burning plastic bonfires in my windpipe and hacking at my lungs with chainsaws dipped in DDT. Vampire fangs sunk down to the gums suck the soul from my skull, and all that

remains in the hellish wasteland between my ears is fear and hatred. Everyone around me starts to run. While I am getting up a cop bucks me in the face with pepper spray. Tony the Tiger is scouring my eyes with his chemical claws, my nostrils are searing, and I can't see a damn thing. I scramble down Seneca stone blind and finally collapse in the street, gasping and convulsing. Someone pours water on my face and rubs life back into my eyes. I am born again in their hands. We all tear ass back up Seneca towards 5th to make out what the cops are doing and how to stop them. I realize that my friends are not all just going to bail when things start to get ugly. And here come the cops, storming through the sickly clouds, ejaculating toxic gas as fast as they can stroke their triggers. They open up on us with rubber bullets and concussion grenades, and we stampede back down Seneca and around the corner. The stampede becomes a fairly orderly retreat as we book down 4th Avenue, hurling everything we can get our hands on out into the street to protect ourselves from their cars and horses. Trash cans, newspaper stands, concrete tree planters, dumpsters, construction barricades, anything that will stop them or slow them down. The gas is inescapable but we grab the cans and throw them back. The rubber bullets are legitimately scary but we chuck sticks, stones, and bottles, and hope for the best. I find myself on top of a newspaper stand in the middle of 4th Avenue, unleashing a psychotic stream of invective at the interchangeable bullies who are approaching through the smoke. "FUCK YOU, COWARDS!, I'M INVINCIBLE!" This is happening all over town. They can move us but they can not disperse us. At 4th and Union the worm is beginning to turn. The cops, facing thousands and thousands of us now, are a little less gung ho than they were at 5th and Seneca. They form a line across 4th and we come to another standoff. Only this time no one is going to sit down for them. I find myself on top of another newspaper stand in the middle of 4th Avenue, roaring at the top of my lungs. "I can't TELL you how THRILLED I am to BE here right now. I LOVE every ONE of you, like a SISTER and a BROTHER. There is NOWHERE, in the WORLD, EVER, that I would RATHER BE than WHERE I AM right now. There is NOTHING I would RATHER BE DOING than WHAT I AM DOING right now. I would RATHER be OUT HERE than spend another FUCKING SECOND in my CAR, or at my JOB, or WATCHING TV. I DON'T think these cops can say that. I DON'T think those delegates can say that. I would rather EAT MORE TEAR GAS than any more of their FUCKING fast food. I would rather DRINK MORE PEPPER SPRAY than any more of their FUCKING soft drinks. I would rather DEAL WITH

THAT than ACCEPT THIS SHIT for another FUCKING SECOND. And I would rather DIE LIVING than continue to LIVE DYING..." Somebody hugs me. It has been so long since anyone has touched me that I nearly melt in their arms. Someone else jumps up and roars, and then someone else, and then someone else. I rest for a minute while a stout Chicano man recounts some interesting news. While the servants were busy terrorizing us and the rest of the blockades, the wily and mobile Black Bloc dealt with their masters in kind. Masked little elves armed themselves with slingshots, sledgehammers, mallets



illustration s.1: Eviction from the 121 squat in the U.K.

chains, and crowbars; and attacked The Gap, McDonald's, Niketown, Bank of America, Starbucks, Levi's, Fidelity Investment, Old Navy, Key Bank, Washington Mutual, Nordstrom's, US Bankcorp, Planet Hollywood, and other manifestation of corporate dominance, smashing windows and redecorating facades. I am ecstatic. Those glittering towers are not invincible after all. The

greatest trick the vampires ever played was convincing us that garlic did not exist. Let their facade be torn to pieces, and may the walls come tumbling down. The stout Chicano man tells me that during the L.A. riot he and his friends burned down police stations, and nothing else. We freestyle from the newspaper stand until my larynx is throbbing. Eventually the cops get impatient, and one of them bucks my man full in the face with pepper spray. I kiss him on the head, they club me and everyone else they can reach, and back down 4th Avenue I go, a phalanx of crocodiles in ankylosaurus suits at my heel wreaking havoc and pain. Yet another standoff at 4th and Pike. The cops form a line across 4th Avenue. This is getting repetitive. I have inhaled so much tear gas, ingested so much pepper spray, and ducked from so many concussion grenades and rubber bullets that running the bulls on 4th Avenue is no longer novel or fun. It's just frustrating. We outnumber them almost immeasurably yet they still attack us with impunity. They hold all the cards, they make all the rules, and they cheat all the time. I am terrified. We are in no way seriously prepared to defend ourselves. All it would take is for one dumb ass aggro cop to decide to get his rocks off and open fire and all the rest would follow suit. It would be a massacre. Kent State. Bonfires smolder behind my eyes, and the smoke rises out of my mouth.

I choose one—at random, for they all look exactly the same. Every inch of his body is hidden under black cyborg armor. He is armed to the teeth. His face is hidden under a gas mask, face shield, and full helmet. "O'Neil" is embroidered on his bulletproof vest. I plant myself squarely in front of his face and I stare dead into his eyes. He won't look at me. He blinks constantly, looks down, left, up, right; anywhere but at me. It infuriates me almost beyond words that this coward has the impudence to attack me when I am unarmed but lacks the courage to even look me in the eyes. "Can you look me in the eyes? CAN YOU LOOK ME IN THE EYES? LOOK ME IN THE EYES, O'NEIL." Nothing. I know why he won't look at me. When he was halter-broken he joined his trainers in a companionship stimulated not by love, but by hatred — hatred for the "enemy" who has always been designated as a barbarian, savage, communist, jap, criminal, gook, subhuman, drug dealer, terrorist, scum; less than human and therefore legitimate prey. I try to make it impossible for him to label me as a faceless protester, the enemy. I pull off my ski mask and continue to stare into his eyes. I tell him that I am from the south, about fixing houses and laying floors and loading tractor trailer trucks, about nearly getting killed in a car wreck in October, about carrying my dog around crying to all the bushes that she loved to root around in the day she died of cancer. I

tell him that we all have our stories, that there are no faceless protesters here. Nothing. "Can you look me in the eyes, O'Neil? I am a human being, and I refuse to let you evade that. I won't let you label me as a protester, and I don't want to have to label you as a cop. I refuse to accept that they have broken you completely, that there is not something left in you which is still capable of empathizing with me. I want to be able to treat you as an equal, but only if you prove to me that you are willing to do the same. And the only way you can do that is by joining us, or walking away." I remain dead still, staring into his weak cow eyes. He is blinking excessively and is visibly uncomfortable. "Can you look me in the eyes, O'Neil? The difference between me and you is that I want to be here and you don't. I know why I am here. I am enjoying myself. I am reveling in this. I am rejoicing. I have been waiting for this to happen since I was a little kid. There is nowhere, in the world, ever, that I would rather be than where I am right now. There is nothing I would rather be doing than what I am doing right now. It has never been so magnificent to feel the sublime power of life running through the marrow of my bones. I know that you don't want to be here. I know that you don't know why you are here. I know that you are not enjoying yourself. I know that you don't want to be doing this. And no one is holding a gun to your head and forcing you to. Wherever you want to be, go there, now. Whatever you want to be doing, do it, now. Go home and get out my way. Go make love with your girlfriend or boyfriend, go snuggle with your kids or dog, go watch TV if that's what you want, but stay out of my way because this is a lot more important to me than it is to you." I have not moved my feet or my eyeballs at all. I have been trying to blink as little as possible. O'Neil's eyes are quivering and squirming to avoid me beneath the mask. "O'NEIL! CAN YOU LOOK ME IN THE EYES? CAN YOU DO THAT FOR ME, O'NEIL? CAN YOU LOOK ME IN THE EYES. Basically this whole 'Battle of Seattle' boils down to the relationship between you and me. And really, there are only two kinds of relationships that we can have anymore. If you can either join us or walk away then you will be my brother, and I will embrace you. If you cannot then you will be my enemy, and I will fight you. The relationship that we are not going to have is the one where you are dominant and I am subservient. That is no longer an option. That will never be an option again. Which kind of relationship do you want to have with me, O'Neil? Look around you. Look at all of these people singing and dancing and making music. Don't you see how beautiful this is? Don't you see how much more healthy and strong and fulfilling and desirable and fun relationships that rest on mutual respect and

consent and understanding and solidarity and love are than ones that rest on force and fear and coercion and violence and hatred? Don't you see that the life and the world that we are beginning to create out here is superior to the one that you have been trained to accept... Don't you see that we are going to win? Don't you want to be a part of this? I know you do because you still can't look me in eyes. If you want to remain my enemy then so be it. But if you want to be my brother all you have to do is join us, or walk away." At this exact moment the Infernal Noise Brigade appears. For the first time since this surreal monologue began I look behind me. A small man wearing a gas mask and fatigues is prancing about in front, dancing lustily with two oversized black and green flags. Behind him two women wearing gas masks and fatigues march side by side, each bearing an oversized black and green mock wooden rifle. Two columns of about fifteen march behind the women with the guns. They are all wearing gas masks and fatigues, and they are all playing drums and horns and all sorts of other noisemakers. They are making the most glorious uproar that I have ever heard. The Infernal Noise Brigade marches all the way to the front where we are standing. When they reach the line the columns transform into a whirling circle. We form more circles around them, holding hands and leaping through the air, dancing around and around in concentric rings like a tribe of elves. We dance with absolute abandon, in possibly the most unrestrained explosion of sheer fury and joy that I have ever seen. On one side of the line across 4th Avenue there is a pulsating festival of resistance and life. On the other side there is a blank wall of obedience and death. The comparison is impossible to miss. It hits you over the head with a hammer. When the dance is over I return to my post up in O'Neil's face. I stare into his eyes and invoke all the love and rage I can muster to fashion an auger to bore through his mask and into his brain. And Cow Eyes cries crocodile tears. His eyes are brimming, with red veins throbbing. His cheeks are moist. He won't look at me. "O'Neil, I don't care if you cry or not. I don't care what you're thinking right now. I only care about what you do. Before long you will get orders to attack us, or one of you will get impatient and provoke another confrontation. What are you going to do? When that happens I am going to be standing right here. If you choose to remain our enemy then you are going to have to hit me first. You are going to have to hurt me first. I dare you to look me in the eyes when you do it. You may be able to hurt me and not look at me. You may be able to look at me and not hurt me. But you won't be able to look me in the eyes while you hurt me, because you are afraid you will lose your nerve. You are afraid of me, and you should

be. O'Neil, you all have been terrorizing us all day. If this goes on all night we will have to start fighting back. And you and I will be standing right here in the middle of it. I have no illusions about what that means. Neither should you. We may get killed. But I would rather deal with that than accept this one second longer. I would rather die than give in to you. I don't think you can say that, can you, O'Neil? Would you rather die then be my brother? Who are you dying for? Where are they? Whoever gives you orders is standing behind you, man. Whoever gives them orders is relaxing down at the station, and whoever gives them orders is safe in some high rise somewhere, laughing at your foolish ass! Why isn't your boss, and their boss, out here with you, O'Neil, risking their lives and crying in the middle of 4th Avenue? Why should they? You do it all for them! What are you thinking? I just don't get it. They don't care about you, hell, I care about you then they do. You're getting used, hustled, played, man, and you will be discarded the minute you become expendable. Please look me in the eyes. I'm serious, O'Neil, come dance with me..." Someone whispers in my ear that another cop is crying down the line to my right. For a fleeting moment I can feel it coming, the fiery dragon breath of the day that will come when the servants turn their backs on their masters and dance...and then it's gone. Because O'Neil is not dancing. He is completely beaten. His lifeless eyes don't even bother to quiver or squirm. And he won't look at me. I could whisper in his nightmares for a thousand years, I could burn my face onto the backs of his eyelids, I could stare at him every morning from the bathroom mirror, but he would never look me in the eyes. He is too well trained, too completely broken, too weak to feel compassion for the enemy. His eyes are dead. There is nothing left. The magic words that could pierce his armor and resurrect him elude me, if they exist at all. "O'Neil, I know that you have been broken and trained. So have I. I know that you are just following orders and just doing your job. I have done the same. But we are ultimately responsible for our actions, and their consequences. There is a life and a world and a community waiting for you on this side of the line that can make you wild and whole again, if you want them. But if you prefer to lay it all to waste, if you prefer death and despair to love and life, if all of these words bounce off of your armor and you still choose to hurt me then FUCK you, because the Nuremberg defense doesn't fly." I have nothing left to say. I sing the last verse of my beaten heroes' song, softly, over and over and over again, staring into O'Neil's eyes and waiting for the inevitable. "...in our hands is placed a power greater than their hoarded gold, greater than the might of armies magnified a thousand fold, we can bring to birth a

new world from the ashes of the old..." Eventually one cop down to my right either gets impatient or gets orders. He grabs some guy, completely randomly, pulls him across the line, and starts beating him. The crowd surges to rescue our friend, and O'Neil makes his choice. "LOOK ME IN THE EYES, O'NEIL!" He clubs the person standing next to me, and the cop standing next to him clubs me. "LOOK ME IN THE EYES, MOTHERFUCKER!" But he never does. I ram into him as hard as I can, praying that the sea behind me will finally break through the wall, drown the both of us, and carry my friend away to safety. But I am not strong enough, and the wall of death beats us back once more. Over my shoulder I watch one cop walk up to a very small older woman and unload a tank of pepper spray into her eyes. Her indomitable and bitter face is the last thing I see before I have to run away... There are no words that are poisonous enough to convey

I.M.F. MEETING IN WASHINGTON, D.C. courtesy of Ameliarate

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever does."

It's been exactly seven days since I left D.C. and I lay here on my bed wondering how the hell I'm going to write down my experience on paper when I still tremble in cold sweats at the thought of what's happened in the past two weeks of my life. As my hands leak with perspiration of the past, my brain rattles in wonderment of what lies ahead. My stomach growls and twists as a manifestation of relentless hope burns in the deepest part of my soul. Where has this taken me?

I've heard from most of my comrades and have replied with short, heartfelt emails describing how much each of them mean to



illustration s.2: S26 in Prague

the venom that I hold reserved for O'Neil and all of the rest of his kind. These wretched scabs, these Uncle Toms, these despicable bullies, these hellish machines, these dead bodies are utterly beneath contempt. I look at their faces and I feel nothing but hatred. I run down 4th Avenue, ducking gas and grenades, my eyes brimming with red veins throbbing. Training has dehumanized me in O'Neil's eyes, and O'Neil in mine.

Friends, I bit off more than I could chew, I am leaving town tomorrow, I have stayed awake for two weeks beating this monster into shape, and I don't have time to finish it.

Much love always,
Anonymous

me. The more I reminisce I realize that there is a tugging at my heart longing to be closer. I want to touch them again. *I want to feel you again.* I want to gaze into their courageous souls and grab hold of what we shared and fly as far away with them as my wings will take me. These strangers have become counterparts in a movement that is not only revolutionary in a global sense, but in a personal and spiritual sense also. I could never forget them or this experience as anything less than life altering and eye opening. Raising our fists, singing verse upon verse, or getting naked and going limp were experiences that will be crammed against my heart for eternity.

For those of you who weren't there, I want to portray what I experienced that week as

best I can; please bear with me and all the details. There are of course no words that can describe what went on between each soul in that jail or outside in the streets, but one thing I can conclude is that there's a whole new world ahead of us...and this is only the beginning.

A16-5am

I first stepped onto the kidnapped ground of D.C. to a morning wetness that reminded me of other marches I had been to. The air was humid and the streets were damp from the early morning rain. Without an official affinity group name, my friends and I made our way past Farragut North Station to an intersection that held a clump of demonstrators.

As we approached, I could see a group of about 30 forming a circle inside the intersection. There were a few people with string running around the four light poles in an effort to keep police cars from passing through. Soon after, two police cars struggled their way through the intersection while the cluster of demonstrators remained, singing and chanting.

Since we didn't have a schedule to go by, we decided to continue walking. By late morning we had managed to stay together, ending up at a blockade on some street that looked like all the rest. We locked down for about 3 hours in front of a police line. As the gray morning soon turned into a sunny afternoon, we remained locked down; fed, sunblocked, and massaged by our fellow compeers. As delegates attempted to solo it through our line, we gently refused them entry and told them to try another block (even though every block within a quarter-mile radius was blocked with protesters). By 3 o'clock we heard that the meetings had begun and most of the delegates had made their way into the World Bank. We gathered our noisemakers and puppets and headed for The Ellipse.

My group and I made our way around police barricades and riot cops, soon to find a street overflowing with demonstrators. We joined in and followed the crowd (or more accurately put, critical mass) to the Washington Monument. [I remember by that time of day the skies had cleared and spirits were alive and roaring throughout D.C. Dancing in and out of the crowd, I caught an eye here and there, receiving smiles and shouts of support by the blurs of people lining the streets.] As the warm breeze sifted over us, my lover and I would periodically lock eyes and walk arm in arm as if we were in a dream: We could see it, we could feel it, but was it the real thing?

Once we arrived at the park, my friends and I collapsed beneath a tree and dozed on and off for the rest of the afternoon. Everywhere I turned there was a smile to smile back at or a drum to dance to or a voice to echo. I realized that within those tens of

thousands of people lay a common thread: a passion for life, for humanity, and for change. The majority of the participants were there not for a superficial image but for solidarity in a movement that went far beyond a day of protest. This was a day that would continue with us for the rest of our lives. I felt loved by every single person whose eyes I met. Even the cops, who stood emotionless, couldn't convince me that they were empty inside; they were just as human as the rest of us. As I stood silent from my side of the barricade, I searched through their blackness and found a light. Patience was now my crutch, leaving me with an odd feeling of hope and satisfaction. The day was soon over, only to learn the next would be twice as intense. As the crowds dispersed and the echo of speakers and music faded, we gathered our things and headed for the bus.

A17-9am

The next morning my friend (whom I met the night before; I'll call him "G") and I headed towards the Ellipse for another series of protests. As we crossed the intersection of 16th and H St., I glanced at the light, noticing its green glow, and then to the opposite, which was red. I looked to my right and saw a black suburban sitting at the light, partially acknowledging that it was probably a police vehicle. As we continued jay-walking across the intersection, the suburban gunned towards us, ignoring their red light, and aimed straight for my bandanna-covered face and all-black attire. I slapped the side of the vehicle in retort, not thinking about the possible consequences. The vehicle halted to a stop and an enormous man in a bulletproof vest jumped out and shouted "hey!" as I dodged to the sidewalk (G ran the opposite direction). Once on the sidewalk, I realized it was pointless to run any further. I stopped, turned around, and held my arms above my head as the Herculean caught up to me, grabbed my arms and slammed cuffs on my wrists. I let my arms go limp but remained standing and allowed him to push my head into my knees and my legs into a position that gymnasts are only supposed to do. A group of agents were already surrounding me; one ripping my hat and mask off my head and others yelling at pedestrians to get off the sidewalk (I found that quite amusing and ironic when they were told to go *into* the street). A cop walked up to the scene, recognizing me from the day before and sputtered "it isn't so easy to look at me now is it?" I remained silent, ignoring the childlike comments and threats of "we got you now," and "are you an anarchist?" After being searched two or three times, I was pushed over to a suburban and slammed against it until they shoved me inside for a few minutes. I was then put into a paddy wagon with G. During the drive, G

told me that when he was running, two vans pulled up and a herd of cops jumped out. At that point, he said he stopped and put his hands up, but as soon as he shouted "I quit" the cops were senselessly beating him into the ground with their batons. There were a few cameras around, one being our friend's who we had lost earlier, but were pushed away by the agents. I wonder what would've happened if those cameras *hadn't* been there...

We arrived at an office building and were taken to the 5th floor (which was private and unmarked as far as I could tell). We were searched a few times and then finger printed. I had identification on me so I complied with their questions. After one phone call we were taken downstairs and put into a car and taken to the Central Cellblock (the "dangerous" jail of D.C.). We were finger printed again and offered donuts or a bologna sandwich. I took the donuts out of desperation for some nourishment and was taken to my cell upstairs.

As I entered cell #43 I noticed that the rest of the cells were empty. The gate slammed shut and chills shot up my back and into my neck. The thought of Mumia penetrated into my chest. My heart raced. I peered around and examined the cracks and corners of my five by six foot cell: The shoe marks on the mint green wall formed rainbows of memories that I would never know; the stained bars sent images of bruised wrists and chapped hands through my head. Hesitating, I gripped the naked bunk and hoisted myself on top. I looked through the bars and thought to myself, "Where am I? What is this place?" As I sucked in the coldness around me, my heart cracked with thoughts of the thousands of displaced souls who had been there before me...and would soon return. Was this the belly of the beast?

I fell in and out of dreams for the rest of the evening until I was awakened by the sound of female voices and cell gates slamming shut. They were here; thirty Jane Does were being brought in. I touched as many hands as I could as they walked to their cells with their juice and donuts. My door opened and a young woman walked in, dressed in a yellow hospital jumpsuit. We introduced ourselves and exchanged stories. Once everyone was in their cells, we opened the meeting that would last all night and into the morning.

The goal of our night in jail was to attract media attention by remaining in solidarity for as long as possible. We chanted for hours on end, demanding our lawyer and a phone call. After awhile, the men's voices from downstairs echoed ours. The entire jail was pumping with hope and desire; we were alive. As voices harmonized and fists and feet thundered against the walls, something changed inside of me. Fear dissipated and trust took its place. We became one.

Around 7am we were transported to the

courthouse for arraignment. I was put into a cell with two non-protesters for the remainder of the day. By early evening, the majority of the thirty women who were arraigned chose to remain in solidarity and sent to the D.C. Jail in shackles. The few that had "no papers" or posted bail ("no papers" meant their papers were "lost" and they were free to go) were released and I was left alone in my cell, a little shaky at the thought of spending another night in jail. I had been offered a sandwich and cookies (after asking for food three or four times throughout the day) by late afternoon and took the cookies. I don't know what time it was when I was finally taken to court but once I was there, I wasn't given a phone call or a court-appointed lawyer. A lawyer from Midnight Special (a group of volunteers that answered questions regarding the legality of situations) was waiting for G and me but could only answer questions, not represent us. We were pushed into the courtroom, my name almost immediately called and before I knew it, I heard "no papers" and the judge told me I was free to go. My charge "tampering with an automobile" was serious enough that (hypothetically, according to the U.S. Marshals) I could have faced up to five years in prison for. You might imagine how dumbstruck I was when I heard "no papers" and ordered to leave the courtroom. I nearly collapsed, as did G when he was told the same. We made our way outside for the press conference and told our story. Welcomed by hugs, blankets and Food Not Bombs, I was relieved, but my mind was still in jail, thinking of the hundreds of others who were still shackled and caged.

A18-12pm

After a good night's sleep, G and I headed to the Secret Service to collect our belongings. My arresting agent told us that he had gone to the courthouse and put in a good word, but the nice cop ensemble didn't appeal to us since they had told us earlier that they arrested us simply because of our appearance. At that point, any officer's opinion was taken with a grain of salt. G and I said our heartfelt goodbyes and headed for the D.C. Jail.

We arrived at sunset to find a group of about 40 dispersed throughout the parking lot of the jail and adjacent hospital; some playing tag, some singing, some cooking in the home-made kitchen, and the remainder mingling with police. We tried to get an update on the prisoners but were only told what everyone else scarcely knew: there were 150 left and no one could talk with them or see them. As the sun waned and a chill grew over the small camp, people gathered for a meeting to discuss the current situation and what to do in the coming hours.

The meeting was short and ended up splitting due to blocks and conflicting proposals.

Attributing to the fact that so many had been without sleep (and one or two men were on hunger strike in solidarity with the prisoners still inside), tempers were short and ideas were taken half-heartedly. The scattered meetings continued throughout the night while food was served and warm liquids brewed. The numbers slowly drifted into the twenties as some headed for their distant homes and the rest either attempted to sleep under a tarp or stay warm through conversation and cuddling. I decided I had too many unanswered questions to sleep since I knew the women and men inside were awake and plotting their demands for the following morning. Later in the night we were told that prisoners were going to be transferred to the courthouse as early as 4am; their public defender had made a deal with the judge to move them, post bond, issue a trial date, and push them out in an attempt to break solidarity. As far as we knew, the prisoners were not aware of any of this and were being taken to court against their will. We were at a loss of what to do since there were so few of us. After many proposals and heated concerns, we decided that we would make signs to tell the prisoners where they were going and why.

Around 4am a group of 15 headed to the rear entrance of the jail with signs saying "FIRE YOUR PUBLIC DEFENDER" and "DON'T SIGN ANYTHING." As vans crept out and sped past us every few minutes we attempted to shout in unison "FIRE YOUR PUBLIC DEFENDER (amongst other things)" but somehow nothing was in sync. Wrapped in blankets and sleeping bags, we struggled to stay awake for the next 3 hours as vans periodically sped by with barred and tinted windows making it almost impossible to see prisoners inside. By late morning, the Midnight Specials had news that no one in our group had been transported to the courthouse. I drifted to sleep on a curb for about an hour and soon awoke to more vans and shouting, but no new information.

As the tireless day went on, the Midnight Specials were allowed to speak more with prisoners, now aware of the potential of being moved to the courthouse. The women decided to strip and go limp if they were to be taken out of their cells; the men were on hunger strike. As we marched around the jail chanting to our brothers and sisters, we heard the prisoners' voices begin to echo ours. We stopped and listened. Hope had sprung loose inside the jail; I was speechless.

In the late afternoon there was an attempt to transfer some of our prisoners to the courthouse. A small group ran to the back of the jail and attempted to slow the van to inform the prisoners of what was going on. Two people were pepper sprayed by a U.S. Marshal and one was pushed into a car, followed by a violent push to the ground (which later put

her in a neck brace and sling). The group followed the van for about a block with only two officials fighting them off. After the chaos, they were told to leave the neighborhood unless they wanted to be arrested. One local was forced to leave even though he lived a few blocks from the scene. Still recovering from the shock of the marshal and his uncalled for violence, we calmed down, reassembled, and talked about what to expect next.

It was Thursday evening and things were back to a calm but questionable pace. The current information was that the prisoners would be released the next evening with the hopes of only a five-dollar jay walking infraction with the option of remaining a John or Jane Doe. There was still a good-sized group outside the jail, many talking with police and others still singing and dancing. The night rolled by and the next morning we awoke to gray skies and wet tarps.

By Friday afternoon, the prisoners were



illustration s.3: S26 in Prague

guaranteed release by midnight. We began to cook more food, warm drinks and gather lawyers for people's stories of their treatment in jail. There were five guards in riot gear blocking the very narrow entrance to the inside of the release area. We lined the sidewalk singing and waving to the inmates we could see in the windows as we anxiously awaited our comrades' arrival.

As time began to drag, I heard cheers and hoots and locked my eyes on the guards. I saw three women proudly walk out, hands

held, smiling from ear to ear, approach the roaring crowd. The energy I saw in those women's eyes reminded me of why I had slept outside the jail all week. As the hours passed, women and men filed out, either running or nearly collapsing into the crowd, as their friends and strangers greeted them with hugs and kisses of affirmation. Once reunited with my sisters who I had spent the night in jail with, the crowd died off and people headed home. There was still a man and woman who hadn't been released so I waited with ten others until they were let out.

The remaining ten of us decided to walk around the jail one last time in solidarity and thanks for the inmates' support; we had been there that week not only for our friends, but for them also, who were just as meaningful to the fight for freedom and justice. Following our march, a black van pulled up to the camp and a guard jumped out. He extended his hand and began to tell us how much he appreciated what we were doing. The small group of us gathered round in awe, blown away at the sight and sound of this man's quavering voice. His "mixed emotions" about our cause and his job as a security guard left me speechless. With tear-filled eyes, we thanked him for his empathy and watched him drive away. Dumbfounded, I staggered and collapsed. In my daze of disillusionment, I found the world now flooded with justice. Our revolution had begun; strangers had become allies and there were no more sides to be won. We were now *spiritual* companions that could move the world in places, in people, in ways, that we've never thought possible. The world was ours forever.

MAYDAY 2K IN THE NYC

by Nick Baxter

PLANTING FLOWERS IN THE ONCE-FERTILE SOIL OF THE GARBAGE-HEAP CALLED NEW YORK CITY... Planting a forgotten beauty in the now-desolate thoughts of the cynical, apathetic masses...

...We came to New York City via train from the posh wasteland that is Connecticut this past Mayday, or May 1, 2000, not quite knowing what we were getting ourselves into. Jessica and I had read the email forwards in the days preceding the action, and had visited the Reclaim the Streets NYC website eagerly planning our adventure into the city that never sleeps. However, unable to glean much information from the all-too-insecure electronic medium, we packed some food and water and headed out into the bright spring day.

We arrived at the chaos of Grand Central Station in the groggy disorientation that follows any long train ride, took the subway to

lower Manhattan, and headed above ground to get our bearings. Almost immediately upon greeting the piercing sunlight once more we became aware of the stench of bacon. No, not "the other white meat"—I'm talking about human pigs: police. There were pigs everywhere. Every street corner swarmed with dozens of pigs; every sidewalk was lined practically shoulder-to-shoulder with pigs; every street was clogged to a standstill with pig transport-devices, if not blocked off completely with barricades. And this says nothing of the wide variety of uninvited barnyard guests present that day: pigs in riot gear, hogs on horseback, swine on bikes, porkers on motorcycles, pigs in normal uniform and plain clothes, pigs in cars (marked and unmarked), piggies in vans and trucks (marked and unmarked), and oinkers in helicopters. ...And all because a bunch of real humans wanted to make their voices heard and try to change this place for the better. Of course, not all these cops were there for our particular action—there had been some protests and civil disobedience earlier, targeting City Hall and the NY Stock Exchange—but the fact that there were so many in the first place proved the point that we were not welcome in this labyrinth of capitalist greed. But I'll give the pigs some credit—they later succeeded in doing their job of making our day more exciting and rewarding.

It's difficult to explain the type of tense apprehension I felt that day, walking through the gauntlet of uniforms, guns, batons, and shields, all ready to strike me if I said one wrong word or made one sudden movement while passing the time before the 4:30 meeting. My companion and I clutched each other's nervous hands tighter as we tried to stroll as nonchalantly as possible down Wall St. and Broadway—intensely aware of the hostile stares and almost-tangible suspicions of the officers surrounding us. As time crept slowly by, we ended up back where we started, at Battery Park. Settled down on a park bench, we listened to the lively rhythm of a street performer's bongo drums and kept a lookout for any fellow guerrilla gardeners.

After getting discouraged and contemplating the fruitless train ride back home, we noticed a crowd beginning to converge nearby. A young man saw us walking over and whispered to us that it was in fact the guerrilla gardening meeting, and to stay inconspicuous, as the pigs were already beginning to surround, surely itching to slap plastic ties around our wrists and cart us out of there. More waiting and nervous small-talk ensued until finally the wheels were set in motion: we were to split into small groups and make a roundabout trip to the nearest subway terminal, trying to shake any cops or suspicious followers from our tracks. As most of the crucial information about the mission was kept

between the handful of main organizers (and for good reason), my ladyfriend and I basically tagged along with a few other activists who seemed to know what was happening, fearful that we would lose the group and get lost. Fortunately for us, we never lost sight of the others amidst the general chaos of the NYC subway transit system, and even found some adventure along the way. This was because at several points the pigs were able to catch up with us, sending our group running through the echoing bare tunnels of the subway, looking desperately for the nearest spot at which we could transfer and elude the boys in blue. After several incidences of this, a few tense conversations over walkie-talkie with other groups, and more waiting, we arrived above ground once again in Brooklyn, hearts beating and veins pounding.

We raced to the designated site: an abandoned, derelict plot of land shackled by a tall, menacing iron fence, overrun with prickly weeds, dead brush, and littered with trash and debris. Nestled between the nondescript piles of brick and concrete that pass for city architecture and partially under a looming bridge that seemed as if it would cave in on top of us with each passing vehicle's rumble, we found that day's promised land. Despite the immediate ugliness of our surroundings (which included, obviously, scores of police officers in a ridiculous football team formation with riot gear), our eyes were greeted with a beautiful sight that I will never forget: a huge banner tied some fifty to sixty feet up on one of the bridge supports screaming triumphantly, "FREE THE LAND!" With soaring hearts and victorious smiles, we walked with our heads held high past the rows of pigs and into our new urban playground. We were delighted to find out that most of our fellow guerrilla gardeners had already set up shop in this once-morbid meadow and were having a grand time serving free vegan food, pulling up weeds and dead brush, collecting trash into plastic bags, handing out seeds, flowers, and gardening tools, setting up banners, decorations, and maypoles, laughing, playing music on homemade drums, singing, conversing, relaxing... *living!*

Fearful of being rounded up and kicked out (if not worse) by the cops before actually getting anything done, we quickly went to work, shedding our bags and inhibitions. I found a small group of people tying long strips of fabric together to use with a tall maypole being erected, while Jessica helped pull weeds and clear the area of sticks and dead brush. I soon found out that the ropes we had been making were to be held by each of the participants of a traditional maypole dance, and before I knew what was happening I was running frantically around the pole, ducking and dodging the runners coming in the opposite direction. Stealing glances out to my

companion, I was comforted by her warm smile and the look in her eyes that I knew meant, "WE DID IT!" This haphazard, joyful game eventually came to a panting, giggling end as all the ropes were wound completely around the pole and the participants converged in an exhausted pile near the center. Soon after these festivities we resumed the task of cleaning the liberated space and organizing all the trash bags into one pile to be thrown away later. Gradually word spread that the dozens of police officers standing at the entrance of the area like useless statues had been persuaded by the legal observers (lawyers; most likely doing this pro bono) into letting all of us go at 9 PM without questioning or arrest. They were also persuaded into getting the city's sanitation department to come the following day to remove the bags full of trash and refuse we had collected. This further raised our spirits, and just before 9 o'clock the 100 or so gardeners and activists all gathered in a huge circle holding hands, while a final impromptu statement of thanks, congratulation, and celebration was given. This closing was a moving tribute to our persistence, perseverance, and positive action, and an intense wave of joy swept through me as our last moments together that evening unfolded with the powerful chants of "WHOSE LAND? OUR LAND!" and, "AIN'T NO POWER LIKE THE POWER OF THE PEOPLE, 'CUZ THE POWER OF THE PEOPLE DON'T STOP!"

For those few hours on May 1, 2000 we tasted perhaps the closest thing to true freedom that our system of shackles and cages could allow. Our hearts and minds were comforted, at least temporarily, with the feelings of victory and success, and it is in the precious memories of these triumphant events that our hopes, dreams, and will to keep fighting for change are sheltered and fed. We must harness the positive energy that these small victories create, and use it to build stronger communities, form lasting bonds, and execute further actions and plans. We *can* make a difference, and this story is proof of that.

BUT THAT'S NOT ALL...we need to figure out where to go from here, what lessons were learned that day, and what else should be done next time. In thinking about what happened this past Mayday, I have gained some new understandings into direct action and civil disobedience.

My first lesson: planning, organizing, and preliminary work are insanely crucial! I realized that what happened took place only after much careful and meticulous planning and organizing. Much of this I could not even recount to you, as I was largely an outsider until the action took place; I only found out about it via email a relatively short time beforehand, and never did any extensive information gathering or participating until

the last minute due to my own busy schedule. There was inevitably much research conducted into the city's unused land, whose jurisdiction it falls under, how to get to it, how and where to elude cops, what legal repercussions to expect from such an action, where and when to meet, what techniques would be most effective, how and where to obtain legal observers, etc.... With all of this preliminary work going into one short event, it is imperative that as many dedicated people help out in this process as possible. This goes along with my realization of the lack of readily available information, but I know that this is because we live in a police state and every mode of communication open to the general public is monitored and invaded, especially when activism or direct action is involved. We can't rely on means such as the internet or phones, or sometimes even mail if we don't want to

Although I realize that it's an extremely difficult task to convince any Joe or Jane Shmoe you see around you that it may be beneficial and enjoyable for them to participate in your action, it is something we have to keep working on. We need to find more effective ways of communicating and reaching out to those who would otherwise be ignorant, in order to achieve change on a larger scale. I've realized we need to be creative, sincere, and un-condescending in our outreach attempts, while being careful not to divulge enough information to end the mission if it falls into the wrong hands. Strength in numbers (i.e. solidarity or unity) combined with an inviting atmosphere to the public are absolutely imperative for a successful mission.

My third lesson that I kind of already knew: cops really aren't completely bad, despite the fact that I love to make fun of



illustration s.4: S26 in Prague

risk getting our actions infiltrated by undercover agents or ended outright before they can even be carried out or made effective. This means we must be dedicated and involved in real-life 3D space and time; bring whatever you can to the table as early as possible, and stay informed every step of the way (D.I.Y. ethic in full effect here).

My second lesson: despite the fact that late-comers and rookies will undoubtedly be at a slight handicap, it is crucial to leave the action as open to everyone as possible at every step, for maximum participation and involvement. Perhaps the only thing I didn't like about the Mayday action was the lack of participation of the general public, "outsiders", and passersby.

them (especially in this article). Pigs are a huge problem and a constant threat to any action, guaranteed, but the key to diffusing at least some of their "power" is in dealing with them properly. I've learned that if you never deliberately provoke direct confrontation or blatantly break laws for the hell of it, it will be much easier to accomplish your mission—this much is obvious. On a subtler note, having the right body language is always helpful, such as a pleasant, calm facial expression accompanied by confident eye-contact, and hands not shoved deep into bulging pockets, where a bomb or weapon could be lurking (for all they know). Of course, the ones who know the law, and thus cops the best (besides criminals)

are lawyers (a.k.a. criminals, in most cases). Jokes aside, there are always good, left-leaning lawyers around whom you should try to contact and persuade to be legal observers for your action, to make sure that the kids with the big toys play nice. As you read above, I learned that they really can help mediate the situation and diffuse conflicts.

My fourth lesson that I definitely already knew: New York City and its subways are like a maze of confusion for a suburban-raised youth like myself. Bring maps and don't be afraid to ask people questions when you're lost. This goes along with always being prepared.

My fifth lesson: direct action gets the goods.

If you would like to ask questions, give comments, or correspond for any reason then please get in touch with me at the address below, and we can take it from there. If you have any projects or actions you've done or are planning similar to this article's, I would love to network with you. Hopefully someday there will be networks of people who could eventually carry out actions like this every day in cities and communities across the nation or world (Fight Club, anyone?)...We're getting close, so let's keep working.

Peace. —Nick
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REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION, PHILADELPHIA

provided by Chapel Hill local, H. H.

What were we really expecting of the protests at the Republican National Convention in Philadelphia? We were nearly thirty people, all who felt compelled by their knowledge of the current sorry state of the world to make some type of stand – to at least be there in Philly. Were we expecting to win, to shut down the convention, and send George W. Bush packing home with all his bags of money-bribes to his daddy? It would be nice, but probably not. Were we expecting to adventure? Most of us were I think, after all, this type of thing doesn't happen every day. Were we expecting romance? Well, you never really know. Were we expecting the eyes of America see us on the television screen and suddenly wake up to reality? Probably. We all know they need to. While most of us come from vastly different backgrounds, since in our little group we had people ranging from an student from Oxford to a down and out anarchopunk, we all did have one expectation: To help in whatever way we could with the Revolution. Whether we were effective in that is a question only history will decide, but I'll

throw my two-cents in.

Philadelphia was a mad-house before the convention. From all over activists converged unto the City that Loves You Back, and it became some weird mixture between a festival of the absurd, a revolutionary warrior's camp, and a crazy family trip.

Everywhere we were offered hospitality. Quakers, who we never even met and who we called at midnight, let us stay at their place, while others stayed with kind if clueless relatives and myself – I fell asleep face down in the kitchen of some punk house. We wandered about the city, and saw first-hand the destruction capitalism had caused, and cause for hope. Some neighborhoods in Philly looked like a bomb hit them, just empty shells and general despair. But many were alive and vibrant, with community gardens, helpful people and beautiful murals. The protesters were busy creating their own free spaces – like Everybody's Kitchen, where healthy portions of vegan food could be found served from a some type of Magic Bus. The Spiral Q Puppetry Warehouse was one of the more enjoyable places to spend an afternoon, helping create beautiful puppets with whatever materials could be found – proud banners proclaiming revolution, rat masks for those corporate rat-bastards, and over a hundred giant skeletons for every man killed under George W. Bush in Texas. Art seemed to mean something for once, not just some snobbery, but really mean something, and more artists were always needed urgently Everywhere people training, learning about first-aid, what to do in jail, everywhere people meeting new friends, reuniting with old friends, chatting and nervously awaiting the day of reckoning that was assuredly coming. It was quite a feat of implausible logistics just to keep everyone together, fed and back in the housing, but we pulled it off.

Then came Sunday, the day of the Big Liberal March, strategically given a legal permit and placed before the convention actually began by the Powers That Be. While marches can be alienating and boring, with every marcher just being reduced to another face in the crowd, I must admit even I am sometimes inspired just to see there are so many of us – by us, I mean revolutionaries. We mostly mulled around, up and down the street like it was some sort of county fair and we had to see every group to feel we had got a fair deal out of our coming. The speakers droned on, some good, many others just lengthy, but when I saw the Puppetistas break out the mud-wrestling rink between a mock-Gore and Bush that criticized both their horrendous track-records, I knew it was worth it. Things were getting a bit crazy around the edges, and it is usually at large legal marches like this that the authorities manage to coral activists and drain their energy so they don't actually cause

real harm to the system, something seemed like it was about to break. Personally, I hoped it was America's so-called Democracy.

Then Monday was the second day of the Big March, this the Kensington Welfare Rights March, a march of homeless families right up to the convention center that was not given a permit. A permit for a protest – the whole idea's a philosophical crock a shit, but to be realistic some people won't show for a non-permitted event. While I did see these brave homeless activists, they were joined and outnumbered by hordes of home-having activists. The possibility of confrontation in this march was very real, and everywhere we say cops on bikes, cops in vans ominously going up and down side streets, and cops on every corner – waiting for us. Honestly, it seemed like a death-trap reminiscent of the PIC march in DC, in which the authorities would take advantage of an un-permitted march to arrest as many people as they could to defuse whatever direct action was going to take place in the following days. Events sure seemed to be playing into the cops hands – the march went on and on and on right up to the convention center with cops totally surrounding it, with buses and paddywagons just ready to take people away in. I saw lots of little heroics though, like activists tearing the media (who unlike the cops swamped the march to standstill) off the march, protecting the homeless children, and scouting ahead to provide reconnaissance information. The end was anti-climatic, since nothing really happened, but we all went home nervous about the direct action planned for Tuesday. For after the march, we all had a distinct feeling we were being played with by the cops, like a grubby mouse being played with by a strange blue cat.

Overall, the group in charge of the planning for the direct action, PDAG (Philadelphia Direct Action Group) did a decent job, but due to lack of organization, lack of security-consciousness, and general lack of planning managed to set the stage for the disaster Tuesday. It's far too easy to be an armchair critic, so take my words with a grain of salt. Still, while we had thousands of puppets, the general plan was to shut the entire city down by blocking off major roads and generally causing a ruckus – in other words, actually using our right of free speech. It followed the same general game-plan as Seattle and DC, which was to try to physically stop delegates from getting to the convention, it was clear this was neither Seattle nor DC. There were simply not as many activists as they were at those events – definitely not enough to cover the whole city as PDAG planned. Also, as usual, most the activists were simply confused, and PDAG, which could have provided guidance and tactical information, seemed to have only slightly more of a

clue what to do ("Hey, George Bush is staying in this hotel. Umm... it would be cool if some folks would go over there and do something). Also, all decisions were made by consensus. I think consensus works great for small groups of people, but for a group of a thousand, it is idiotic to use consensus, and P-DAG tried to run everything via consensus. While it sounds noble, in actuality, what happens is that people just get bored of hearing a few people take control of the conversation, and through boredom agree to whatever anyone says it desperate hope just to end the consensus process. Also, the whole idea of one person blocking or stepping aside for the democratic process, while it from a theoretical standpoint sounds noble, is ripe for abuse. But somehow it was all pulled together at the very last minute, and people agreed at least on a time and a location to end up on the streets. Not being complete idiots, the police knew all of this because they were without doubt at the meetings. The security was almost non-existent, they simply asked you when you came in if you were associated with the law, and they entrusted with heavy responsibility many people who just showed up a few days beforehand. Later they admitted they had been fully infiltrated by the cops, and that the people they thought were spies were actually just ordinary folks getting involved, and the ordinary folks who were even in the tactics ending up being spies. As regards other direct action groups, the Black Block brilliantly posted their meeting time over the internet and in doing so got infiltrated, and many of the older and more experienced direct action activists just got desperate. I admit, while I consider myself fully an anarchist, being an anarchist does not exclude one from being organized, prepared, or knowledgeable, especially when going into a situation rife with possibilities.

Ground Zero: We were going to reclaim the streets and shatter the myth of American Democracy, revealing it for the corporate-run lie it is. Or that was the plan.

What actually happened was quite different – we were outnumbered and outmaneuvered by the cops from the beginning. The whole thing took on the air, not of a brave seizing the streets for the people, but of a ridiculously braze kamikaze attack on Big Brother. From what I saw, there were at least five cops for every one protester, and the protesters, while some tried to disguise themselves, were for the most part painfully obvious by their age, funky hair, and Conflict t-shirts. Most of them also wandered about fairly large groups, looking for something to do. For quite a while, it appeared like the whole Philly protest was one mass hallucination, that the protesters weren't actually going to *do* anything. Finally, something in my section happened: The Anarchist vs. Communist soccer game started in the middle of the street, and right in

front of it a group of brave and suicidal souls "hard-locked" (using chains and PVC piping to lock themselves in a line across the street), so completely blocking the street. Street closed - Protesters: 1, Capitalist Rat-Bastards and Their Tools the Police: 0. Suddenly the mood jumped from anxiety to jubilee, people moved a dumpster into the middle of the street, people jumped onto the dumpster to drum, and dance, and the for one brief, almost unreal moment – we had won. The infamous Goats with a Vote, whose exact purpose seems beyond the comprehension of mere mortals, began doing their goat-costumed dance of joy right next to me. Then the police came, not in the gas-masks and full body-armor of Seattle and DC, but in their normal light blue gear, almost comically biking around us. They blocked off all the streets

here, unlike in DC and Seattle, they had complete control of the situation, so they put on a good orderly spectacle for the media. The cops simply picked us up, we went limp, and then dragged us away against our will, a process that took several hours. Not exactly a running riot, or even a dramatic inspiration I must admit, but a small if fine example of human beings looking out for each other. Protesters: 1, Capitalist Rat-Bastards and Their Tools the Police: 1.

Once everyone was dragged, some upside down or by their hair, into the bus, we began our journey into the twilight zone of the so-called justice system. While being heckled by the police, our plastic cuffs were on so tight many people lost all feelings in their hands, and many still suffer perhaps permanent nerve damage. The weather outside was burning,



illustration s.5: S26 in Prague

around us, encircling us and cutting off means of escape, and closed off the intersection. The media were everywhere, and we finally had to almost physically drag some of them away so we could position ourselves to "puppy-pile" (jump on people physically to prevent them from being beaten senseless by the men in blue) They began marching straight at us, hands itching at their billy-clubs. We put our little masks up, and soft-locked (human blockaded) ourselves around the hard-locked protesters. We heard them marching up to us, and we gripped ourselves tightly and whispered words of encouragement as we realized our fate was sealed. Finally, the police came, and they didn't even bother to beat us with billy clubs or pepper-spray us, which somewhat surprised us as we had seen police in similar situations go completely insane. But

and the police did nothing to alleviate the situation by turning the heat on in the buses. A few people fainted due to excessive heat. However, as I was to see again and again, in our darkest moments the people came together in solidarity and brought real meaning to the word mutual aid. We rocked the bus when people started crying - literally crying - due to the pain of wearing hand-cuffs. The police would finally listen to us a bit and take people's hand-cuffs off after we caused enough commotion. We were then taken to the Roundhouse, a detention center, to be processed. Once in the Roundhouse, the atmosphere became elated, when we saw bus after bus of protesters come in off the streets. Even though they bore usually bad news, for the police had completely swept the streets, arresting anyone and everyone they put their

hands on, we still wanted more company and to keep morale up. Some people snuck their hand-cuffs off and began smoking, we openly joked at the police and sang songs of Joe Hill and our younger days deep into the night. For that moment, despite the fact we couldn't even tell each other our real names, we were one family of fellow humans.

Then we realized we were one big family together, despite the strange circumstances. The police, after separating the males and females, separated some people they thought were leaders from the main groups and took them into solitary confinement and having them questioned by the FBI. Others of us were processed, and almost everyone refused to give up their name or any ID, an act called jail solidarity which usually has the effect of clogging up the police and legal system to such a degree that they comply to our demands, such as being let out on minimal charges and being tried as a group. This frustrated the police and the correction officers to no end, and they continually yelled at us for not co-operating, which only made our resolve stronger. Once processed, which included the bizarre act of having your shoelaces taken away so you don't hang yourself or other in jail, we were put 6-9 people in a filthy 6 by 8 cell, packed as tightly as sardines. We could not even all lay down at once and sleep – there simply was not enough room. Even though the cell blocks couldn't see each other, we could still organize, chat, scream, and keep ourselves from going insane. We refused to eat the "nutrition-approved" meals of two slices of stale bread with cheese and some chemical Wawa (who ironically were one of the main sponsors of the Convention – wonder what kickback). We threw the bread and cheese out of the cells, made a cross out of cheese and started worshipping it – "All hail Cheesus Slice, Lord of Lords!" Everyone begged the guards to let us see our lawyers, and when they refused we tortured them with bad humor. "What did we do – CD? C-Deez nuts!" was one of our rallying cries besides singing "Solidarity Forever," various 80s songs, "Banned at the Roxy," and "State Violence, State Control." Discharge would have been proud. When our friends led a vigil outside the jail, we began yelling and banging on the walls so loud we broke the jail's light bulbs and guards started breaking down – mentally. We could hear the women upstairs yelling and organizing too – it was very uplifting. We would yell "Hey Women! Stay Strong" and they would yell "We love you guys!", and vice versa. A more romantic moment I have never seen. It was like a mix between a disco and hell, with handcuffs if you misbehaved.

The guards took us one by one to get finger-printed and arraigned. Lots of people resisted, taking off their clothes and going

limp. This pissed the fuck out of the guards, who preceded to start beating the shit out of people. I saw a guy dragged down the hall by his genitals, with a female guard mocking his small dick and then giving him a few swift blows when he said anything. She scratched her badge number off so we couldn't get her. Lots of guards just started terrorizing people, like holding them upside down to get fingerprints and nearly breaking their fingers when clenched their hands. They called one black protester who refused to co-operate "a motherfucking Mumia". Actually, one chant that really drove the cops almost too tears in anger was "Brick by Brick, Wall by Wall, we're gonna free Mumia Abu-Jamal". They squirmed when they heard that. Finally we all got sent to a monkey-court one by one where a judge laughed at us with his attorney (who just sat there playing with his pencil!) and preceded to charge us with trumped up nonsense. We were then sent to a maximum security jail for "quarantine" for a week – after all, the authorities can't have us standing around spreading our radical ideas about freedom, equality, justice and anarchy. Might cause a revolution if they're not careful. We continued to hunger strike, and every other non-protester prisoner I met was behind us, giving us cries of solidarity and raised fists. We even tried to hunger strike with all the rest of the prisoners across the nation against the prison-industrial complex, and call it "Hungering for Justice". But we could never call out – the phones were always mysteriously not working – so I don't know if anyone ever figured it out. I really don't think the brutality was out of the ordinary for the police – all prisoners get treated like shit, and to them a bunch of "hippie" (as they called us) protesters were no exception.

The whole prison system needs to be dismantled – ask anyone whose ever been there.

It doesn't reform. Prisons destroy human dignity, turning both guards and prisoners into monsters.

What is far from ordinary and incredibly fucked up is the bail money – they charged people with a few misdemeanors about \$15,000 bail on average and people accused of felonies (like throwing a bike at a cop!) up to \$450,000 dollars, and people they thought were leaders up to a million dollars. To get out you have to pay one-tenth of that bail, and the rest gets sued out of you if you don't show up in court (also known as "government tracks you down and steals all your earthly possessions, then throws you back in jail"). The police kept taunting us about being a bunch of rich white college students, but from personal experience most of us weren't. While my cell-mates in Roundhouse did include a white, rich college-kids (who were arrested for making puppets!), they also included a concerned middle-school teacher, several home-

less punks, a working-class pizza delivery boy, and older Quaker. I know a guy who lost his home due to the fine, several people who lost jobs, and one person whose dad had to mortgage the house to get him out of jail. This is ridiculous – and they're honest about why they're doing it: They're trying to cripple the movement by ruining its members lives by whatever means necessary. Let's face it folks: This is no game – this is serious, and there are serious consequences to our political power. But we got the capitalist fucks running scared – and we're really just a bunch of unorganized kids.

But we did get our act organized to get people out of jail. I myself, when finally released from jail, and many others spent night after night without any sleep trying to figure out who was in jail, how to get money to bail them out, and how to get everyone home. Some people camped outside the jails until their loved ones were free. It was truly an amazing time to be alive – when I got too frustrated in dealing with the lawyers, the media, and the prison a hippie Quaker women would sit me down and calm me. I have to admit, if I were a religious, I'd definitely be a Quaker. One by one we got our people out, and finally, we too could go home.

Home to what? Let's face it – we were bunch of unorganized kids with immense ideals and passion, and now we were straddled with fines and stuck in the legal in/justice system. In retrospect, Philadelphia was a massacre. Everyone got arrested, the delegates got to their convention, and many protesters had their lives ruined. The cops were well-prepared and we weren't. The Republicans snorted their coke and drank their wine like we weren't even there. The CIA has now moved their main focus of operations from international terrorism to internal protest – now the whole weight of the government will be trying to shut us down. Still – we are a threat. To the punks out there, I am finally proud to be a part of punk culture – punks formed one of the largest groups out there and many of them were on the front lines, doing things others wouldn't dare. To the anarchists, the spirit of anarchy has definitely influenced the entire movement, and anarchists could lead the movement from being one a fractured reformist movement to a true revolutionary movement for freedom. However, we are simply not organized enough, or serious enough in both our ideals and our actions, as we should be. The government has clearly learned from Seattle and DC, why didn't we? They had clearly infiltrated all of P-DAG, and knew our every move. They treated us as terrorists, not protesters.

Sending a bunch of kids to the streets of some city they don't know to meander around, protest things, and block delegates works only if there is a fuck of a lot of people

there and the cops don't know what they're up against. Seattle was an accident, neither side really saw it coming. We need to stop being mere protesters, stop looking like terrorists, and become an organized and coherent force for revolution grounded in the people. We need to reach out into our local communities more and plan with them. It's incredibly easy for cops to arrest a bunch of political pilgrims who travel into town for a weekend, but they can't arrest a whole community. Imagine if the entire city of Philadelphia had been there in the streets – then the city would have truly been shut down. Enough jails simply do not exist for everyone to be thrown into. Revolution requires going home and talking to local grass-roots organizers, local businesses, high schools – everyone – about your experiences, your political views, and what we as people can do to help ourselves, if not overthrow capitalism, at least turn the tide on the new wave of corporate fascism that is destroying everything and everybody. Revolution requires organizing, taking part in local community actions, local issues, and forming real local communities. Eventually the government and the corporations will hunt us down and try to destroy us, and we need our communities at our backs. The era of the weekend protester must end now – we must instead become revolutionary in our every moment. Until this happens, there will never be a revolution. As a consequence, we all have a more than probable chance of destroying ourselves and taking the whole planet with us.

Let us look at the supposedly most revolutionary faction in the current movement, the Black Block. First, the black block is necessary. The government strikes back and they physically hurt people. It is only a matter of time before they start shooting people, especially if we get more organized and become a real danger to the corporate Reich. An extralegal force of revolutionaries committed to fighting, physically if need be, against the government in whatever form necessary is needed. However, right now, due to heavy media coverage, it may very well become a bunch of kids in Conflict shirts throwing rocks at the police. That is simply stupid, and only the most removed from reality of us can really sit back and say "Hey, the people will see the destruction as art". Fuck that. They need to see the destruction not as art, but as concrete and needed tactics meant to defend people. To do this, the Block must be tactical and strike large corporations like the Seattle protesters did with Starbucks, with very explicit reasoning. We should then, quite honestly, spread our thoughts and our ideas through whatever channels. Break a window, and then spray-paint the reason why right next to it. And don't just go out and there to break windows, but break them to cause a distraction when the cops starting beating the fuck out of peo-

ple. The anarchists could be the leaders of the movement. Of all the factions, we are the most passionate, with one of the best critiques of the entire system of relations under capitalism. We just have to prove we are responsible. Other groups don't have to know our plans – that would be compromising security – but they should be able to trust us and be proud of our presence there. The movement in the 60s was destroyed by Maoists, lifestyle rebellion hippies, and art-as-revolution anarchists. Anarchism could succeed. If we can demonstrate that we are fucking serious and fucking intelligent, then anarchism can progress beyond being a lifestyle into a real fucking movement, and then into a real fucking world.

As for being revolutionary in our every moment, I'm not saying in anyway that we should all withdraw from all aspects of our lives except for politics. We should instead strive to be full human beings and realize that

the benefit of everyone and our environment. I guess in that regard love of one's fellow humans is one of the most revolutionary values of all. If we are to be revolutionary in our every moment, then others will see our lives, feel the deprivation and destruction of capitalism and join us. When enough people join us, either bit by bit or in one giant collapse we will destroy capitalism and erect an alternative based on human and ecological values. We need more than a few revolutionaries, more than a Black Block. We need the people to become aware of their own actions and their own power.

The future belongs to the people, not the big corporations and big government. The future belongs to us. We must simply seize it and never let it go.

Love and Revolution,
Hairball

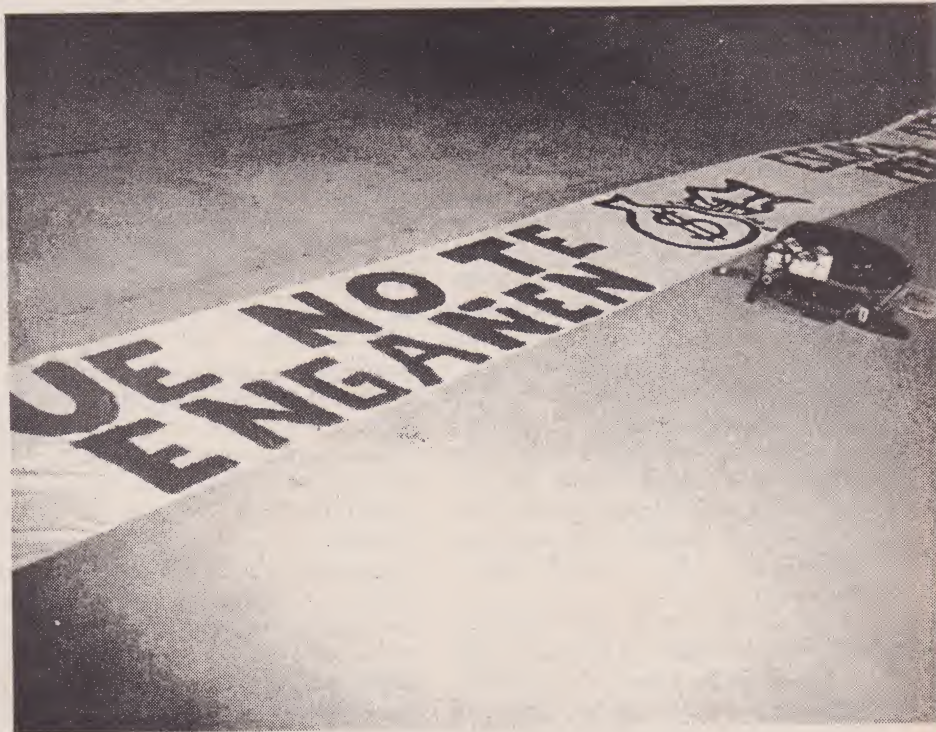


Illustration s 6: S26 in Prague

there is nothing really revolutionary about being revolutionary. Revolution is not some far off socialist utopia. Revolution could be our decisions right now. People seizing control of their own lives, making their own decisions, fighting for their rights – that is the most natural thing a person could do when faced with the situations we are living under. A television-brainwashed corporate temp slave with no dignity or freedom – that is the most unnatural state. Look at your hands. Were they not built to grasp, to hold, to manipulate? Likewise our minds and bodies were meant to move, to think, to plan, to act, and to serve not only our own benefit but to

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA, SEPTEMBER 11, 2000

by Dan/NoLongerBlind

An account of life before, leading up to, and after the S11 World Economic Forum protests in Melbourne, Australia.

Background Information / Introduction

No doubt you would have heard of the N30 protests in Seattle, or the A16 protests in Washington. I have written this under the assumption that you may not have heard much about what happened down here in Melbourne, Australia, from a perspective that

isn't that of the mass media. S11 (September 11: isn't anyone getting sick of this whole letter/number combination yet?!) was a protest/blockade/mass action against the World Economic Forum which was meeting at the Crown Casino in Melbourne. The WEF comprises of the richest fuckers in the world, who get together to discuss the "merits of globalisation", and (covertly, of course!) how to extend their control over the world and our lives. Seeing as the downfall of capitalism was high on my list of priorities of "Things To Do" this lifetime, I was really excited to be there.

Now, first things are first. I wanted to write this article from a purely clinical standpoint to avoid some of the very painful and depressing things which my time in Melbourne represented to me. However, in light of how tedious and boring it would be for you to read, I've decided to open my heart here. Melbourne was definately one of the most awesome experiences of my life, but for many reasons it was one of the most excruciatingly painful experiences of my life (which, all things considered, could correlate with the former?). A short time before S11 my girlfriend/lover/best friend/soulmate decided to end our two year relationship (we have lived together for 1 1/2 years now) and to pursue a new relationship with my best friend and, coincidentally, OTHER housemate. So, while I would like to claim that I am the revolutionary who is totally fine with this situation, living with your ex-girlfriend and her new boyfriend (also your best friend) was taking a toll on my sanity. When we were going to S11, we were all going together and I knew it was going to be hard for me. So a lot of what I write will be influenced by this situation, that I was in a terrible emotional state whilst down there and therefore cannot report on a "textual basis", that I would like to. Understand? OK, let's go.

Here is a short excerpt from an article I wrote about life before S11 for my own 'zine:

"This September, I went on a trip down to Melbourne for a mass action against the World Economic Forum. The trip lasted just under a week, and though that may seem short to some, I can say with confidence that this was one of the longest weeks of my life. Full of adventure, fun and mayhem; of dancing in the streets, fighting with police and some incredible hardcore bands. Here is the story of that week.

"... I was tired, hungry and in a city I didn't know so I was feeling just a 'little' overstressed...

"...that night I couldn't sleep I was so angry at everything. I sat there feeling the blood pumping through my head, thinking cold, bitter thoughts with an empty stomach and a broken heart.

"...after a boring meeting and some food

from the gracious 'Food Not Bombs' we all cruised over to check out the Casino, which was where the WEF was being held. Well, fuck, you would have to be there to believe how huge this place was. It's hard to understand how and why someone would need to build such a place for people to come and throw their money away at. But, they did, and as an example of how much profit this place pulls: the three days that we shut it down (September 11-13) it was estimated they had lost \$10 million. Fuck, that's more money than anyone needs to feed their entire family over 10 lifetimes, isn't it?

"Come the morning of S-11, we were all as ready as we could be. We awoke at 4.30am, got our stuff ready and caught a 5.30am tram into the city, a short walk away from the casino. We arrived, a motley crew of anarchists and socialists and -ists, clad in ski-masks, bandannas and multi-coloured overalls, some smiling, some scared: we were ready...

"...and over the next few days of intense violence on the part of the police, running, dancing, screaming, laughing, talking, arguing, love and hate I realised that nothing could have prepared us for it!"

The reason I wanted to use these excerpts is because they articulate some of my feelings in Melbourne. It was such a hostile situation to be in, the meetings and convergence spaces we went to were full of untrusting people trying to be as covert as possible in fear of the police, as it was understood that there were police spies 'everywhere.' This unhealthy dose of paranoia was beginning to get to me after a while, and I'm still feeling that untrusting insecurity which was drilled into us in Melbourne. One thing I remember was this anarchist bookshop we went to, and my friend Dave passed them a copy of the 'zine' by 'Revolutionary Action', an organisation devoted to the downfall of capitalism and the construction of some form of socialism. While I am definitely not a socialist, they are awesome to work with. What got me was the dick at the bookshop whose first reaction was "oh, there isn't any Marxist crap in there, is there?". I was just sick and tired of the faction fighting political bullshit, and it was only the second day! A quick note: it's unhealthy to be dogmatic about anything. Sure, anarch-'ism' is a great thing, but if you treat it like it's the be-all-and-all then you become like a religious zealot, like these guys obviously were. It was fucking gross, I wanted to puke.

Organization / Strategies

Basically, there was a very concrete aim to what we were trying to do in Melbourne, and that was to blockade the entrances to the casino to prevent delegates from entering and thus, hopefully, fucking up the meeting and showing our disapproval for capitalism, globalisation and all its destructive extensions. To

blockade the entrances, groups of people would stand at the entrances 'locked-on' to each other (arm in arm) and chant to any delegate who came to enter to "fuck off", but usually in a more 'media friendly' way. There were some chants which I will never forget, mostly because of how disgusting they were! For example:

"We will, we will stop you!" Sung to the tune of "We Will Rock You" by Queen (ah, the amount of times we've talked about Queen over the past few weeks!)...

"Shut it down, shut it, shut it down!" Said really fast in some sort of head jerky techno dance music pattern.

"Join our line, join our line!" Sung by people whenever you'd walk past. The problem with this is, usually you'd be going somewhere important and people would hurl abuse as you passed them for another area.

There were two groups of organisational strategies apparent at s11. First, the 'official' "S11 Alliance", who were organizing in a traditional 'socialist' way from my understanding. No, I can't articulate this, this was just a description given by someone for it. It doesn't help, does it? OK.

They organized on the basis of a group of people marshalled by people identifiable as 'marshalls'. These 'marshalls' were supposed to know all about the area we were to cover, about first aid and legal advice, about what to do in certain situations, and they had a level of 'authority' invested onto them for this information. More information on these people later!

The other way of organizing was in 'Affinity Groups'. If you are unfamiliar with this, it's pretty easy to understand - it was basically a group of people you have 'affinity' with, familiarity with, friendship with. For an example of an affinity group, our group consisted of about 7 people who all knew each other relatively well. We would stick together and keep an eye out for one another. We would always organize meeting places if we would be separated and we kept to it. If one of us went missing, we would find the person before moving on.

Each affinity group decided what they were going to do. Our group in particular was a mobile group. We walked from blockade to blockade, filling it up if it needed numbers, and when it had enough numbers we would move on. This way, we did a lot of walking and running from place to place over the time we were there. It did mean that we missed a lot of the 'action' which usually happened in certain blockades at certain times, but it also meant that we were able to keep the numbers up where they were needed. In hindsight, it would have been a good idea to not have run around so much!

Other affinity groups did different things. There were street performers, a huge truck

which played that 'dance music' that the kids listen to these days (!), mobile groups, vandals, a self-proclaimed 'Black Bloc' who romanticised the whole thing to the point of ridiculousness and people who just stayed on a certain blockade for the whole day.

Day One

As I said earlier, we arrived very early to the casino and it was still dark when we got there. We had arranged to meet a group of people known as 'Red & Black' as it was safer to be around a huge group of people at this time of morning. As soon as we got there, it started pissing down with rain and my feet got wet there and then. Fuck! For the record, I spent the entire day with wet feet and when I took my shoes off that night, it looked like I'd been having a bath for my entire life.

We took shelter and started to do blockade tactic training. The group that we arrived in, which was basically the 20 or so people who came from Wollongong (my home town, fool!) split in half, half of us deciding to stay with Red & Black and the rest of us scouting the outsides of the casino.

At this stage of morning, there were a lot of huge jock motherfuckers around. For example, I was wearing a ski-mask (for reasons I will articulate later) and this HUGE guy walks up to me looking FURIOUS and says "the last time I saw that it wasn't a pretty sight". I hightailed it fast, this guy was three times bigger than me!

We walked around, surveying each blockade. At this stage of the day, the police looked very confused as they didn't know what to expect. We walked around for a little while, and then I freaked out worrying about Jyoti's (my ex-girlfriend) safety and decided to walk back to Red & Black and meet them there. My friend's Luke and Keith came with me. As we were walking back, this group of jocks were eyeballing us. One says to Keith: "what a life!", and Keith says "It's better than yours!" and he got angry and started following us. He didn't do anything.

We found Jyoti and our friend's Dave and Lee and formed our affinity group there and then, deciding to be a mobile group and we started moving.

Today the police didn't know what to expect, and although they knew it was a non-violent protest they were still pretty scared. There were so many people they couldn't really do anything, and we kept out 2/3 of the delegates which was so awesome. They weren't very violent today, but my friend Luke got kicked in the chest by a horse and he coughed up a hunk of blood (gross!) and Jyoti almost suffocated when police got violent on a blockade that we were on.

Anyway, I won't detail everything that happened because it would take way too long. I organised for me and Keith to stay at my

friend Mark's place and we did, because the house where everyone else from Wollongong was staying was packed with people. We hung out, listening to records and watched an Unbroken video, then we crashed.

Day Two

Today we had much less numbers. I knew this because, when me and Keith arrived at the casino we were told "go to this blockade now!" and we ran down to it. It was down a couple of streets, and so we turned a corner to face about 50 riot cops with sticks and horses and masks and shields and they looked fucking psycho! Behind them, in a small intersection, there were easily 200 police standing around armed and angry. We forced them all back into the casino, and then me and Keith were told what had actually happened 15 minutes before we arrived.

Basically, there was a blockade on one of the gates the buses (which the delegates wanted to enter in, fucking smartasses!) were going to enter, and it was there for about ? an hour. Suddenly, a huge line of police horses arrived, and police on motorbikes and riot cops with huge sticks came out of nowhere and started beating people up to form a path for the bus, and they zoomed through at about 70km an hour!

Today, there were much less people and the cops knew we were 'non-violent' - even 'pacifist' - and they took advantage of this. People were beat up really bad today. It was fucked! My friend Luke got punched in the head and guts by a cop at one of the blockades he was at.

Anyhow, today I realised how fucked the marshalls were. Basically, they were making decisions on the part of a blockade without consulting the blockade, they were telling people what to do (including stupid shit like "turn your backs to the police", whereupon the police would hit the back of your head or "sit down in front of the horses", whereupon the horses would stomp on you) and were basically of no purpose whatsoever. I received more assistance from people in the street who I asked than these marshalls, identifiable by their blue scarfs.

Also, I realised how fucked it was wearing a ski mask. I wanted to wear it just in case I became involved with anything compromising, and also because the police were taking photos of protesters and I didn't know whether I had a file with ASIO (Australian Security Intelligence Organisation) which this photo could become a part of. Anyhow, every time I turned around there was some fucking photographer from some mass media trying to get my photo because it looked so 'violent' and 'dangerous'. The majority of photos taken would have had me flipping them off, but it was just disgusting how many there were! So, I decided that I'd rather not have that photo

in the newspaper and I wore a bandanna over my face instead (a good choice, now I could breathe!).

That night, shortly after I left (I was putting in a twelve hour day here!) the police went really violent and fucked people up. My friend got a broken nose, another has a huge gash taken out of their head and a cracked skull, I know of people with broken arms, punctured lungs and cracked ribs. It was total police brutality!

Day Three

Because of my emotional state, I couldn't stay in Melbourne any longer and today decided to try and get home. I managed to hustle a ride in a mini bus going back to Wollongong, and I got back late on this night, and finally got to lay on my bed and cry, for the first time in a week.



illustration s.7: S26 in Prague

Conclusion

Obviously, I can't conclude this. It's so soon to what has happened, I have so many thoughts going through my head that I need to sort out - as do many of the other people who were in Melbourne. I have a friend suffering from Post Traumatic Stress, who has panic attacks whenever she sees a police car. In fact, I know of people who suffered from PTS just from watching the violence on television, and my mum was so worried about me that she has to take a week's stress leave!

In the next issue of 'no longer blind' (#9) there will be an open forum discussing what

happened in S11. I'm especially interested in hearing your ideas on non-violence, the media/protester relationship and basically anything you'd like to address. Please get in touch for any reason whatsoever. If you're more interested in finding out what went on, check out www.indymedia.org or www.s11.org, and keep in touch with me as I'm working with other people putting together a zine out of the forum that will appear in #9, plus interviews and other related stuff.

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S26

SBANCA LA BANCA MUNDIALE!

by Kim Bae

I was travelling in Europe for a few months and had planned to return to the US at the beginning of September but the International Monetary Fund (IMF)/World Bank summit (er, protests) in Prague was calling me. A few days before it I went to a festival in Leipzig, Germany where I met up with my friend Yannick. We had heard all kinds of stories about troubles at the border so we tried with some success to look decent and clean on the train to Prague on Saturday the 23rd of September. Surprisingly the border police didn't ask us even a single question and we entered the Czech Republic with no problems. By the next day my friend Derek and this guy Greg who I'd met in Leipzig became a part of our crew.

The next few days were spent preparing for the big demonstration on the 26th and trying to find out what was going on. We went to some workshops and volunteered to help out at the INPEG (Iniciativa Proti Ekonomické Globalizaci - Initiative Against Economic Globalization - the organizers of the demonstration) convergence center. I was disappointed that there didn't seem to be any coordinated actions to prevent the IMF/World Bank delegates from actually leaving their hotels or arriving at the meeting place near Vysrehad. Most of the planned actions seemed to be aimed at blocking the delegates inside the congress center. We were also somewhat dismayed by what seemed like a lack of medical and legal support and general organization and information so we set about trying to figure shit out on our own. By Monday night we were equipped with a mobile phone, respirators, goggles, bandanas, and supplies in case of pepper spray or tear gas.

When Tuesday rolled around the atmosphere was charged. There had been police all

over the streets and helicopters overhead the whole time I'd been there. I had been thinking about this demonstration for 3 months now and hoping that it would be next in the string of legacy protests that were N30 Seattle and A16 Washington DC.

Tuesday morning we headed off to the meeting point at Náměstí Míru square. There we met up with six friends of ours from Germany so we now totalled 10. There were to be three organized marches (blue, yellow, and pink) to the congress center which were all declared illegal by Czech officials. Around 11:30 we left Náměstí Míru with the blue march, sticking more or less with the black block. We all locked arms and the march kept stopping and starting, people were breaking off to spray graffiti, some asshole fascist/nazi types harassed us...I was nearly exploding with adrenalin and nervous energy. Not far from Vysrehad near the intersection of Krokova and Lumirova we encountered a police blockade. I was pretty far back and all I could see was the huge globe some demonstrators had made being sprayed with water cannons and bobbing up and down. Once I made my way to the front I could see that people had already started hurling rocks and bottles at the police who responded with more water. They would occasionally swoop down a hill where members of the press were trying to photograph and videotape the events but always retreated. At one point it looked like the police were making a full retreat and I, absolutely dizzy from excitement, charged forward with the crowd only to be pushed back by tear gas and concussion grenades. I saw several people hurt, bleeding mostly from their heads which showed where the police were aiming their weapons.

Since this was the first time I was ever in the thick of a violent demonstration I scurried around near the front with rocks in my hands, unable to get the courage to actually do something with them. After being hit by a tear gas canister and some rocks thrown by the police I got angry enough to launch some of the rocks. I spent quite some time trying to get close enough to throw more but kept being turned back by the tear gas and concussion grenades. When 6 tanks were rolled down it was evident that we wouldn't be able to get past them. Some people however continued vigilantly and I saw several molotov cocktails flying through the air. Yannick saw 4 police officers catch on fire and people scrambled to grab their shields and batons. Four of our German friends grabbed a ton of rocks and marched toward the police in a line punching the air with their fists and shouting, "No justice, no peace! Fuck the police!" and I got chills down my spine.

The battle continued for about two hours until the police managed to force us all back down the street we came from. A cement train

pulled up behind us in some kind of feeble attempt to block us in between it and the police but there were several ways to get past it. By then it was 3 pm when the IMF meeting was supposed to be over so I felt defeated. The police had successfully kept us from reaching the meeting center and it seemed like complete failure.

For the next hour or so I wandered around trying to figure out if anything more could be done. Every time the police started to attack the crowd I would lose track of everybody I was with but managed to more or less stick with Derek and Yannick. We heard some people were moving up to the congress center to surround it so we marched up some steps on a steep hill and somehow arrived with no police interference although the complex seemed to be heavily guarded everywhere else. There were some cops there and people in suits, presumably IMF delegates, standing on the roof. The riot police formed lines a few times but would break up shortly afterwards. Nothing much seemed to be happening so I took a nap in the grass.

About fifteen minutes later someone tapped my shoulder. "I think it's better you are awake now." I looked up and saw riot police making a bigger formation than before. I scrambled up to where Derek and Yannick were and a few minutes later the pigs attacked us and started beating the shit out of people. I ran down a path until I reached a police blockade and had no choice but to slide (more like fall) down the side of the very steep hill. Things seemed to calm a bit so Yannick and I climbed back up and saw loads of fuckers in suits standing on the roof, at least ten times as many as before. Seeing these assholes on the roof who are destroying the planet and people's lives drew anger and hatred out of me like nothing before and I had to scream "Fuck you!" at them a few times, wishing I could pelt them with rocks instead. There were now a lot of police behind the blockade on the path and they charged us again from about 20 meters from where I was standing, sending me back down the hill on my ass. This time the police kept pushing forward so I was forced to run down yet another steep hill. Derek tried to grab me as we were running and he sent us both tumbling down to the bottom. When the police stopped attacking us and shooting tear gas/concussion grenades we climbed up only to see a big police bus pull up. We scrambled back down to the bottom just in time to miss the second wave of gas and concussion grenades. Walking on a path at the bottom of the hill I saw some police grab a protester on the street above and aggressively try to force him to get down. A group of us clambered up the hill, taking photos and shouting at them, "Everyone can fucking see what you're doing! Fucking assholes!"

After walking for a bit it was obvious we

could do nothing more, especially with the peace police faction of the protesters shouting at everybody throwing rocks so we decided to head to the Opera where the delegates were supposed to have some sort of dinner and entertainment. On the way we met up with a huge crowd of Italians and all of us boarded a tram to the center which was pretty amusing. When we arrived at the Opera we turned a corner and looked down at Václavské Náměstí (Wenceslas square), the huge shopping/tourist area in front of the Opera, absolutely overflowing with people. It was seriously a jubilant sight. The McDonald's was already completely destroyed as well as some bank windows. From this point on it was complete mayhem. Riot police were constantly forming lines and attacking everybody they encountered, even tourists and locals trying to leave some of the businesses. I had several close calls and did my best to stick around the area without being beaten or arrested. I had completely lost everybody during one police rush when I ran down a side street so I was alone for about 15 minutes which was nerve-racking. It was pretty dark by this time and the scene at the square was like something out of a movie that looks totally unreal and exaggerated on-screen. People running and screaming, clouds of tear gas, police in riot gear randomly attacking and arresting people - I couldn't believe what was happening in front of me. We all managed to regroup and after seeing what seemed like a mile of police cars and buses we decided it was best to leave the area. Once we were in the flat we were sleeping, I asked what happened to two of the German guys, Mario and Philip. Nobody knew. I found out a few weeks later that they had been arrested and kept in jail for 2-3 days, Philip with a broken hand.

At 11 the next morning we headed off to Náměstí Míru where everyone was supposed to meet. There were groups of police on nearly every corner on the way there and we were, of course, stopped and searched. I was a bit nervous since I had my passport in a plastic bag taped to my leg which looks pretty sketchy and my bag was filled with supplies for the demonstration. Yannick was taken away but the rest of us were let go. I wasn't about to walk through the dozens of other police so Greg, Derek, and I opted to head back while Marian, Sascha, and Jörn continued on. They were immediately stopped and searched by the next group of cops and arrested. The three of us that remained went to the INPEG infocenter and found out that there would be no demonstrations or actions that day but there might be some peaceful protest organized for the next day. We also heard that people who had been arrested were being beaten, sexually harassed, and tortured by the police. An Israeli guy that Yannick knew told us about a march to the prisons that was sur-

rounded and detained by the police near Náměstí Míru. Since our friends had just been arrested there an hour prior we figured it would be pretty senseless to go there only to be arrested and unable to help the four of them.

Feeling cut off at the knees we spent the afternoon at the flat, waiting to hear some news about Yannick, Jörn, Sascha, and Marian, and avoiding arrest. I felt depressed, impotent. We were completely immobile, unable to participate in any actions and most of our group was arrested or missing. By about 8 pm the four arrested that morning had been released. The worst story was from Sascha

ing stopped the meetings!! My body and mind exploded with elation. The riot police arrived soon after we did and, not wanting to be arrested again, we made a hasty retreat.

I left Prague the next day and began to hear horrifying stories of what happened to people who weren't as lucky as my friends in the jails. Some people were forced to stand with their arms and legs spread against a wall for 20 hours. One guy Ralph who I met the Sunday after the protest had an arm and a rib broken by the police and was kept in isolation for 3 days, coughing blood the entire time. At least one woman was raped. Another was so scared of the police who were aggressively interrogat-



illustration s.8: One of the many agit-prop wallpaintings in Tehran

who was made to stand against a wall with his arms and legs in the "spread and search" position for 4 hours. We ate some bread and tofu together and headed off to the old town center where we heard there was a meeting at 9. We arrived to see what was basically a street party. I bumped into my friend Nick who explained that the meetings had been stopped that afternoon, a day earlier than planned. The IMF and World Bank said they worked really fast and finished everything they needed to do in two days but we all knew that was bullshit. Contrary to what INPEG denounced as "fruitless expressions of powerlessness and political immaturity," it was obvious that the violence sent a very clear, effective message. The street party was a celebration - we fuck-

ing her that she jumped out of a window and cracked her skull. Others were pepper-sprayed and beaten and, of course, denied access to medical and legal help. When I heard about all of this I was enraged and wished I had done more to fight the fucking assholes that are getting away with this bullshit. Ralph said that what happened to him only made him more angry and more motivated to continue to fight. These organizations must be stopped and Prague showed me that we can stop them. I made a pact with myself that any time the WTO, IMF, or World Bank are meeting, no matter where it is in the world, I will be there.

TRAVELING THROUGH BOSNIA

I slept about two hours and woke up feeling sick. Things had settled during the night but I was feeling rough as shit, physically and mentally. The past few days had been hard: never more than a few hours of sleep, always up early, long drives and problems at every border. Not enough food, not enough rest, we ran on forty-five minutes of adrenaline just to play the music, then spent the rest of the day trying to recover our strength. The fifteen of us crammed into these little apartments and dorm rooms at night, into the van all day; I hadn't been able to find any personal space. The apartment in Klagenfurt was small but cozy. There was a woman who gave us bread to eat in the morning; I still don't know exactly who she was. Anyway, we hit the road to Banja-Luka early.

I crawled into the back of the van, sleep descended and I spent most of the long drive in a hazy state of light comatose. We went through something like three borders and each time you cross a border it's a fucking hassle because we always have to lie to the customs officials and hope the border police don't search the van. But they always search the van. And no matter how thoroughly you prepare, it's always a high-pressure moment when you drive up to some soldier-of-fortune motherfucker with a badge and a gun and pretty much the ability to shoot you dead. Then you hand over your passports with a bullshit story about being "tourists" and hope for the best. You've got to be on your toes, talk fast and look confident about your story. And never, *never* ask to use the bathroom.

Anyway, by sunset we were driving through the mountains of Southern Croatia. It was an eerie experience to drive through these old villages and see the standard of living and think about what it's like to live in such a place. These families were really living at subsistence level, right off the land. Every house had chickens and piles of wood, ragged old barns and rusted tools, woodstoves out in the yard. Your sitting in the back of the van, weary from the constant travel, looking out the window, watching these old houses roll by. And every so often you catch a passing glimpse of a pale white corpse hanging from a sort of teepee made with branches lashed together at the top with rope. "Wait, was that..." you think. Then another one goes by, you realize it's a slaughtered pig, some of them have been cut down the middle, exposing the rib cage. Intellectually, you *assume* these animals are killed for food; but you don't really know, not for sure. You notice there are also skinned chicken bodies hanging from the branches of

trees. Feral-looking dogs are prowling around and every once in a while you see an old man with a hat standing motionless by the side of the road, expressionless, he doesn't look at you, he leans on a cane, he's a farmer in southern Croatia and he has no idea what punk rock is, he has no idea what Catharsis is trying to do. Then you see he has a Pepsi in his hand and you realize what you're up against.

The closer we got to the Bosnian border, the darker it became and the worse the road got. In the twilight it seemed the place was haunted by memory; the landscape was utterly vacant, but there was evidence of terrible things. We passed burned-out houses and apartment buildings, scarred and torn with bullet holes. There were ghost villages full of empty, abandoned houses, cars burned to their skeletons overturned by the side of the road, huge holes in sides of buildings caused by artillery fire.

After hours and more hours of driving, we were flagged down by a pair of soldiers standing by the side of the road. They took our passports and compared them to a list on the hood of their patrol car. "They must be looking for somebody," said Matt. At this point, you're thinking to yourself: we don't even speak the same language. We don't know our rights or their privileges. They have guns. We are in the middle of fucking nowhere. They told us to keep going.

When we finally got to the Bosnian border, the sky was black as coal and none of us had any idea what was going to happen. There was a small bridge. And soldiers. We stopped and handed over our passports, which they held for about thirty minutes while they checked us out and made strange paperwork. We told paraplegic jokes to ease our anxiety. Then they let us on in. Actually the Bosnian border was more rational and practical than most of the other borders. The Bosnians were worried that we didn't have insurance for our van (rightly so — because we didn't!) whereas most of the other just wanted to bust us for small amounts of drugs so that they could fine us and keep it for themselves.

Once through the border, it wasn't far to Banja-Luka. I fell back asleep in the van and as I drooled on my guitar amp and flirted with semi-consciousness, I heard the others' voices. "We need to get out of here," one said. "Just go, Alexei, just go." A voice told me to look out the window and when I raised my head I saw outside the van a small village of tents, constructed of wood and plastic, camp fires and people cooking over fifty-gallon barrels, kids and dogs running around. There was no electricity, it was dark, like really dark. Every place gets dark, I guess; but few places get as

dark as that bus station in Banja-Luka. We had no vital information about the show except for the promoters' name and phone number, so we drove to the bus station to call him. He told us to stay put, he would meet us in an hour.

Standing around the van, a little edgy, perhaps a little nervous, I absorbed the sights and sounds of Banja-Luka. There were various sketchy characters around, standing, waiting on their busses, smoking cigarettes, looking suspicious. There were others who lived there. Bojan, the promoter, later told us that the tent village is inhabited by Yugoslavian refugees who were driven from their homes during the war. "The government helps them some," he said, "but not much."

At this point, I thought to myself: *right now I feel like absolutely anything can happen next*. And it was true, none of us knew the promoter or anything about the Bosnian scene, we're waiting for him at the bus station next to a camp of Yugoslav gypsies [editor's note: *gypsies are a distinct ethnic group, not just refugees... these weren't gypsies*]. I thought: "Is this guy going to show up with a Chain of Strength windbreaker and a pair of New Balances and take us to play for a basement full of middle-class Bosnian hardcore kids? Is an army going to come through and start wrecking shit? Are we going to get robbed standing here? Are those gunshots?" Some of the kids playing around were setting off fire crackers every minute and a half or so. Each time I heard the sound, my blood curdled and my eyes flinched open. It was so dark; there were many people standing around nearby, but you couldn't see anyone's face. We waited.

Bojan came after an hour and directed us to the show space, which turned out to be a pretty typical kind of rock stage with a tall stage and loud PA system. Bojan told us it was the first hardcore show they'd had since the war, which is pretty fucking cool; but I don't know whether or not to believe him. Another woman I spoke with told me they have about seven shows a year. I don't know what Bojan meant by "hardcore show."

After the van was loaded, I was sitting outside on the edge of a concrete patio next to a restaurant or night club that was closed. I watched a shadow looming up behind me and when I turned I found an old Bosnian man, the proprietor of the restaurant. I started to get up, expecting him to yell at me and kick me off his property like they do in America. But this guy didn't want me sitting on the cold stone, he showed me to a bench constructed outside one of the restaurant windows. "We don't even have the same alphabet," I said and gestured a thank you. He nodded, and walked off.

After the show we went back to someone's apartment (a friend of Bojan's whose name I never got). I was dead tired and went to bed immediately. In the morning it was pouring rain. I ran out to the van, where Ernie, Josh, Christian, and Alexei were sleeping. It was early, I remember that. There was like five or six days there where we were going to bed at four or five AM and getting up at nine AM to move on to the next town. A week of four hour nights can take it's toll, especially when you're not eating much.

It wasn't a long drive to the town in Croatia where we were scheduled to play; but we knew it would take a while to find the place because we had no vital information about the club itself and no real idea where exactly it was; plus we had to make it out of Bosnia first. We were right to be concerned, when we got to where we thought the border would be located, we found only a very long, very still line of cars. Christian went ahead on foot to check out the situation; but he returned unsure of what to make of it. "There's some kind of activity at the front of the line," he said. Turns out that Croatia and Bosnia are separated by a river and the bridge had somehow been destroyed. So all of us would-be commuters had to wait for the army to set up a pontoon bridge before we could cross, which explained the line.

We made it across okay, but our Hungarian friends didn't; they were rejected, because their paperwork was out of order, and forced to drive all the way around Bosnia to another border crossing. We waited for them all night, sure they were in prison, and had to miss the show. We never carry paperwork with us, anywhere, just give blank looks and seem certain that we can't be stopped. I guess that's the moral of the story.

CATHARSIS SOUTH AMERICAN GUERRILLA TOUR, FALL* 2000

*(that's spring north of the equator, remember) provided by your lovable editor

I can't possibly do justice to two of the most incredible, horizon-broadening months of my life in a simple scene report, but at the same time I don't want to let some of these stories go untold—so I'm going to make a humble little attempt here to capture a few moments of my life on that tour. South America seemed like another world when we left for the airport (which is a story in itself—Alexei's grandmother died that day, we were driving a van we'd borrowed from a friend of ours who had stolen it from his father, he's on probation and not allowed to drive or leave the state and we were going from N.C. to N.Y.C., then it turned out it didn't have a license plate on it, just as we ran a red light in

front of a policeman...), and everyone who talked to us made a big fucking deal about how we were "leaving civilization" and all this other really ignorant bullshit.

Really, any place seems wild and exotic when you first arrive, because you project your own fear of the unknown onto it. When we first got off the plane, into hot summer weather (we had left shivering winter in New York), everything did seem crazy at first: "Wow, did you see that tree? We don't have trees like that in the U.S.!" "Look at that shantytown—fuck." "Oh my god, that's really Portuguese!!" But after we'd been there for a while, it was no more exotic than any other place (in fact, coming back to the U.S.A. was a real shock—everyone seemed so unhappy here, all the fucking amenities seemed so unnecessary, and though the drinking water in South America never gave me trouble, contrary to popular myth, the tapwater in the U.S. wrecked my life for a few days when I got back!), and that's when we stopped being just adventure-happy First World punk kids on

ism, etc. won't be mere abstractions. This scene report may concentrate more on the adventurous, selfish sides of my experience, but I hope that my writing in general from now on will be a little more informed, thanks to our trip (and all the efforts of those who made it possible).

I. I stayed up later than everyone else on the flight south, totally carried away by the thrill of setting out for a new world. On the advice of PFM (my old comrade who I hadn't seen since the Catharsis tour in 1997, who joined us for this again, rekindling an old and troubled friendship), I watched a somewhat clumsy but poignant romance movie that was showing on the in-flight program, and cried a little. When it was over, everyone else was asleep. I opened the window and looked down—at that moment we were crossing the northern coast of Brazil, for real, and it blew my mind. After so many times in the past few years thinking I couldn't go any farther with my life, seeing the little lights of that anony-



illustration s.9: Co.Tra.Vi

tour and started really learning. I think it was really important for a band like ours, with our political pretensions and so on, to actually go to the "Third World" (whether Brazil, Argentina, Chile, or especially Uruguay actually count as Third World is controversial, I guess—but the way I see it, you can see pieces of the Third World everywhere, in Detroit ghettos just as in small town Peru: the Third World is basically the parts of the world that have been designated by capitalist power as waste dumps and sources of cheap/slave labor), to have real experiences and faces to connect it with, so all our talk about imperial-

mous coastal town winking beneath our plane was a sweeter absolution than I could possibly deserve. Then, at that instant, the sun broke through the clouds on the horizon—and I looked up to see the sky turn blood red.

II. Did you know in South America bands share amplifiers, drums, and cabinets? We always share cabinets and drums when we tour Europe (unlike a lot of touring U.S. bands, who insist on renting "their own" equipment, then take the expense out on the "fans" in show guarantees), but we'd never shared this much stuff before. It's awesome,

because it emphasizes a basic common sense point that is so hard to remember when you live in a wasteful, consumerist, selfish place like the U.S.: one car is enough for a neighborhood. One amp is enough for a punk scene. If people can just learn how to be cool with each other, they don't have to each provide individually for their own needs. Now, if we could only apply lessons like this, which make it more possible for people of varying means to participate in making art, to life in general...

III. PFM and I spent a lot of our time in Sao Paulo at what we called the "straight edge house," our own poor translation of the local name for an apartment shared by lots of really cool people involved in the hardcore scene there. I have some wonderfully idyllic memories of sitting on the second floor overlook watching him play stickball (Taco, in the local dialect—it has different rules in every neighborhood) with the kids in the neighborhood (who came to refer to him as Soldado, a reference to his resemblance to the guerrilla warriors of the gangs in Brazilian ghettos) drinking Guarana (a delicious Brazilian fruit drink/soda, one of the only local beverages in the world that still can outsell Coca Cola despite the latter's marketing powers).

Something that amazed me over and over in South America was the generosity and hospitality of everyone we met; it far exceeded anything I've experienced in Europe or the United States. There are a lot of different factors that could explain this—the continent is not yet overwhelmed with money-hungry U.S. hardcore bands, people who have less always understand need more, cultural differences, etc.—but the bottom line is that we were spoiled rotten by everyone, and might not have survived physically or emotionally otherwise (since being placed in a totally different environment is a bit of a system shock). I'm afraid that we North Americans with our feeling of entitlement didn't make it clear how much we appreciated every meal, every place to sleep, every show set up for us... but we did, we really did.

IV. Before we played any shows, we got to see a guerrilla show on top of a concrete parking deck-type structure in downtown Sao Paulo. Some of the poorer punk and hip hop kids organized a show there, with almost all the instruments plugged into one little struggling P.A., so they could play their music and get together without having to afford a hall. It was definitely cool to see the different musical genres combined there, and also important to me to see how different being a punk rock street kid is in Brazil from in the U.S. Someone hot-wired the electricity to power the amplifier from the streetlights (very impressive!), and though the pigs showed up

to harass people (I saw them questioning one kid: one pig stood in his face, threatening him, while the other stood a few paces back with a gun aimed at his head) they didn't shut it down.

V. Our first show was at a Krsna house in Sao Paulo, oddly enough. The hardcore kids can use the house for free, which makes it possible for them to organize shows that can actually provide funding—the shows we played were a big help to us in financing our tour (we lost \$1200 altogether, and it would have been a whole lot worse without the Sao Paulo shows—hell, we wouldn't have been able to go to South America at all without them), and they paid for the printing of the Portuguese version of Harbinger (Arauto) with funds from shows at that place, too. Someone was selling books (including de Sade!) and radical magazines in the courtyard, alongside the usual records and 'zines, which I thought was awesome (a lot more awesome than the local television station, which showed up to do one of their typical "News of the Weird" pieces on Brazilian hardcore).

The Sao Paulo hardcore scene is probably the biggest in Latin America (we're talking hundreds of people here, consistent shows, lots going on), and it's notable for its variety as well as its size and age. It has come to maturity with the people involved in it, growing from the primal disorganized violence of early punk scenes about a decade ago to something much more positive today. You can find all sorts of punk/hardcore bands, 'zines, etc. in it. I'd start listing bands and 'zines and kids, but I wouldn't even know where to start, and I don't want to leave any out if I do make that list. Pay attention when talk of Brazilian hardcore comes up, write kids and 'zines and bands from there if you can; I'm sure over the next couple years South American hardcore will begin to be taken more seriously north of the equator, just as European hardcore is finally coming to be taken seriously in the U.S.A.

VI. We stayed at a farm occupied by the M.S.T. on our way north from Sao Paulo. The M.S.T. (landless farmworkers' movement) is an organization that squats—not buildings, but rather large stretches of farmland! This one was about 30 kilometers across. I'd heard that the M.S.T. has some communist party involvement at the top, but the people I saw on this farm (basically poor families who had nothing, who work in the movement in return for the chance to take a home and sustaining land of their own) were purely anarchist/syndicalist in their day to day lives (if you have to put an "ism" on it)—and it was so fucking inspiring to see that happening, to see land that had been selfishly owned and unused now captured and turned into a little corner of egalitarian paradise (hard work not option-

al, of course, but vastly preferable to a life of comfort built on the bruised backs of others—let alone remaining one of those backs...). I don't feel qualified to write in depth about the M.S.T. or our stay there here, I feel like it would be easier for a native Brazilian to capture the subtleties of what's going on there, and hopefully before the week is over and this has to go to print Tarcisio will send me his article [*editor's note, the next day: his piece follows this one*—but I do feel like I need to mention a few beautiful moments:

- a. Our hosts spend the day showing us around the area: they take us by the houses that have been erected, by the farms where coffee is grown (they encourage us to try our hands at planting, and we learn just how impractical our suburban upbringing has left us... later, passing by another field, one of us points at a sad, stunted little coffee plant, and jokes: "that's from when Crudos came here"), and as we go we collect various fruits and other foods that happen to be growing on the land. It was a fucking revelation that night when I realized that was what we were making for dinner. And oh my god, the stars clear in the sky overhead after everyone else was asleep, with no air or light pollution to interfere...
- b. The town calls a meeting to talk with us and find out what we are doing there. We all sit in a circle, asking and answering questions with the brilliant translating assistance of Tarcisio... at one point, I ask how decisions are made on the farm. The first time I ask, everyone ignores my question. The second time, one of the farmers looks around at everyone like it's a most ridiculous question he ever heard, and responds, simply, "collectively." Of course.
- c. The next day we hike about 25 kilometers to the other camp, on the other side of the farm. The first has been there for a few years, and has been legalized; but this one was new, freshly erected houses with tarps for walls in some cases, and always the threat of assault by the pigs or thugs of the rich (there have been slaughters in M.S.T. occupied zones before, brutal murders on a par with the original genocide of the fucking conquistadors). The people there were as generous as anyone I have ever met, sharing the best of their food with us even if they had nothing else. I spoke (thanks again to the wonderful patience and efforts of Tarcisio) with one older man, who told me about his struggles in the mining unions in his youth, and insisted with a calm, inspiring conviction that law or no law, this was where he was going to make his home and live for the rest of his life.

I was also told about an urban movement analogous to the M.S.T., which squats build-

ings and neighborhoods, and has won similar advances for the poor and dispossessed, also against the resistance of the violence of the rich and merciless. For those of you reading this in the U.S. and Europe—the M.S.T. is the sort of group that your governments put pressure on “Third World” governments to eradicate, so their countries will become better investing grounds (and we saw as many fucking multinational corporations there as in any Western European nation—the difference being, of course, that *none* of the capital earned by these corporations is going to remain anywhere in Brazil...). Your government counts on you not knowing about their existence. The pressure you could put on them not to interfere or arm the Brazilian government to destroy these groups could preserve the lives and livelihoods of thousands of people, as well as strengthening an arm of the international anti-capitalist resistance far removed from your own efforts. Learn about this stuff if you can.

VII. After the inspiring days at the M.S.T. camp, we crashed right into the brick wall of how stupid and senseless hardcore can be. We were playing in Belo Horizonte, at a show organized by my friends Ian (the comeliest man in the world—seriously) and Felipe de Libertinagem, with Point of No. Return (in which Tarcisio, who had come with us to the M.S.T. farm, Fred, who booked our whole tour, and Marcos, who released our split CD with Newspeak, all play, along with other good friends of ours); over 400 kids were there, and it looked like it was going to be a great show for everyone. But while P.O.N.R. were playing, and Tarcisio was trying to speak about our experiences with the M.S.T., some drunken punks began heckling him, and suddenly the whole show disintegrated into a bloody riot as the two gangs (punks and straight edge kids) fought each other with martial arts, spiked belts, throwing chairs... it went on for over half an hour, until the pigs came and the whole space was cleared out. I know it's easy for me to say this, since I'm far enough away from the whole thing to have a disinterested perspective, but what happened was really fucked up and *everyone* should figure out what their part of the blame was. Yes, the “other guy” always does dumb shit that makes it impossible for things to turn out any other way, and of course as a recovering macho male myself I understand when someone loses his head, but the question is not who to hold responsible, but how to make sure this shit doesn't happen next time. Being violent when violence is around you, coming from a life of violence, is understandable, if tragic—the only part that really disappointed me was listening to my friends, whom I respect so much, comparing their exploits in the fight afterwards.

There are class implications to the punk/hardcore kid distinction in South America, just as there are in the rest of the world, and they are expressed in some places (like that night) with more tension and force, because the class tensions are themselves more explicit and tense (that's my theory, at least). In situations like that you can see how people get lost in the roles set up for them by their chosen identities: hardcore kids are supposed to look tough, so the punks feel intimidated; punks are supposed to be drunkards, so they get defensive about straight edge kids; and everyone gets so caught up in the conflict of their identities that it's no longer individuals with different perspectives meeting, it's just

next day at Aracruz, after an all-night walk—kids pointed him out to me, sitting by himself. He has the faraway look in his eye of a man possessed by a destiny greater than himself, driven by things he cannot articulate to anyone else.

IX. PfM and I returned ahead of time to B.H., to hastily organize a show to replace the one that had ended in disaster (we were only playing on the weekends, when people were free to attend shows—we spent the weeks meeting people, or traveling, which we did by bus)... well, that's a lie, Ian and Felipe organized the show, we just tagged along and chatted. We spent some wonderful time with them—Ian



illustration s. 10: Co.Tra.Vi

roles meeting to fight each other without the humans playing them even being present (except in body). Again, it's easy for me to preach, since I'm not involved (I might as well tell rival street gangs in Los Angeles to forget their blood feuds, when their brothers and friends have been killed by their enemies)—but the question is how to act in such a way that you never get involved, so our efforts to build something in this scene don't end in blood, waste, defeat. Fuck, that was a depressing night.

VIII. After the Belo Horizonte debacle, we proceeded to the coast, where we played in Vitoria and then Aracruz, and met more awesome people. We were also fortunate to encounter in the flesh a truly legendary character: SchMike. SchMike is known in these parts of the Brazilian hardcore scene as a man who has walked on foot to every punk or hardcore show in the past decade or more. He was at our Vitoria show, and then there the

really is the most attractive man in the world, it's ridiculous... everyone in his city knows him, too. Everywhere we went, they call him over, greet him enthusiastically, celebrate him. I share this with you for no good reason except that I'm not quite over it myself. He simply radiates a feeling of calm and acceptance.

We caught up with the anarcho-punks at an art gallery opening, after attending the meeting of a local activist group. There was free food inside (it was an exhibition about the 500 years of European oppression in Brazil, yet of course the refreshments and access were reserved for an elite), and we were all trapped outside, until the guards saw Ian among us, and welcomed us all in. The punks had come to sneak in too (we ate the free food, they drank the free liquor), and we made peace between us. They apologized for their friends who had acted out of line, and said they had no quarrel with us, which was quite cool. One of them asked me if I spoke Esperanto (the

"universal language" invented a century ago by radicals hoping to bridge cultural divides), and invited us to do an interview on their pirate radio station.

X. In parts of Brazil there is a war on between the State-organized public transportation and independent cells of vigilante public transportation. A van will suddenly pull up, invariably a minute or two before the city us arrives, and a man leaps out screaming and gesturing for you to hurry into the vehicle before the bus, or police arrive. (Ever seen the movie *Brazil*, which incidentally has nothing to do with the nation Brazil? The vigilante repairman in that movie is a good reference point for this phenomenon.) Each van is manned by two people: one who drives, the other whose job it is to lean out the window, screaming at traffic and waving his fists. The State has posted huge billboards threatening those who ride the guerrilla public transportation with death and dismemberment, just to make the whole thing more ridiculous. Marcos informed me that the "alternative transportation" is all controlled by the mafia, which sucks, because for a second I thought we'd experienced some real d.i.y. "dual power theory" in action. Ah well—the same principle could be applied here, without the mafia.

XI. We played in Rio de Janeiro, which is probably the scariest, ugliest place I've been, outside of New Jersey. I attribute this to the fact that it's a tourist city used and abused by rich assholes from all over the world: of course the city is left to deal with all the garbage and bad karma of their bullshit attempts to lose themselves on vacation. Matt had pinkeye so bad he couldn't see, and we all thought he was going to die—it hurt just to look at him, with his eyes crusted shut and swollen up. I was the only one who would even come close to him, since the others were so scared of being infected too. We were up all night waiting in the bus station for a bus out of town, so we could get back to Sao Paulo for our second show there... finally, at six a.m., a bus came. It was one of the more expensive busses, a higher class one, but we opted to pay the extra couple dollars each just to get going and finally get some sleep. When the bus started we found out that the extra cost was simply because they had movies on the bus—and no headphones, the soundtrack blaring out of the speakers at us. The screen was right over my head, and at 6:15 am *Mortal Kombat 2* came on at full volume, poorly dubbed into Portuguese. Oof. I pulled the cheap fabric of the pillow I'd stolen from the airplane over my head, managed to finally fall into a troubled sleep (sitting erect, on the bus seat, as we were for up to 72 hours a week during the tour), and woke up in Sao Paulo with my eyes sealed shut: pinkeye.

XII. The pinkeye proved useful, however. We were interviewed on a Sao Paulo rock radio station, by a D.J. who quickly turned out to be our enemy. He was out to imitate the successful rocker D.J.s of the first world, regardless of the fact that they and their whole civilization don't give a fuck about him—and was angry that we were trying to make his show address serious topics by bringing up the M.S.T., music industry imperialism, etc. The cool hardcore kids who had gotten us on the show were a little shocked to find out he was so adamantly opposed to what we were doing, and at first thought we should leave; but we kept wrestling with him between songs, until all the issues that were supposed to be kept silent were on the airwaves. At one point, as he was bidding us a pointed farewell, firmly shaking my (infected) hand goodbye, I informed him (live on the air) that he had just contracted pinkeye from me, and his so-cool professional pose cracked for a second in front of all his listeners. Ha ha!

XIII. I'd also managed to develop an abscess in my thumb. Everyone in our group made fun of me, since I'm always exaggerating things, but this time it was true, I had a fucking abscess and no one believed me. It was in my right thumb too, the one that holds the microphone, the one that people grab and squeeze when they're singing along. We were playing a show south of Sao Paulo, in Guaraja, near Santos—on the drive there and back we had passed through one of the scariest industrial infernos I have ever seen; the town is occupied by a chemical company, which has polluted it so badly that a whole generation of babies were born without brains in their skulls... it took a decade for the corporation to admit responsibility, and even now they're not doing anything for the families affected.

We were at the merchandise table, and I'd bought a pack of razor blades, determined to solve the abscess problem once and for all. PFM held my hand down, while Ernie (I had chosen him because, as you may know, Ernie has had extensive experience with abscesses of his own) sliced my thumb open with the razor blade, as the kids who had come up to buy records or grab a copy of *Arauto* watched in horror. But Ernie missed the abscess, so now I had a fucking abscess AND a gratuitous incision halfway through my thumb, too! Later that week, Estela (the drummer of Sao Paulo's all-female hardcore band Infect, and a wonderful person) had her mother look at it (her mother is a doctor who also gave me the medicine that cured my pinkeye), but she was afraid to try anything to fix it. Finally, at the end of that week, before we headed south for the next leg of our tour, when I was staying at Marcos' house, my thumb had become so fucked up from the abscess that I couldn't feel anything in it at all (the skin under the

thumbnail was turning dark brown...); thus liberated, I took the remaining razor blade and made another incision, cutting until I finally got to the abscess. More pus came out than I'd thought could possibly fit in my thumb, but after that it healed and I was OK. It's a pretty good feeling to perform successful surgery on yourself—makes you feel capable of looking after your own health after all.

The other event I really remember from that show was watching Abuso Sonoro play. Although there was a lot of good competition, they were probably my favorite live band we saw all tour. It was straight ahead political punk, the kind I already know and love, but played with such fucking passionate seriousness that it swept us all away. Their singer, Elaine, has the most powerful presence when she sings, and creates just through her own self-confidence the kind of safe environment in which everyone is able to feel secure and supported and self-confident. If you've ever had the experience of being at a real punk show, where the feeling of community and belonging and power is so thick in the air that you feel you could live on it alone, you know what I'm talking about. There was an anarchy-punk woman at the show wearing a fishnet shirt and nothing else, not to show off her body but simply because she was comfortable like that—just the fact that she could do that and not fear the bullshit and stares and judgments of those around her was a beautiful thing. The walls were hung with banners urging us to make good on the promises of punk rock rhetoric by living them out, and when Abuso sang about solidarity with our Zapatista comrades, we could all taste the reality of what we were doing and it felt fucking good. Their guitarist was wearing a bandanna over his face, and I didn't truly understand why until I saw him at the rally against the "500 Years" clock the next week, wearing it again, participating in the riots I wrote about in the "violence/nonviolence" article in the columns section.

XIV. A few days later, we played a show in a water park in Joinville, farther south in Brazil. It was an old, slightly rickety water park, and after the bands played the owners were cool enough to keep the water on for us—imagine upwards of fifty hardcore and punk kids running around a water park at midnight after a punk show, screaming and leaping down hundred-foot slides... for me, it felt like we'd slipped through the fetters of everything that was supposed to be off-limits to us, and we had arrived at a paradise beyond the edge of the world. Here we were in fucking small-town Brazil, with a hundred new friends, in a fucking water park, a place I never thought I'd ever be (for financial, social, legal reasons), let alone feel so happy and free in. I count that night as one of the high points of my life in this past year.

XV. We arrived in Uruguay at four in the morning, after a 22 hour ride from Curitiba in Brazil. Fred and I were met by yet another generous host, who took us to his mother's tenth-floor apartment, with a broad window facing a gorgeous sunrise over the river that separated us from Argentina (it was so wide, you could see no land on the horizon). Again, we were pauper kings, more free than anyone in any office in the United States behind us (thanks as usual to the support of the international punk community, to which I am forever pledged to give everything, now!).

The day after the show in Uruguay, some other friends there took me around the city of Montevideo, explaining to me the political history and current events there. They told me about the school occupations (organized by horizontal, spontaneously created student committees) that have happened since 1996, pointed out one such group meeting on the steps of a building (including a well-known communist party member, who stood to one side, except when he was delivering angry speeches at the others), and explained to me why the whole punk/anarchist scene in Montevideo is 22 years old or younger: there is a whole missing generation of radicals that were killed or forced to flee during the coup d'etat.

One of the places they took me was the CO.TRA.VI: the squatted neighborhood ("shanty town," some Westerners would call it) outside of town. Over 360 families moved in when the land was first squatted three years ago, and now many more have joined. All the houses are built by hand by their occupants, from found materials; the electricity is all stolen from neighboring power lines, by talented (and dangerous) local handiwork. This squat differs from the M.S.T. squat in one significant way: the group that squatted this land was organized during the planning and squatting, but afterwards left all the inhabitants up to their own devices, rather than continuing to meet and make group decisions. Consequently the township has same problems within that go on in the outside world, with the notable absence of police pressure. The police are scared to enter, and a young punk called Gustavo (the Montevideo punks have all moved into the CO.TRA.VI to find common cause with the other poor men and women there, to see what they can all learn from each other... they seem to have done quite a good job integrating themselves) told me of a night when he and his friends forced some pigs to flee who were trying to break into his house (in a purported search for a "criminal"). Police are not well paid in South America, and Gustavo also told me of one policeman who lives in the squatted town—once the squatters set a big fire in the middle of the nearby freeway, to place pressure on the city not to evict them, and his neighbors had

to warn him to hide, because he might be recognized: his squad had been called out to watch over the protest! Gustavo's parents were full-on Tupumarus, part of the terrorist resistance to the dictatorship government of Uruguay a generation ago—they were captured and tortured by the government before escaping and fleeing to Holland, where he was born. Gustavo loaned me some photographs of the punks building their house in the CO.TRA.VI, which will hopefully be reproduced with this article. It certainly was inspiring to see people living autonomously in every sense of the word, to walk into a hand-built house with punk playing on the hijacked stereo, and see people from the other side of the world, who are also a part of my community, putting these values into practice in a totally different situation, and to a much greater extent than I am used to seeing in the U.S.

XVI. We took a boat over the vast river (it was a beautiful ride, the sun glinting off the water—in the middle the river is so vast you can't see land on either side, and you only know you are on a river by the branches that occasionally float past), arriving in Buenos Aires. We were terrified going through customs (we don't look like tourists, of course, and we have musical instruments, lots of CDs and radical literature, no papers of any kind besides our passports...), and the pigs were checking everything very thoroughly—but fortunately, just before it was our turn, they took a cigarette break, and we just walked through unchecked! Thank heaven for this kind of luck, which we had every time—without it, disaster.

The most memorable moment for me in Buenos Aires was when one of our friends took us to an anarchist center, the F.L.A., which had been there for decades. It has a vast library, an infoshop, a large meeting center, all sorts of awesome resources. Argentina has a rich anarchist history—a lot of refugees from the anarchist movement in Italy and France fled there in the earlier part of this century, and in fact there is an Italian neighborhood in Buenos Aires that declared and maintained independence for a year in the 1920's. People explained to us that after the success of the so-called Communist Revolution in Russia, lots of anarchists became communists, because that seemed to be what was working. I guess it's a good thing, in the long run, that the Soviet experiment was attempted and failed, so now we can know what to avoid in our next attempts to overthrow capitalism and replace it with something genuinely free and healthy for all of us (hope I don't sound like too much of an ideologue here). Anyway, the guy who showed us around the F.L.A. was this awesome old man who, it turned out, had once been a race car driver (something Ernie fanta-

sizes about from time to time—at first Ernie thought we'd put the words in his mouth!)... he recounted how one day he had realized that it wasn't the competition he enjoyed, but the speed itself, and from that epiphany it was just a few steps to getting involved with autonomist action.

Something else that's worth noting about Buenos Aires—shows there take place so late it's unbelievable for people of other nations. Both the shows there we played didn't start until after two in the morning, and we didn't play until five a.m., in both cases—and at the second show, we weren't even the last band!! We sat out on the curb at eight a.m. that morning, waiting for the show to close down so we could leave, watching people head to work.



illustration s. 11: View from Alamut

XVII. Our best show in Argentina was in La Plata, a matinee. After we'd finished playing, we had to run as fast as we could to catch the last night train back to Buenos Aires, and we just barely made it. That ride back is another of my most treasured memories of the last few years—it was a cool, perfect night, the doors of the train were open so I could sit on the steps watching the dark countryside speed past, our friends were moshing in the train car behind us and singing Argentinean samba as they beat out the rhythm on the walls, and I felt so fucking good about what we were doing and where we were going.

XVIII. We were terrified heading over the vertical horizons of the Andes mountains (which

were beautiful, oh yes, the most stark and severe, dry splendor), because Chile is the most recent of the four countries we visited to come out of a dictatorship, and the pigs there (who are a part of the army—"military police," they're called—it's the same in Brazil) were trained under the last generation of murderers. [This seems like a good place to point out, in case any of you don't know already, that these dictatorships, especially the one in Chile, were all established and maintained with the explicit support, training, and funding of the C.I.A., even when it was clear that thousands of people were being executed without trials. This is not secret information, it's easy to research, and if you don't know about this shit, you should read up.] The border crossing was elaborate (a few different stops, thorough searches, guns and military bunkers, etc.), but we didn't have much stuff left with us anymore, and we got through OK.

Santiago, the capital of Chile, is an industrial city in a desert valley in the mountains: that means the smog from the factories can't escape and is trapped over the city, keeping the sky a lead grey and making it impossible to see more than a few hundred feet through the air. It's hard to breathe, even if you're not used to it... you'd think obvious shit like this would make even the industrial capitalists more environmentally aware, but I guess they can afford fancy air re-conditioning. Despite all this, Santiago struck us as having a sort of romantic atmosphere, and again we got along with everyone there very well.

If I can beg your indulgence to tell one more Catharsis war story... the last show of the tour (besides a free show we played in a ghetto outside Sao Paulo on our return, after a 72 hour bus ride from Santiago), we were playing on a stage a number of feet high, and I somehow got carried away enough during the last song to do a somersault off of it—and landed in between the people in the audience, flat on my back. I was out cold for a minute, and when I came to I saw everyone staring down at me in terror; Ernie came over to the edge of the stage as he continued playing the improvisation—he saw that I wasn't dead, and kept playing. And (you won't believe this, but it's true) somehow it happened that at the exact second we hit the last note of that final song, the electricity in the whole building cut out.

Conclusions

There's a lot I haven't done with this scene report that I really should have: I should have written about all the awesome bands we played with and got to know (all of whom deserve the exposure, for helping us so much), the specific activism happening and issues being addressed—about the political and economic history of Latin America, and the context from which punk rock has emerged there—about the specific life lessons I learned

from all the wonderful people I spent time with, and the fragments of culture and language I picked up. In every case, I've just been too afraid of leaving things out, misrepresenting things, spelling names wrong, revealing my typical North American ignorance. Had I worked on this soon after my return from that continent, I could have at least had the poetry of recent experience at my disposal to capture those wonderful, pure moments I mention so clumsily in this piece... but alas, I'm writing this the day before the deadline to get this issue laid out and printed, and I'm afraid I can't do better than this. Besides, to really do those two months justice, it would take a whole book. The one thing I can say for my article is that it captures the edges of my personal experiences there, which you can't find out about anywhere else. There are others much more qualified than I am to teach about the way imperialism works, the function of class and race in nations like Brazil, the latest incredible bands in Santiago. Please, seek them out, if anything in this scene report has interested you. I'll be addressing some of those issues myself in my future writing, too—and, as always, the best way to follow up on this article would be to just corner me next time I'm passing through your town, and ask me to tell you how to get a visa to enter Brazil, or exactly what I mean when I talk about "hardcore imperialism," or where the best old school hardcore band in Buenos Aires gets cheap vegan pizza.

BRAZIL AND THE M.S.T.

Edited and provided generously by Tarcisio

1. The MST – Landless Workers Movement

General info to contextualize the reader...

As you may know well, Brazil is one of the richest countries in the world. It is a huge territory, with plenty of natural resources, full of rivers and fertile lands. The problem is that all the wealth is concentrated in the hands of a real small – but powerful – elite: 1% of the people in this country controls more than 50% of the wealth it produces; 32 million Brazilians suffer hunger and 65 millions are under fed. The results... you may know it as well. Brazil is one of the most miserable nations in the world, equal to many African countries in which natural resources are extremely scarce.

If you take your world map you will see that Brazil is almost as big as Europe. Most of the population is concentrated in the big urban areas, which are mainly distributed along the coast, while the countryside remains a huge amount of land with very few inhabitants. These lands are mostly very fertile but, as we have already said, a small elite controls them. This fact recalls to the period of colonization: after reaching the Brazilian coast, the

Portuguese divided the territory into 15 big areas and handed it in to a few members of the royalty. These people distributed the land among their relatives and friends – people from the Portuguese elite.

From the 16th century to our present days, something has changed, but the basic structure remains the same: a small minority controls the land, most of which is kept for the only purpose of economic speculation. Less than 3% of the population owns two-thirds of Brazil's arable land. Thus we have huge areas of unproductive lands, while millions of people in the countryside and in the big cities live a life of misery, with no perspectives to find any kind of work at all. While 60% of Brazil's farmland lies idle, 25 million peasants struggle to survive by working in temporary agricultural jobs.

This situation has forced poor people to get organized and start struggling to take back what has been stolen from them. The Landless Workers Movement (Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem-terra - MST) is an attempt to do it. It is a social struggle, which is trying to achieve agrarian reform for poor peasants all over Brazil's territory. Hundreds of thousands of landless peasants have taken onto themselves the task of carrying out a long-overdue land reform in a country mired by an overly skewed land distribution pattern. The Movement started many years ago and has grown greatly ever since, at such a level that they became nowadays a terrible thorn in the side of Brazilian federal government.

The MST is transforming the lives of thousands of families from north to south, from east to west. It's an autonomous mass movement, without any political or religious link. The main goals of the movement are the land, the agricultural reform, social justice and the schooling of rural workers. Their actions go from occupying unproductive lands to setting up public demonstrations in big cities, from mobilizing extensive marches in the countryside to carrying out raids of big supermarkets. As their power increases more and more, it has become impossible for the Federal Government, which is responsible for the agrarian reform, to simply ignore them as they usually do to the demands of poor people. MST became a real threat and the government knows it.

And of course, the more the struggle for human emancipation grows, the more violent State repression becomes, and we see that the so-called democratic nations are not democratic at all. The MST has been bombed from all sides: 1) by the media, through deliberate lying, cheating and manipulation of public opinion (note: recently, our biggest weekly magazine, *Veja* – a Brazilian version of *Times* – has published a special report about the MST; the cover of the magazine, with a dark/red background and the picture of a

MST member in the first plan looking like a crazy fuck, showed the following line: "The tactic of riot: how the MST wants to transform chaos into a socialist revolution". Do we need to tell anything more about how tendentious was this report?); 2) by the government, through the ostensible police and army repression; and 3) by the landlords, through the building of paramilitary groups, seeking to assault, threaten and kill peasants who are occupying their lands. In the past 10 years, more than 1000 people have been killed as a result of land conflicts in Brazil.

2. The Visit

by Isadora and Tarcísio

When Catharsis was on tour on Brazil they decided to see personally one of the MST occupations, and since we had never seen any of these as well we decided to get off our fucking asses and go there with them – a decision which we will never regret. We left São Paulo on Tuesday at night, we took a bus to a small town and, from there, we had to drive about 40 minutes in a cab – which looked like an old van – to the MST farm "Primeiro do Sul" (note: This encampment is called "Primeiro do Sul" – "South's first one" – because it was the first land MST legally gained in the south of the state of Minas Gerais, which is bigger than many European countries).

The MST has two kinds of occupations: the settlements, that is, the places in which the fight for the land was successful, and the MST members were given the legal right to remain on the land; and the encampments, that is, occupations in which people are still fighting against the landlords in the Judiciary, waiting for the final decision of the judge. The first place we visited was a settlement.

A family that was known by one of our friends, Isabela, welcomed us. They were a couple – Tani Rose and Magela – and one kid – Ipê – and received us in the kindest way. After leaving our bags in the rooms, we all sat around the kitchen, and while the food – rice, beans, and some vegetable – was cooking we had a nice conversation. Magela is one of the state secretaries of MST. We talked to him about Brazilian reality and about important facts on MST history. Tani Rose kept coming into our conversation, talking about some aspects of Magela's personality: "He doesn't like religion at all. He is pretty much an anarchist," she would tell us. *[editor's note from Brian: When the topic of religion first came up in our discussion, I was really careful with it, because I had no idea how this guy saw religion or what role it played in his life. So it ended up that HE told ME I was being too soft on religion, which was pretty funny and ironic!]*

It was our first candle-light dinner in years. But, wait a minute... not in a romantic sense. They use candles because they do not have electricity. Their home is humble, there is no

electric devices as TV set, refrigerator or whatever. They have only a small oven to cook their meals and a small radio that works with a battery. And that is all. On the other hand, they have something that people from big cities as we are, with all our apparatus – from TV sets, CD players and computers to washing machines, guitar amplifiers, etc. – could never dream to possess: they have freedom and dignity.

(note: perhaps it would be naive to say they are free. But one must consider that they have conquered much more freedom than we do because they were able to take control of the means of production – in their particular case, the land. And they certainly have dignity because this freedom is a result of a great col-

lective effort and militancy).

that occupation, by the time when they conquered the land legally, according to the needs of each family. So everyone has their own piece of land to grow their crop, which is partially sold and partially consumed by them.

During our walk, we chose what we would have for lunch: edible vegetables were everywhere and the sensation that we didn't have to buy – or steal – to eat was incredible. Food was just around, all we had to do was choose a vegetable and pick it up from the land. We felt that we could really be in control of our life in that place. We felt that the survival of the landless workers on "Primeiro do Sul" depends only on themselves and on their own work. Maybe that is why the Brazilian elite is so afraid of the MST.



illustration s.12: Covert CrimethInc. operatives on their way to Alamut

lective effort and militancy).

In the next day we hung around the farm. In the morning, after taking some tea and fruits, we went to visit some plantations and other houses. The main agricultural activity there is coffee because it is one of the most valuable products in the market. They plant coffee in order to sell it and make some money to buy the equipment they can't produce by themselves: tractors, agrarian machines, gas. We went firstly to a coffee plantation, in which we could see – and help a little bit – how to plant the seedlings in the soil. After that, we came to visit some other houses, passing through small roads and many other plantations. All those pieces of land had been equally divided among the members of

At night, after having dinner, we had a meeting with the whole community of the farm. They were all very curious about us. First of all, because not so many people go to distant farms like that – unless members from other MST occupations in the region; secondly, because they knew that there were some foreign people among us. But we, also, were very much excited to have the opportunity to know those people personally, to talk to them, to share information. And so we went.

For that night, we reserved a special place in our memory. Around 8pm we all went to a big hall in front of an abandoned house, in which we sat and talk to more than 30 peasants for about two hours. There were all kinds of people, from the elderly, who could barely

talk, to kids, playing around frenziedly. It was one of the most exciting experiences we ever had. We were mediating the conversation. Sometimes, it was the peasants asking their doubts and curiosities about the USA; sometimes the guys from Catharsis wanting to know about the life in the occupation.

We've learned that, on the settlement, all the decisions are taken collectively, and that each person is responsible for an aspect of the administration of the farm. The production and the profit from the coffee sale are divided between all equally. They have some special rules there, and one of them is to respect nature (there are two ecological reservations on the settlement area). One of the landless workers told the guys from Catharsis that the competition against multinational companies was very unfair and harmful to them. Another one asked if they had class struggle in USA, or any movements that are similar to the MST. They all wanted to know about the American distribution of land and about American social movements.

How moving it was for us to see poor peasants, which had barely access to education, so aware about our present political situation! In Brazilian big cities, most part of the poor population is completely indoctrinated; they have given up to pessimism or, even more frequently, to religion determinism. The MST, on the other hand, has created a structure in which poor peasants have been given not simply a common education, but a critical one. We left the meeting deeply affected for what we have seen and heard there. The experience was inspiring for ourselves, and we are sure, for all our friends as well.

In the next day – our last one there – we woke up very early in the morning and walked from the settlement to a MST encampment near there (well, not so near...). We walked for about 2:30 hours to get to the encampment! But it wasn't tiring or boring; it wasn't boring at all! Nice conversations and the beautiful vision of plantations had filled our minds, and at 12pm we were able to see the red flag of MST trembling: we had reached the encampment.

The fact that it was not a settlement means that the situation over there was much tenser. In the settlement, since the land already belongs to the MST militants, we could find many houses being built, while old constructions were being reformed, and we could find each family growing their own piece of land. In the encampment it is not like that. Instead of houses they have provisory tents, built with canvas and bamboo; small pieces of land are cultivated but most of what is consumed still comes from the city; and the hope for a positive response from the Judiciary is high.

Zacarias, one of the leaders of that occupation, told us that the legal recognition of that encampment was dangerous to the elite of

Campo do Meio, the city next to it. First of all, because once they gain title to the land, the MST families living on Campo do Meio area would be the majority of the electorate. In a second place, because most of the rivers and lakes that supply water to Campo do Meio and other cities around it were on those lands. Finally, because that elite was mostly composed by landowners that were interested on getting those lands for themselves.

As a consequence, that MST encampment was suffering all kinds of attacks. The main victims were the leaders of the encampment – most of them waiting to be judged for two or three accusations. All the crimes that happened on that area were attributed to the MST members – we don't think we need to mention that some of them happened specifically with that intention. Zacarias told us that Campo do Meio police came by the end of 1999 and destroyed almost everything they had produced during the year. We asked him about the use of violence on their struggle: "We want to do things peacefully but, in case we don't have an alternative..."

Even so, the atmosphere in the encampment could not be better. Just as in the settlement, everyone there very well welcomed us. We were divided into three different tents, so that it could be easier for them to provide food and shelter for us.

The first image that comes to our minds, after getting into one of these tents, was the picture of Che Guevara, black and white, hanging over a bed. That recalled us again the fact that we were not in a common, but a very special place; I'm never tired of repeating that: in São Paulo, just go to a poor place you will find the picture of Jesus Christ or Ayrton Senna. But, hey, not there! They had fucking Che on their wall!

After taking another delicious lunch we kept talking to the people there. One old guy, Mr. Ramon, told us that they were just waiting for another sentence from the judge, and in the afternoon they were going to the city, full of hope that the land might be finally given back for those who really deserve it. On his last sentence, the judge ironically decided that they could remain on that area, but they could not work on the land. Afterwards, when leaving back to São Paulo, we met Mr. Ramon in the city again; unfortunately, the response from the judge has not been positive yet; but it wasn't enough to take the smile out of his face or the hope from his eyes: "It doesn't matter. We can wait."

In our last moments of this trip, we had a great time in a lake near the Camp. The weather was hot and Tarcísio spent some hours in the afternoon trying to perform Ernie's incredible flying retard "jump" [editors' note, as requested by the authors: in this special diving maneouver, Ernie leaps up and forward, grabs his ankles, and flies head-first into the

water with his legs and arms out behind him like the wings of some extinct, absurd fishing-bird. I'm sure Ernie means no offence to all you retards out there.]. At last, he wasn't able to do it 100% - his best jump was like 80% - and it made him a bit frustrated. The sun was setting and we had to move on, back to São Paulo... back to hell.

Anyway... any kind of bad feeling could never overwhelm our great excitement for being able to know a revolution taking place before our very eyes.

3. A Personal Comment

by Tarcísio

What shape may revolution take? This question has been in my mind for quite a while. Some years ago, I had already tried to provide a reasonable answer for myself but nowadays, looking back and rethinking the issue, as well as observing recent historical events that are taking place all around the world, I believe my opinion slightly changed.

One of the most important things I have learned in the past few years is the importance of seeing social phenomena historically. This means to understand that historical circumstances of time and space cannot be excluded from the process of interpretation of events. It seems to be pretty obvious but, personally, I have always found myself prone to fall in the very same mistake, again and again: trying to provide absolute solutions for problems that are circumstantial.

That is why I believe that I was pretty naive by spending my time thinking of what shape a world revolution might take. Because we don't know. We can't know. It depends on several different inter-related aspects: where and when is it taking place and what are the social, economic, political and geographical conditions involved. Besides, revolution is not something that we can specify: "now it just started; now it is all over." Revolution is not an event; it is a process.

But what all this has to do with the subject of this report? Well, in this text me and Isadora tried to come up with some information about one of the most important social movements in Brazil nowadays, the MST. But I believe it is important for everyone reading this to keep in mind that this struggle is very specific to Brazilian reality. The whole idea behind the MST may sound absurd to any American or European person, if they think about it in terms of their own reality: highly mechanized rural areas, few amount productive fields, relative social equality, effective preventing politics from property speculation and so on.

The best lesson we could take from MST, in my opinion, is not that agrarian reform should be tried everywhere. Rather, we learn the importance of striving to understand deeply the historical circumstances of the

places we live in, so that we are able to come up with real effective, solid, threatening counterattack to capitalism advance. If the MST is getting any success nowadays it is because — besides, of course, the tireless militancy of its members — they were able to interpret Brazilian reality as no one else could.

For more information, or to discuss this subject further, contact Tarcisio at the Point of No Return address.

WORKING IN CHICAGO'S GAY NIGHT CLUBS

Culture and Hedonism
By Eric Boehme

I see him approach, making a beeline from the dancefloor just as I come behind the bar. I'm used to this now but I still cringe inside. I know I'm gonna have to kiss him. I know his lips will linger just a little too long and, if he can get his arm behind the bar, he's probably gonna grab my ass. But I'm gonna let him do it because last time he was here, he left me \$20 after buying just one drink. I went home with over \$300 that night, all tax free, all cash. And even though I've been working in all kinds of jobs since I was fifteen, this was the most money I'd ever seen in the quickest amount of time. I bought my first computer that summer, I saved money to go back to school and I took a three week trip to Paris to visit my then-partner. Sometimes it really sucked. Like being at the bar until 6 AM. Other times it was cool, talking to some friends who would come in, hanging around and not doing too much. Every night though, it was interesting.

**This is not a Commodity
nor a Spectacle: These are People's Lives.**

First lemme start with a disclaimer. I wondered if I wanted to write about working in Chicago's gay night clubs because I thought that some of the things I saw, if I wrote about them, would come across as a kind of judgment on the behavior and lifestyle of folks I worked with and I saw at the clubs. This is not meant as a judgment on the way people want to live their lives. Neither is this an attempt by me to commodify gay club lifestyle by writing about it or make a spectacle, an "under-cover expose" of the "deviant" lifestyle of gay club guys. The facts are that I needed money for graduate school and at that time, for all intents and purposes, I lived as a gay club guy. My housemates were gay, many of my friends were either gay, straight or ambisexual kidz who liked hanging out in gay places. Finally, I worked so much that I was constantly around gay club culture. However at the time, my partner was a woman I was

committed to monogamously and spiritually. And I even though it was interesting for me, I didn't really like the club scene. Hopefully, this won't color the way I tell what I saw and participated in during that year.

The Clubs, The Crowds, The Clothes, and The Chests

I worked at a couple of clubs in Chicago's "Boys' Town" for over a year, starting in 1996. I worked mostly at Fusion, formerly called the Vortex. At the time, it was one of the largest gay/mixed dance clubs in Chicago, with two different dance floors and four separate bars on an upper and a lower level. Manhole was

drinks and try to develop a repeat clientele who knew me and would come to my bars rather than the other guyz who worked there. When I bar-backed, I worked for the bartenders, filling up their coolers with beer and ice, stocking glasses and supplies, and making sure the liquor guns were full in the back. Business was usually pretty crazy there—very high volume, very stress inducing. We would try to attract business by having performances and theme parties. At Fusion, Ru-Paul played the opening, Debbie Harry performed, and we had some of the International Male Leather Events. We wore theme-specific costumes (the over-riding theme being less cloth-



illustration s.12: Path that eventually leads to Alamut

a smaller, two room leather bar run by the same guys who ran Fusion. Our clientele at both places was pretty varied but there were basically four crowds that came through: the leather crowd (predominant at Manhole), the shirtless-and-jeans, water-drinking, circuit-club boys, the "freakshow" club crowd (drag queens, trannies, costume wearing hetero club kidz), and regular gay guys and girls. At Fusion, a fifth group was regularly seen: straight women who came to dance in a place where they wouldn't be constantly bothered by men trying to pick them up. I did a variety of jobs but mostly I bartended and did what in the industry is called bar-backing. When I bartended, I would mix and get

ing is more), leather for the leather events (vinyl for me), loin-cloths for the monthly "Animal Parties," boxers with hearts on them for Valentine's Day. Even the three or four straight bartenders never wore a shirt behind the bar. Everybody worked on their bodies (some obsessively) because this is how we made our tips. It made me realize that sometimes men have just as many body issues as straight women do. Guys come to your bar rather than others' because they like the way you look or because you have developed a continuing relationship with them where they give you tips in return for drinks, kisses, ass, nipple, waist or bicep grabs, a quick conversation, flirting, and sometimes complimentary

drinks or shots. Chances are, your biggest tip-pers are the ones who you give the most stuff too, either in terms of drinks, your body, or your conversation. I finally knew what it was like for women walking around in a crowded hetero club cuz I got grabbed and pinched everywhere I went.

Being the Fluffer:

Getting Him Ready for the Next Scene

Because I was also a bar-back, I had a unique relationship to the bartenders when I wasn't bar-tending. In many ways, that meant that I was the production-assistant, gopher-type guy who had to go all around the club doing different errands for people. I'd take a drink to the DJs in the booth and then carry four cases of beer through a shoulder-packed club shouting in my most menacing voice for people to move. Because my tips came from the bartender, I'd have my own little mini top-and-bottom relationships going with the bartenders. I'd be doing stuff like going to get a bandage for someone or delivering a note, or when it was slow, I became some anal-retentive bartender's re-decorator. Some guys wouldn't care what I did as long as they had beer, ice, and glasses, some guys wanted everything around them set up and placed in a very particular way. It was like I was fluffing them so that they could go and display themselves for their customers, so that they looked good to attract tipping guys.

Drugs and Sex: Vanilla and Leather

Everyone was just wasted on drugs. Either frenetically trying to control everything around them, or doing as much as possible to run around and have a good time rather than doing their job. I saw all kinds of sniffing and snorting and puffing from people who went to the club as well as most people who worked at the club, who used some kind of drug for entertainment or to keep them awake and up for so late into the morning. The most popular drugs I saw were coke and crystal meth, ecstasy and K—everything up to keep you dancing. Even the owners were all wired. Many a time I'd try to talk to someone running the joint and they would be sweating and talking faster than a firing AK-47, trying to encompass far too many thoughts, suggestions, and mostly orders into a jumbled trainwreck of sentences.

Sex and drugs were everywhere. Indirectly, I guess we as bar-tenders were doing a kind of sex work by wearing hardly any clothes and exchanging some level of physical interaction for tips. But I'd walk around on the dancefloor, in the bathrooms, or in the dark corners and couches upstairs and run into all kinds of people, both gay and straight getting it on. I've seen guys getting jerked off, giving head, and hetero couples having intercourse right on the dancefloors. I was introduced to

leather sexuality, to codewords and practices, top and bottom roles and bondage techniques. During the International Male Leather competition, there was a shaving and boot-blackening booth next to my bar where men would get their crotch and assholes shaved or their boots shined by a big man with a handlebar mustache wearing nothing but a leather biker hat and a leather apron. One time a guy asked him to urinate on his boots. A swing was set up in another bar for incapacitation and whippings, while tops tattooed their submissive slaves at a table next to the downstairs bar. I overheard a conversation in the line for the bathroom that basically consisted of one guy asking another to urinate in his hat, which he then put on his head.

Jackie told me I should wear my armband on the left. I think I would consider myself a top and he said that tops wouldn't try to pick me up if I was representing myself as a top. It was interesting to meet men in leather culture who considered themselves either tops or bottoms. As with the gender roles of men and women, the dominant and submissive relationship was a kind of guideline for action rather than a rigid set of roles. Traditionally you think top and bottom and you think the top is the one who is dominant and in control. Yet you'd meet a top who would initially come off really tough and macho yet later you'd find out that the bottom, the guy who was being submissive and obedient, was actually running the show.

Head-Games, Drama, Hierarchies and Categories.

It was refreshing for me though because I think gay men, unlike some straight men and women, are totally honest about their desire. Everyone was totally up-front and honest about what they wanted from you, and if you didn't want to give it to them, that's cool, there is always someone else. I think there are far more head-games when it comes to sexuality between men and women. Not to say that gay men aren't interested in head-games and drama, but just that when it came to fucking, things were pretty cut and dried.

It wasn't just pure, raw sexuality though, it was also an insight into the way men interact with each other. I think many men, both gay and straight, need to be able to use categorizations and hierarchies to determine where they stand in the social order. There was certainly a hierarchy between those who worked at the clubs based on the amount of time that someone had worked there, or based on who happened to be the personal favorite of the owner at the time. It is not just straight male culture that needs this kind of wolfpack, pecking order mentality—these men I worked with also needed it. They also needed to be able to categorize, to determine once and for all what someone's sexuality or sexual habits were.

I mostly kept to myself and I think they really couldn't figure out where I stood sexually, so I was constantly the subject of gossip and speculation. It was like any ambiguity was problematic and rather than let you represent yourself in a certain way they had to have confirmation of which category you fit into. I remember on a number of occasions telling men that asking the question of whether I was gay or not was so passe. It just seemed to me that most of the guys and girls I know just naturally consider themselves bi or ambisexual and defining yourself in such black and white terms is anachronistic. I guess it also could have been a generational thing because back in the day there was so much more at stake by declaring your homosexuality in the face of a dangerous and prejudiced society.

The off-duty Chicago police-officers who did security for the club didn't quite know what to make of everything, particularly anyone who came across as quite masculine. I felt like it was weird for the security to see straight or straight-acting guys among those of us who worked there—they just didn't know how to talk around us. After shift they would sit around with us as we cleaned up and waited for the owner to count out our cash drawers. The best conversations during these periods were always between the police officers and the most effeminate bartenders. The thing was, they agreed on everything. The security guys and the more catty among us would crack wise about certain things that occurred during the shift. Sometimes I heard the same homophobia from both: genuine in one case, self-hating in the other.

Celebrating the Little Boys' Playground

It felt like such a little boys' playground working at the club. Gay nightclub culture is notoriously hedonistic and self-indulgent. Everyone going to the club or working at the club was trying to get their rocks off either through drugs, dancing, sex or just hanging out with friends, seeing and being seen. The management had huge amounts of money to throw around and there was a massive workshop in the back to build sets and design decorations, costumes, lighting, and sound productions. In many ways we were like a bunch of pre-pubescent boys working there. Self-indulgent and hedonistic, we supplied entertainment and fun for so many. And we had as much fun as we could when we were there. Sometimes I left the club and went to other clubs on Halsted Street for awhile. Sometimes I would go in the back and read a book. Sometimes I would stand in the cooler and exercise using cases of beer and bottled water as weights. There were many nights when I made the best of the work situation and had a lot of fun. But I think that is why drugs were so ubiquitous. In such a play-

ground everything was fun, everything was open, we could do anything, anything we wanted, anything we desired. Playing next to each other in very close quarters, we had a constant level of physical yet non-sexual contact. Hugging each other, horse-playing, wrestling, slapping each others' asses, it was all in good fun and deeply refreshing to find out that you could touch and be physical with another man without it being sexual or getting violent. Yet as far as I knew, none of the guys slept with each other. It was just like being a kid before you knew that touching another guy was socially frowned upon, before physical contact was channeled into either sports or sexuality. It was the way boys play with each other before heterosexual society begins to try to mold them into either masculine males or queenie fags (not that everyone now is or should be one or the other).

Live Your Desire? Hedonism and Fulfillment

In many ways, gay-club culture could be seen as the complete expression of the "live-your-desire" mentality so advertised and exhorted in the pages of this magazine*.

Even the off-duty police treated the club like their playground. One time as we were closing I came upon a security guard in a just-closed bathroom with a woman he had met at the club. She obviously did not want to be there and I hung around the bathroom cleaning up until they left. It was then I realized that the self-indulgence and hedonism I thought was so healthy and so rad, could have very detrimental effects on others. Sometimes when we pursue our desires completely, we hurt ourselves and others. Because the very nature of desire is to be unfulfilled, because desire works sometimes directly at odds with the well-being of others, and because others can come to be objects through our desire, there was almost an endless and wistful sorrow, a deep isolation under the surface of the fun and friendship of the hedonistic club culture. Desire always carries a measure of objectification. People become conduits for our pleasure. Pursuing pleasure at all costs lessens us as social beings. We become individuals. Always searching for the next best high, that next great fuck, that next great DJ, pushing our senses to the limits of human existence, tasting the pain and the ecstasy of a constant never-ending desire sometimes can seem like a hollow quest. Perhaps I just didn't get it. Perhaps I never will.

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**Editor's note: see the poster section at the end of Days of War, Nights of Love for an illustration of the crucial differences between mere "hedonism" and "ambitious hedonism." Real, ambitious*

pleasure-seeking is not a temporary abandonment to individual desires, but a well-reasoned, long-term commitment to the pursuit and exploration of desires of all kinds and scopes, especially the large-scale, long-term ones.

ALAMUT

Excerpted from the international bestseller,
Volvo Speaks

Prologue

After a 56 hour bus trip that took me through most of Turkey, countless mountain passes and military checkpoints, I reached Iran. After an overdose on Persian pop music and a day of severe diarrhea I was overwhelmed with relief when I got of the bus. I wouldn't do my memories justice by trying to incorporate my impression of Iran into one essay and therefore I choose one tale...

Alamut - The Eagle's nest

We descended into the clouds that filled the valleys in the Alborz mountain range and traveled back in time, or so it seemed. Behind me laid the busy street life of Tehran, housing the remains of an American Embassy, the world's largest bazaar and millions of people and cars.

The countryside was waking up as we made our way on winding roads. The villages, which scattered the mountains, showed no signs of modernity and its female inhabitant's colorful clothes were in stark contrast to the black chador, worn by the majority elsewhere. At the time I was unaware of the significance of the place I was about to visit, I was along for the ride and the scenery made it worthwhile. As always, unmediated adventure is the most rewarding, and this particular one took me to Alamut, the ancient fortress of the medieval Assassins.

The fortress of Alamut was the center of the empire and the symbol of the movement, controlled by Hassan i Sabbah and the later heads of the Assassins. The Assassins were a Persian Isma'ili sect and their empire was largely a hidden political one within the borders of others and was maintained by the means of information and political assassination. Alamut is said to been seized in 1090 by the Assassins and stood unassailable until 1256 when it was destroyed by Hulagu Khan and his Mongol raiders. Why became apparent when we parked the jeep at the foot of the mountain in the outskirts of a little village and started to make our way up the mountain. Alamut is only accessible only by a single, almost vertical pathway, which at the time of my visit was slippery with small stones. We reached the top and our eyes were rewarded by the swindling view, while a group of young local boys who tailed us filled our ear with incomprehensible phrases and laughter. There

was not much on site to aid the imagination of what the castle had looked like back in the day. I found some holes along the edge that overlooked the path and which were probably suited for greeting unwanted guests with flying rocks. A herd of goats were grazing the few patches grass that could be found up there and there were no visible signs of the mythical garden.

Like many secret societies throughout the ages, the actual history and practices have been blended or bastardized by folklore and myth. The history of Alamut is no exception to this. Most of the Western myth about Alamut, which have intrigued writers such as William S. Burroughs and Hakim Bey, comes from Marco Polo's tales of his travels in the area in the early 1270s. While the fortress had fallen at that time it's fair to say that Marco Polo's narrative is not a first hand source but a



illustration s.13: Marco picking vegetables in Zagreb

collection of tales he picked up from storytellers along his journey. According to Marco Polo an initiate was drugged and taken to garden close to Alamut where he was given a taste of paradise on earth. It's a matter of dispute whether the initiate was treated with hash along with the other sensuous delights as wine, food and sexual pleasures. The initiate was led believe that he would return to this paradise after death. With this prospect ahead of them the Assassins performed their deed willingly. From Alamut the Hassan i Sabbah, also called the Old Man on the mountain, sent out missionaries to infiltrate his enemies ranks, where they would often rise to positions of prominence and trust, often posing as religious teachers or dervishes. From this posi-

tion it was easy for them to kill their intended victim. The assassinations would usually be carried out with a knife and the Assassin would not try and escape capture. Instead, he would wait calmly prepared to die, having carried out his objective. Political assassination was not unknown in the Muslim world before Hassan i Sabbah but the Assassins marked a qualitative shift. Sometimes an Assassin would be in the service of a ruler for years and years before being required to strike. This sort of political assassination was new to most of the rulers and it was easier to give in to the Old Man's demands, when one could not be sure of even his closest advisors could be trusted. The power to assassinate an enemy was said to reach as far as India and France.

The terrain in this area is arid, rocky and some sources assert that the altitude would not sustain a garden with the vegetation described in the chronicles of Marco Polo. It's therefore highly unlikely that the garden was a physical place and if it existed it was either an allegory for some sort of initiation ceremony or part of a spiritual vision to which the initiate was given access. Another of the principle myths surrounding Alamut involves the library, which supposedly contained over 200,000 volumes on a myriad of subjects including political power, philosophy, religion and the control of spirits. When the Mongols invaded Alamut, record show that they were surprised at the number of books and scientific instruments that they found. More critical sources refute the notion of a library of that magnitude, in regards to the lack of space among other things, and having visited the place I feel inclined to agree. According to the myth the words "With the aid of God, the ruler of the universe destroyed the fetters of the law" were written on the door to the library that after the Mongol invasion was either lost, stored in another manner or did never exist of this world.

The religious teaching emanating from Alamut is said to have been a derivation of the Isma'ili faith, a peculiar and unique and blend of Sufi mysticism and Shiism. For the Isma'ili, the Imam, or religious head was the personal representative of God in the physical world and salvation was only obtainable through the Imam. For years the Isma'ili Imam had been the Caliph Fatamid, but the split, when the Isma'ilis from Persia pledged their allegiance to the by-passed Caliph Nizar who lost the throne to his brother al-Musta'li, the Nizari Isma'ilis was born. The Nizari Isma'ilis under the Hassan i Sabbah, who later took the role of Imam upon himself, started a new school with a slightly different direction. Paradoxically, Hassan i Sabbah managed to install his followers with a sense of freedom, at the same time as making them fanatically loyal to himself, which can be illustrated by a tale from Arkon Daraul's book.

Two men in the year 1092 stood on the ramparts of a medieval castle - the Eagle's Nest - perched high upon the crags of the Persian mountains: the personal representative of the [Persian] Emperor and the veiled figure who claimed to be the incarnation of God on Earth. Hassan, son of Sabbah, Sheikh of the Mountains and leader of the Assassins, spoke. - You see that devotee standing guard on yonder turret-top? Watch!

He made a signal. Instantly the white-robed figure threw up his hands in salutation, and cast himself two thousand feet into the foaming torrent which surrounded the fortress.

- I have seventy thousand men - and women - throughout Asia, each one of them ready to do my bidding. Can your master, Malik Shah, say the same? And he asks me to surrender to his sovereignty! This is your answer. Go!

The paradox can be seen in some of Hakim Bey's writing on the Assassins where he states "[t]rue, in this myth some aspirants disciples may be ordered to fling themselves off the ramparts into the black - but also true that some of them will learn to fly like sorcerers".

The Assassins most known lasting legacy is actually the English word in itself, which definitely entered the literary vocabulary when it was used by Dante. In *The Divine Comedy: Hell, Book XIX*, Dante describes himself "like a friar who is confessing the wicked assassin". From an etymological viewpoint the popular notion is that the word is derived from the Arabic word hashashin, consumer of Hashish. It is unlikely that the austere Hassan i Sabbah indulged personally in drug taking and there is no mention of the drug hash in connection with the Assassins in any historical written records except for Marco Polo's. Other scholars derive the word from the Arabic word "assasseen", which signifies "guardians" and consider this the true origin of the word - guardians of the secret.

Epilogue

It's a tentative to reason whether the Assassins legacy has had any influence on contemporary militant fractions in the Middle East. I do think that the myths can serve an emancipating purpose among the many people, who has to conceal their armed desires in an alienating world, to endure until the time is ripe to strike. A guiding star in the battle may well be the oft quoted maxim attributed to Hassan i Sabbah which reads...

Nothing is true - everything is permitted

Additional recommended reading: Arkon Daraul: A History of Secret Societies, Edward Burman: The Assassins - Holy Killers of Islam.

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ST. MESTO KIMBALL, NEBRASKA / INTERSTATE 84, U.S.A.

by Matt (SK8amongus)

[editor's note: to its credit, this scene report arrived handwritten with lovely pen drawings in the margins, and a few stalks of genuine Wyoming wheat in the envelope, which was of course postmarked December 29.]

11 p.m. December 27th, 1999

Car pulled over. No others in sight. No light but that of the wide open, clear sky. Lying in the dead grass, we stretch and marvel at the warmth. One hour until we sleep. Gorgeous!

December 28th, 1999

Oh my god, it's so beautiful out! The guy in the Harley shirt and leather vest proclaims that this 60 degree weather is, indeed, unusual for this time of year, then continues with his tales of weddings attended by himself and Al Gore, Boston accents, C.B. radios. What the fuck am I doing in Wyoming? Two weeks ago, if you'd told me I'd be staring at these vast plains spotted with remnants of snow and deer and cowboy culture and "Taco John's," "Kum & Go's," our polluting tailpipe, sagging bumper, cramped Corsica, and us inside—well, how would you know that? How the heck was I to know I'd finally find the nerve to make a long-standing dream of mine a reality? And not a moment too soon—nobody seems to know what's gonna happen three and a half days from now.

The guy at the trading post said that Sunday was their busiest day by far. A lot of young fellers coming in, stocking up on firearms and ammo. His electrician buddy claims there'll be a fourteen-day minimum lack of power. What are three (more or less) middle class white boys doing so far away from the security of friends, families, homes, jobs... I should be stocking soymilk or cashing out 47-year-old ladies with \$50,000 bank accounts and a taste for free range, "organic" turkey, so I can pay for a decaying, over-priced third floor apartment back on the coast of New England. Not that I mind that as much as I might say if, say, I was there doing that. I feel really lucky. If not for some stupid Hollywood movie (or two), I might not have decided to risk the economic eclipse I'll have to face once I get back—if I get back. What if this IS it? My last chance to finally witness the sun setting on a rocky Oregon beach that so many people have captured with camera lenses and paint brushes, yet I've (longed to but) never managed to see first-hand (not having the opportunity to spend the time or money on such a journey).

Normally, rationality would instruct me not to escape the security of my daily/weekly routine. Things are tight enough as it is—but

eventually, I decided it was near mandatory to at least try to make this journey a reality. I think that if the world is engulfed with nuclear disaster the morning of January first, there will be a bit more harmony within my personal constitution, huge hiking pack strapped on and fir trees cradling the moon. The only regret I might have, if busses don't exist anymore and I can't be carried back to the east, is I may never see Noella again. This almost had stopped me, but we all gotta do what we gotta do. I guess I wish I had brought my skateboard, too. (Cheyenne had some rad fucking transitions going on). 700 miles to Eugene. 79 hours to live. 3 friends. 2 many days before this I've spent dreaming, not living. 1 last chance to live the dreams. (\$0).

CARRBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

by Gloria Cubana

A zoo without a fence and the Paris of the Piedmont. The two towns share a main street and the burden of housing 25,000 students, but Carrboro and Chapel Hill enjoy very different personalities. Take the homeless populations for example. Chapel Hill is the upscale, self-conscious town (only recently persuaded that with a huge university and a rapidly growing supply of permanent residents, it could no longer call itself a village)—in spite of this, or because of it, a lot of panhandlers ply their trade on the main couple of blocks in the center of town; the crazy ones tend to roam down-to-earth Carrboro, since they won't get any money out of anyone anyway, preferring Webster's Laundromat and the sidewalk outside of the cooperative grocery.

That grocery, Weaver Street Market, is the pulsing center of a tiny town, which means that you will not be able to get out of it in under half an hour after going regularly for a period of time. In fact, even if you have never been in it before, and in fact have lived thousands of miles away all your life, there have been documented cases of people entering WSM for the first time and finding long lost friends. Lucky you if your friend plies you with Carrboro bars the most filling vegan pastry you can get for \$1.50.

Transportation in Carrboro is a cinch: walk. If you have to make the dangerous border crossing into Chapel Hill, a full 10 minute walk from Town Hall, you can use a bike. Bike paths are plentiful. Carrboro even features a bike courier service, and, when he's not working, its owner, Seth, can occasionally be spotted riding a double-decker bicycle (with optional cheetah head and tail attachments) through the streets.

The Spotted Dog will feed you enormous salads and beer-battered fries. For a cheaper meal, you can go to the Armadillo Grill right across the street: breathtakingly mediocre Tex-

Mex, but you can stuff yourself for less than \$3. After dinner you should venture onto Chapel Hill's Franklin St.: if you don't stray too far from the safe glow of Carrboro, you'll find the Silk Road Tea House, where a Sufi group frequently gathers to sit on the cushions and enhance the atmosphere of the place. Another option is the Open Eye Café, a comfortable Carrboro coffee shop with divine vegan ginger carrot cake.

For nighttime entertainment, Carrboro provides the Cat's Cradle, a once-great club that now hosts a bunch of bands I've never heard of. (I haven't yet been able to decide if this means they are out of the loop, or if I am.) If you've got to work early, and can't go sway with all the hipsters at the Cradle into the wee hours, just get up an hour or two early and head over to the fire station, which is beside Town Hall and the Farmer's Market. I used to live right across the street from it, and besides the insomniac bird chorus (purportedly the result of a Zoology department experiment at UNC-Chapel Hill whose purpose was to see if

Officer Bob will tell you bad jokes of his own invention ("Thanks, folks, that's an Officer Bob original.") and stop to chat outside the coop.]

The Saturday morning Carrboro Farmer's Market, by the way, is almost as upscale and boutique-y as Chapel Hill. Still, Kathy will keep you talking and sell you beautiful garlic, and right next to her you can get all kinds of crazy varieties of potatoes, and sometimes there are even free tastings. I stuffed myself on watermelon recently, feigning studied concentration as I carefully compared the 10 or 15 different varieties they were offering as snacks—I mean, samples. The eco-gourmet atmosphere can be off-putting (no dusty, sunburned old men backing up a dirty pickup truck with a bed full of ears of corn here), but there are a few old-fashioned farmers there selling produce (and all kinds of preserves). Plus, those little yellow tomatoes are so delicious, they're worth any price.

For such a small place, you wouldn't think they'd need two hardware stores three blocks



illustration s.14: Dinner in Zagreb

it was possible to confuse birds' internal clocks and cause them to start sleeping during the day and singing at night (apparently, it was)) that can be found performing all over Chapel Hill and Carrboro after about 1 a.m., you can enjoy the early morning performance of "Siren-Testing Song" (Op. 14), an avant-garde number that the firemen execute faithfully every morning, carefully calibrating it to climax just when the neighbors are sleeping best. [The police are just as unique as the firemen. Carrboro cops are notoriously laid back. EmoCop wears Buddy Holly glasses and warns you not to leave your bike unlocked.

from each other, but they do, and if you lament the salt-of-the-earth types missing from the farmer's market, you can always go listen to the hardware guys converse with the regulars: "I know you aren't trying to flim-flam me this early in the morning, now," we heard one 8 a.m.

Cheap clothes can be found at the PTA on Jones Ferry Rd., but I don't often find anything that I want to wear. For a somewhat more expensive but more reliable selection of old clothes, you should head to Time After Time, only a bit farther down the street from Carrboro than the Silk Road Tea House.

Haircuts can be had at the Beehive on Weaver St., but I think you have to be far cooler than I to enter. That's why I cut my own hair, and my bathroom and broom and dustpan are available for other daring souls with similar plans. When I'm getting really fancy, I call my sister (no remarkable haircutting skills, except that she can see the back of my head better than I can), who can be found way over in Chapel Hill. She might do yours, too, I'll ask her.

After Hours at Weaver Street Market (summer Thursday evenings) is usually a really terrible band playing, attracting a large crowd of hippies and yuppies (and that weird breed that is sort of a mishmash of the two) who gather and bring their kids and drink wine and dance and basically make life hell for the hapless store employees that get stuck with the Thursday shift.

During the summertime, there are numerous apartment complexes around town whose pools are ripe for sneaking into. I'm not going to tell you which one is my favorite, though because I don't want to see you there. There's also a hot tub at a luxury complex, and if you're willing to climb a fence in your bathing suit, there's no reason you should hold back...

An idyllic way to Get Away From It All (if you are fast enough to dodge reckless mountain bikers during peak hours) is to wander the trails in the woods of Estes Drive. One of them leads to Wilson Park, where it is pleasant to lie in the grass and read novels and listen to the thock, thock, thock of tennis balls bouncing back and forth in the courts. Or you can take a ride into the countryside. Just past Calvander, a small community (i.e., an intersection), the scenery turns to fields and dairy farms.

Nice Price is perhaps the best used bookstore around. And Carboro does have a public library—but why bother, when there are the 8 floors of Davis Library on the university's campus to explore?

ZAGREB, CROATIA

by Kim Bae

I was fortunate enough to spend about 11 days in Zagreb in August 2000. There I found a bounty of great food and happily immersed myself in a frenzy of eating debauchery. Before revealing the details of my gluttony, let's get some practical information out of the way.

I. Practical Information (for tourists, punks, and vegetarians)

A. Croatia is actually called Hrvatska in the Croatian/Serbian/Bosnian language.

B. At the time that I went the exchange rate was about US\$1 = 7 Croatian Kuna (KN).

C. The tourist office on the east side of the main square in Zagreb, Trg Bana Jelačića, is

one of the best I've ever seen. Be sure to grab a copy of the pamphlet "Zagreb Info A-Z" which has all the information you need to know as a visitor to Zagreb. Also available is a map of the center (which can also be found in the pamphlet) and a map of the tram and bus system - all for free! Keep in mind that the names you see on maps are not the names you see written on the street signs. It's a bit confusing but at least the roots of the names are the same. All street names in this report are those that are written on maps.

D. Most of the time you need not worry about purchasing a ticket for the trams but I was controlled about 3 times so I bought a ticket and simply didn't stamp it. They can be bought at little kiosks that sell tobacco and magazines or at post offices for KN 5.50 or from the driver for KN 6.00.

E. If you find yourself in a pinch and need to get some vegetarian/vegan shampoos, soaps, etc. there is a shop called Lush near Trg Bana Jelačića on Petrinjska. Everything is handmade, vegetarian, and cruelty free. You can ask for a newspaper they produce which lists ingredients so you can be sure of what is vegan. Very expensive.

F. The best place to go to check email is the Mama internet cafe. It is located on Preradovićeva on the west side of the street in between Berislavićeva and Hebrangova. It's a bit difficult to see it but just look out for the red and white sign and a small passageway you must walk through to reach it. Internet access is really cheap and the people there are involved in some political activities with the Attack! autonomous center (see below).

G. Attack! is an anarchist community center in the basement of some alternative club (can't remember the name - starts with an "m"?). They have an info shop, library, internet cafe, and cook a cheap (10 KN) vegan meal every Tuesday and Thursday. It's located at Kralja Držislava 12 south of the center of town in a former factory building. Telephone: ++385-1-461-12-671. Website: members.nbci.com/zap_zg/news1eng.htm. Email: attack_zg@zamir-zg.ztn.apc.org.

H. As far as I know there aren't any record stores where you can get punk and hardcore stuff. Attack! has a few records for sale.

II. Food!

- every place written about here is easily accessible by trams. All the food mentioned is vegan.

A. Grocery stores: The best ones I visited were both Konzum. One was located near Kvaternikov Trg (there are actually two there but the bigger one is directly across from the market) and the other near Britanski Trg.

B. Markets: The best market is at Kvaternikov Trg. There you can find everything from

broccoletti to dried soya chunks for cheap. It runs from early in the morning to about 6 pm. Another pretty good one is at Dolac, north of Trg Bana Jelačića but it's only open until 2 pm. I visited the one at Britanski Trg as well but it was pretty small in comparison to the aforementioned.

C. Health food shops: Health food is super fucking expensive. A carton of soy milk is about US\$3. Be prepared to spend big. The best health food shop I went to was Biovega which is located at Ilica 72/1 near Medulićeva. There is also one called Rosa which is on the south side of Hebrangova in between Gajeva and Strossmayerov Trg but it's a bit smaller. Inside the meat market just south of the open-air Dolac market is a small health food stand which is bizarre. It's truly difficult to brave the smells of raw, bloody meat in order to buy a some Alpro Soja Drink Schokolade (which you absolutely must try). It's impossible to explain exactly where it is but it's somewhere in the middle of the building. Supposedly there is a new health food store that just opened right at Trg Bana Jelačića but I didn't have a chance to go there. If you just need soy milk, try going into a DM (Drogerie Markt) - it's a drugstore but they have a sort of health food section. They can be found everywhere.

D. Restaurants: Zagreb has two(!) macrobiotic restaurants. One is called Makro Nova and it's in the same building as Biovega. If you have a huge appetite you can have an entree for about 60 KN but I got the small plate which was more than enough (and cheaper). Desserts are 20 KN and are pretty good. Bijeli Val is this not-quite legal restaurant situated in an apartment at Trenkova 7. You have to push a buzzer to be let in and I was too stupid to write down which buzzer it is but it's on the first floor and the word written on the buzzer is also written on a little sign for the restaurant on the wall. The meal I had there was really incredible and the atmosphere is great. A huge meal including tea and dessert will cost you about 70 KN (?). The Attack! community center has an infokitchen twice a week (see above).

E. Foods you must try when in Zagreb: Konzum has these vegetarian sausages that you can slice up to put on sandwiches. I can't remember the exact name (I think it has "veg" in it somewhere) but there are 3 different colors of packaging. The white is original flavor, the green is olive, and the beige-ish one is with tofu. Ajdvar is this interesting spread made with red peppers and onions that comes in a jar. It's bright orange and looks gross but tastes great. I discovered some wonderful ?ipak (rosehip) jam in a small shop near Sanja's house and decided to try it, not knowing what the hell it was. Also look out for the best chocolate

in the world called Bajadera which is a creamy hazelnut chocolate. Fontana Ledene Kocke in a blue box is a strange minty kind of chocolate. Kras ?okoladne Napolitanke in a red and brown box are really amazing chocolate wafers. Dorina ?okolada Za Kuhanje in a brown and white wrapper is really good, not-so-bitter cooking chocolate. There is a cherry liquor chocolate in a red box that I didn't try that is always found next to Bajadera and Fontana in shops. All of this, except for the sausages, can be found just about anywhere. The plain white bread loaf found in bakeries and all food shops in Croatia (and all the other former Yugoslavian countries) is really amazing. I don't know what they do to it but it's kind of crusty on the outside and really, really soft inside. It's really different from any kind of bread I've had before. There are 3 Slovenian drinks that are commonly found in Croatia that are incredible. Their answer to Coke is Cockta which you seriously have to try to believe. I don't even like soda but this stuff is great. Eis Tea (the one with the blue label, not the pink one) is a peach flavored ice tea that is, again, something I would normally hate but is somehow really good. Fructal is the brand name for a line of the best juices I've ever had. It's not as easy to find as Cockta or Eis Tea but is still available. I think the strawberry and blueberry ones are the best but they're all good.

III. Stuffing my face for 11 days straight

I'm positive I gained some weight on this trip and I wouldn't be surprised if it was all from Zagreb. My first full day in Croatia, a big group of us went to this small village where the parents of my friend Marko live. We picked some vegetables in their garden and made a huge meal with stuffed tomatoes, dozens of kebabs, marinated soya steaks sandwiches, tomato and kohlrabi salad, great bread, and baked chocolate bananas. I told everyone that night about my idea to do this scene report and from then on the stage was set. My friends Sanja, Ne?u, Marko, Bojan and I sat outside on Sanja's patio one nice evening and had a stir-fry dinner by candlelight. They had told me that Chinese food was somewhat of a rarity in Croatia (considering the extremely high cost of soy sauce there I can understand why) so they really enjoyed my ordinary stir-fry. This evening I tried cornflakes with chocolate soy milk for the first time which tastes a lot better than it sounds.

The next night Sanja made this traditional Croatian dish with beans, onions, and soy milk which was really great. About ten of us sat around in her living room, bonding through food. The grand opening of Attack! after the summer closing was the next day and I cooked a Korean meal. It was a grand

affair with flyers announcing the meal and a beautiful poster that Ne?u drew. A few days later Sanja had her birthday party there and I cooked a Thai meal with some salad. Just about every day we ate bread with ajdvar, miso, garlic, tomatoes, margarine, mushroom pate, etc.

I really love to discover new foods as I'm travelling and cooking/eating with new friends. For me, food isn't just about suste-

nance and survival. It is one of the few simple pleasures in life and is something to be shared and enjoyed with those around me. Very few things give me as much joy as sitting around a table covered with food and seeing smiling faces all around me.



illustration s.15: Stuffed tomatos in Zagreb

LAST US TCHKUNG SHOW
Eugene, Oregon, USA Summer 1999

A HILLSIDE
Prague, Czech Republic Summer 1999.
by Finnegan Bell

Usually a "scene" is conceived of as a certain amount of people in a loose community, involved with various projects, usually bands. However, more often I've found that the most critical scenes that I have been a part of have lasted seconds, or perhaps a few hours or a day, like the ones described below. I feel much more compelled to share these "fleeting" scenes with you because with all disregard for time and place these moments have shaped my life more than any list of local bands. It is also quite clearly subjective to the reader whether or not any of the below information is of any "practical" use. At heart, I want to begin to sketch a picture of a world that I have caught a glimpse of in my travels throughout this life. These transforming moments have become more and more of a web that I can travel upon - I'm doing everything to link them; not only with each other, but with other's moments as well. A federation of beautiful moments! There is a world beyond the perceived banality of our society - a world full of daring people, breathtaking beauty and ingrained with (dare I violate the cynicism?!) - magic...

As the bi-plane pilot, lover of key lime pie and sublime novelist, Richard Bach noted: "There was no need for fiction. In fact, the truth wasn't plausible enough for it!"

Thus:

An old dance hall on a street of forgotten buildings - a long summer's day descending into twilight. Earlier that day Arwen came to me at the coffee shop: "Hey," she said slyly "There's something you can't miss tonight."

"What's that?"

"Some folks are coming down from Seattle, a band... erm... of sorts - Tchkung."

"A Tchkung? What do they do?"

"You'll see..."

Later I found myself following Arwen into a foyer of the old hall. I could see that it was already packed: hippies, punks, burnouts, dropouts, freaks, and what looked to be a whole regiment of wood elf terrorists. Some were sitting masked behind an Earth First table. I looked to Arwen.

"They came down from the Treesits for the night," she replied to my unspoken question. The Oregon and Northern California Treesits were some of the most pleasing and effective activism that I had ever experienced. In response to the relentless cutting down of old growth trees in National Forests for-profit a brave handful of individuals took to the trees and refused to come down. They have actual-

ly, with the simple tool of ropes and their bodies, prevented the trees from falling. In the last decade not only have the number of treesits steadily increased, but a number of treesits have become year round communities - some as going so far as to declare their autonomy! Though media coverage rarely extends beyond Pacific Northwest, the support community is immense - Everything from food to funds to climbing training. Around town they were fondly referred to as the "Ewok Villages." The dark smoky room smelled sweetly of the Earth.

Arwen turned to me and smiled mysteriously.

Joelle and I had been in Prague I don't know how long. She had rigged up some crazy scam where we had traveled from the North of the Continent for ridiculously cheap. But we had had to spend days traveling on shady regional trains and arrived in Prague in the middle of the night to find we had the city to ourselves. The air was damp in that eastern city. It was probably noisy like all cities, but later we could only recall a steady thumping silence.

Joelle and I had been traveling for months in disguise as Swedish tourists. We had even made up a secret language; our own "Swedish" that we would speak in front of taxi drivers and late night kiosk loafers.

"Where are you from?" they'd ask.

"Sweden," We'd answer with serious faces.

But Praha was different - it was a secret city - at least the one we stumbled on in those days. We soon realized that we didn't need our disguises.

We walked through the midnight until we found a corner to sleep in. Later, we woke in the mists.

Arwen and I carefully made our way through the crowd of people excited with anticipation. Arwen explained that the last time Tchkung had played in Eugene a street riot had ensued at the end of the set! A tribal drum session was played seductively over the PA evoking a ghost ensemble. I was handed a small tract by a fleeting figure - I could only make out a certain amount of the apocalyptic ramblings in the half-light. The small stage was crowded with debris that I assumed were to become instruments. I noticed a guitar hidden in the clutter. A massive percussion section dominated the back of the area. And power tools... I turned my friend. "An oil drum?" I mouthed.

The lights went out.

We had been wandering since early morning. The mist we had kept us well hidden and happily lost. Each corner we turned seemed to hold some new surprise.

Sauntering over cobblestones we found a

small unassuming cafe where we hid ourselves in a dusky corner to nourish our damp bodies with 15 cent Turkish coffees. Behind our table of worn wood there was a forlorn bookshelf. Joelle slid an old dusty Rainer Maria Rilke volume off the shelf. Opening it she read to me:

"Und der Mut ist so muede geworden und die Sehnsucht so gross. Es gibt keine Berge mehr, kaum einen Baum. Nichts wagt aufzustehen. Fremde huetten hockendurstig an versumpten Brunnen. Nirgends ein Turm. Und immer das gleiche Bild. Man hat zwei Augen zuviel."

Two too many? With sad eyes she shut the book. We rose and slid out of the cafe back into the city, to drift.

A rumble erupted from the front of the stage. I suddenly realized how packed the club was - how electric. Three or four people began pounding out furious rhythms on a mess of surfaces, a bass guitarist was thrusting about. A woman was standing stoic like an angry demi-goddess, violin in hand. A burley bearded man dressed in industrial coveralls stepped to the microphone. The building music stopped for a brief second - we inhaled - the room exploded.

Every rock show I had ever been to, every fakery of expression and emotion, was left behind in that moment. Everyone on stage and off was moving in a frenzy. I was hardly certain as to what I was witnessing: drums, old radical IWW songs, screeching metal, a haunting violin. The whole room was awash with one anguished cry for everything our modern society has destroyed; for wounded forests and our polluted bodies, our neuroses. Each song was a piece for a building symphony. Each one raised the stakes for each of us present. Each song begged the question: How far are you willing to go?

I was lost in the lighting storm of color and vibration and sweat and bodies. Some one on stage had taken an electric saw to the oil drum, creating a cascading shower of sparks over us, burning our skin faintly. Two dancers appeared in front of me surging from the crowd, their bodies completely covered in silver paint. One reached down into a container and then proceeded to anoint me with a streak of silver across my forehead. Around me boys and girls are shedding their shirts and were covering themselves in silver coating, never ceasing to dance. Near us there was then a bright flash. A pail with some brilliant burning mass illuminated the room like a bonfire. Immediately all began to direct their dance around the fire. The oil drums had been brought to the floor, the sparks intensifying. Some one blew fire; another spun fire around her head. I heard shrieks of delight around me as we moved around the flames. I could no longer remember the last time the music

stopped. I caught a glimpse of a shotgun on stage and pieces of a hysterical speech about defending the lives of the last remaining wild North American wolves - And I understood - a refusal to accept the destruction of the little beauty left - drawing the line. Savage and beautiful.

Then everything crystallizes into the Real: A gas-masked uniformed figure in riot gear broke from the crowd and brutally tackled the fire breather in center of the room. Total confusion. Everyone stumbled back over each other only to suddenly find we had been roped in - The room panicked.

Flashing lights, bull horns, flailing bodies, screams. The music did not stop.

The mist and rain increased until Joelle and I found that we were alone on the windy streets. We had just come from a lush, concealed and deserted garden we had just explored. We made our way up a twisting street, ascending a long hill slowly. To one side of us was a row of old medieval homes, to the other a decaying stone castle wall, long abandoned.

We both became anxious to discover what lay on the other side of the wall. After and indeterminate amount of walking, weary from the climb, we finally spotted a gate ahead in the stone. Reaching it, we eagerly slipped through and old iron door to the other side. We emerged into a strange light, sight. There was a wood before us already well into its autumn colors - despite the persistence of summer on the calendar. Ahead to the right a statue of some forgotten saint stood remembered only with old dry flowers strewn about its base. Beyond that the forest disappeared down a hill.

Joelle looked to me and I followed her amble away from the door into the strange fall. Soon we came to a large grassy slope. The mist had intensified quite noticeably. The wood was cloaked in grey. We both stopped suddenly. Ahead appearing from further down the hill, entering into the glen was a figure in white. We stood still and waited for the stranger, a young woman, to approach. Her pitch black hair was tied back and moist - All our clothes were clinging to our forms from the moisture. She was carrying a small canvas bag. As she drew nearer she eyed us thoughtfully. Finally, standing in front of us she asked something in Czech. We shrugged in the Swedish manner to indicate politely that we didn't understand. She then reached into her bag and held her hand towards us asking again in perfect broken English, "You want a pear?"

Joelle and I stood both shocked for a moment, totally entranced by what seemed to be some magical question. There was something so queer and beautiful about the encounter that we were both savoring. With tender care we each took a pear, all the while

transfixed on this mysterious girl. She slowly explained that she had been further down the hill poaching fruit all morning. In love, we bit deeply into the pears. Absolutely the most delicious, sensuous bite ever. We were totally stunned - somewhere we had crossed, without noticing exactly, into another world. As the universe spun around our feet, the girl said goodbye and disappeared back into the wood. I stood next to Joelle for a long time. She smiled and took my hand. We continued to walk, silent and transformed.

The music had climaxed finally into one slow, pounding drum beat. The smoke hung in the air. Our bodies breathed sweat. Darkness. From around a corner two drummers hooded in old habits marched in time. They were followed by four painted men bearing a platform on their shoulders. On the platform sat a four armed blue woman with thick dreaded locks. Decked in jewelry

club, and the implications of what we had just been a part of in that space/time. Coming onto the street, we both hesitated. The entire hall was surrounded with riot police, waiting. Arwen pulled up her collar of her coat and looked at me: So close! Yet, perhaps this time not so far. We quickly made our way down the street, past our fears, into the vanishing night.

The rest of the day we spent in silence and shared laughter. Joelle's eyes were so bright. In the gloaming of the day we found a small restaurant. We sat long into the night trying to remember what to say. The establishment served a strange beverage of milk and honey, which we sipped slowly. Finally it occurred to me what must be said. I began to open my mouth, to speak and Joelle tried to speak at the same time. But spoken words were thankfully no longer necessary. Not with her. I looked down at



illustration s. 16: Yet another food related photo from Zagreb—Danijela enjoying a baked banana with chocolate

and intricate chains she surveyed the room. As the procession, which was followed up by two additional drummers, made its way around the room, the blue woman was handed a small torch. She then produced an American dollar bill and set it to flames. Then another. Fistful after fistful of dollars were sent fluttering to the crowd around her. Every Single last dollar was retrieved and held to the fire. Money is a symbol of debt - every symbol was returned to ashes. After marching through the crowd, they slowly exited. The room was quiet - we were all left with ourselves.

Arwen found me and we hurried from the

the tattered paperback that I had been carrying around for months. Remembering the old trick Richard taught me, I opened the book to a random page. "For magic to even begin to work, you have to believe," it said. It was no longer a choice, not that night. We could only acquiesce. Joelle carefully brushed her behind her ear with her hand. Dishes clattered joyfully from the kitchen. The forgotten city exhaled.

The Final Inside Front Reviews

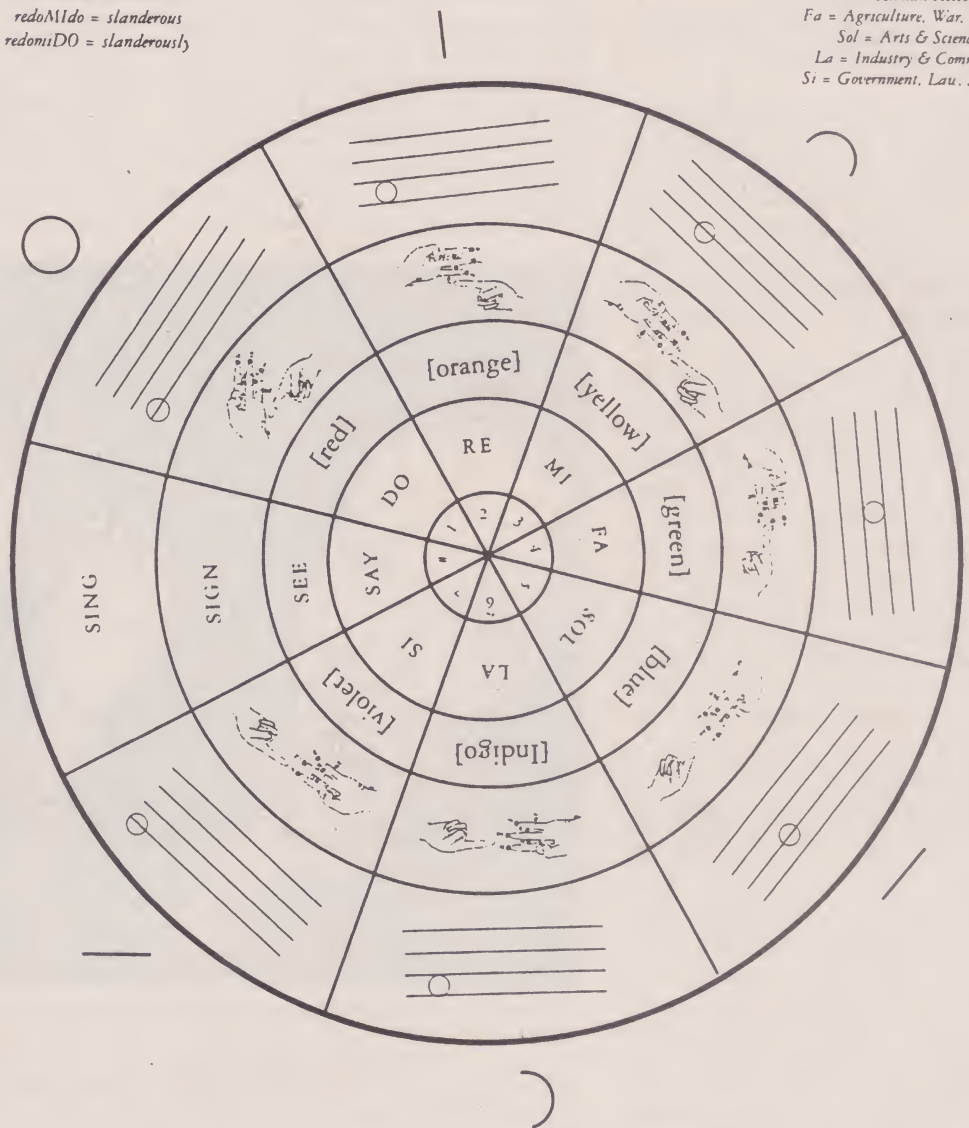
SOLRESOL UNIVERSAL MUSICAL LANGUAGE

EMPHASIS
is function

redomido = to slander
REdomido = slander
reDOMido = slanderer
redoMido = slanderous
redomiDO = slanderously

KEY
is primary

Do = Physical & Moral Aspects of Humanity
Re = Family, Household, Dress
Mi = Human Actions
Fa = Agriculture, War, Travel
Sol = Arts & Science
La = Industry & Commerce
Si = Government, Law, Society



MEANING
is reversible

Misol = Good
Solmi = Evil

ORDER
is static

Subject - Verb - Object
Noun - Adjective

SOLRESOL UNIVERSAL MUSICAL LANGUAGE

As you can see, this last reviews section begins with some reviews from outside the hardcore scene. I'd wanted this issue to conclude with reviews of some of the movies, books, plays, and older records (punk and not) that were responsible for inspiring us to do what we have with Inside Front in the first place, alongside the more standard reviews of current records and 'zines, but time and space were, as usual, too pressing.

I'd hoped to write a review comparing Art Spiegelman's *Maus* (about his father's experiences in the Nazi death camps) comic to the more recent *Palestine* comic (which deals with the current situation of Israeli oppression and inhumanity in occupied Palestine). I wanted to write about Godspeed, You Black Emperor! and their side project A Silver Mount Zion, about how their ensemble approach subverts the usual hierarchy of roles within a band, and how my friend Paul says their music is the only thing he's ever heard that sounds like it's coming from a world on the other side of the "rev-

both need"). I was going to write about the first Integrity record, about what was so important about it when it came out, since so many people listening to hardcore today weren't then and don't understand now what all the fuss was (since that band turned into a joke in poor taste). I wanted to write about Diamanda Galas, about the anarchist jazz communes of the 1960's, about my favorite books by Italo Calvino and my favorite paintings by Ernst Fuchs...

I was going to write about one of the best punk shows I've ever been to in my life, when I saw Alexei's old punk band Polyester Cowboys play almost a decade ago, while we were still in high school. The singer of the band was a little older, and worked construction with a black man in his late thirties who was a blues musician, who had promised to come to the show. He arrived at the club (the Fallout Shelter, a notorious basement punk club where my friends saw Agnostic Front and other bands in the '80's) with his saxophone, and was so musi-

shoulders to steal handfuls of popcorn. A rich older woman caught him doing this, and clutched her popcorn to her chest in outrage. To everyone's amazement, he snatched it from her hands, threw the popcorn in her face, tossed the box in the air, and strode away while everyone in the place (a bunch of totally bourgeois families!) laughed and cheered. Right on!! I'm sure she got another popcorn and a free sweatshirt ("we can only hope," quipped Bruce when I told him this story), but all the same it was amazing to see this sold as entertainment. A young man I've corresponded with told me the second half of the story: we he saw the Cirque, the same guy was going around stealing popcorn, and a little girl noticed him trying to get a handful of hers. She held her popcorn out to him, and he was so surprised that he took his hat off and

The Negate Box Retrospective:

All Time Greatest Lyrics of the Decade!

I'd have to say the prize goes to Earth Crisis, for their song "The Order That Shall Be," which was on their demo before the Firestorm 7" (actually the best thing they ever did, someone should have bootlegged it) and then reappeared on a couple Animal Liberation benefit records. The whole song is just one riff, repeated over and over with minute changes in the drumming to signal the differences between the introduction, the verse, chorus, and breakdown, seriously just four notes over and over for about four minutes—that's vegan nazi minimalism for you, keep it simple so no one gets confused! The chorus is my favorite part: the guitars are all e-chunking in lockstep together, like a squadron of Third Reich [vegan reich?] stormtroopers arrived to purge the "undesirables," and would-be Führer Karl, in the one-dimensional monotone grunt of the vocalist who recognizes "sounding tough" as the only possible standard of value, pronounces:

*Perpetrators of this madness, your right to live is gone
Your burning bodies will light the path to a glorious New Dawn*

The rest of the stormtroopers join in to shout along on the last two words (in "unisense," as Agnostic Front put it during their "Live at CBGB's" era), and in my mind's eye I see us, the righteous vegan warriors of the world, stamping the faces of the non-believers into mush with our steel-toed patent leather boots as the death camps smoke with the flesh of the guilty, purifying the world once and for all. As the final note (an "e," of course!) rings out I find I cannot resist the urge to raise my right arm stiff, hailing victory, welcoming the New Dawn, ready to burn the bodies of all who stand between us and the Order That Shall Be. Christ, this stuff is better than Wagner, or even Skrewdriver! Yeah!

olution" we talk about. Speaking of that, I wanted to write about the heartbreaking Bertolucci movie *Before the Revolution*, about the fragile idealism of a young Italian communist in love with his aunt.

Hell, I even wanted to write that ten page exploration of *Natural Born Killers* I've been threatening to write ever since that movie changed my life, and Paul was supposed to write about *Fight Club*. And I wanted to add to those a raving review of the Children of Bodom "Hatebreeder" record, my other favorite record along with the Godspeed e.p.—Children of Bodom are the most amazing metal band I've ever heard, five Finnish (of course!) guys doing the work of a whole symphony orchestra. I was also going to review the new Dover CD "Late at Night," which is by far the best rock record I've heard this year, and I wanted to talk about how the first song addresses the subject of non-monogamous relationships ("I've been with someone else—I've been with someone we

cally acute and outgoing and confident (in what was a totally alien environment, to him) that he was able to pick up all the chord progressions of their songs and play along. He got up on stage and joined them and they played together, and everyone felt so close and excited—clearly, anything could happen! I remember that night as one of the first times I realized the real power of punk rock...

And I was going to write about seeing the Cirque du Soleil, the French Canadian circus I went to see with my parents that made me think about how the circus has been a place where creative and radical and exciting things could always take place in the most conservative and repressive of societies, and gave me ideas about what new things could be done with the circus model. Before the performance started, a man in a hilarious costume who later turned out to be the ringleader was stalking around the aisles of the amphitheater, sneaking up behind people and reaching over their

gave it to her. Her eyes got really big, and she was very happy—as was I, to hear about it.

And, damn it all, I was going to write a review of my friend Greg Bennick's juggling performance in front of the post office when he came to visit Chapel Hill last summer, and review my friend Sera's 'zines and tell the story of how we met when she was living in the library I hang out in and sleeping in her car. All that will have to wait, I guess—look for those reviews in future issues of F.B.I. 'zine, or maybe Slave magazine, or else we'll have to do a fucking Inside Front epilogue. The only piece I did get finished was this, the final submission for the "Negate box" (the Inside Front feature created in honor of our favorite nonsense-lyrics band, as reviewed two issues ago).

DEAD PREZ "LET'S GET FREE"

by Nick Baxter

This is a rap (or hip-hop) album, has nothing really to do with hardcore/punk, and consists of the rappers M1 and Stic. However, I felt it deserved a review in this zine because of the profound effect this album has had on me since I first heard it while in Washington D.C. "protesting" the IMF and World Bank. I have long been a fan of hip-hop (or rap) music, but stopped listening to it when I started to become more educated and informed, and dare I say, political. This is because of the overwhelmingly nihilistic, sexually degrading, mindlessly violent, and basically counterproductive views and lifestyles embraced by many rappers, which I found myself increasingly aligned against. ...And then I heard Dead Prez, a politically and socially conscious, revolutionary, positive-minded, "from-the-streets" hip-hop duo, and was blown away. Finally, I could really sympathize with the lifestyle being represented, the intense emotions being portrayed, and the intelligent, uplifting messages being advocated in a rap album. I really don't know where to start, as I have so much to say about this, so I'll sum up by stating that Dead Prez have got their shit together and cover all the bases on this album. Their main goal seems to be to uplift, unify, and energize the African-American (or in their minds, just plain "African," as they see "American" as an unjust term for the race) population into forming revolutionary armies and declaring war on the status quo to obtain true freedom and equality. This is a *huge* task considering present conditions, and they seem aware of this, with every song an urgent call to arms, both literally and ideologically. They go from rejecting the Eurocentric, institutionally racist school system, to overthrowing the prison system (even more horrifyingly unjust), to confronting harmful social attitudes and perceptions towards blacks, poor people, and women, to rejecting lies of the advertising and media industries, to fighting the pigs tooth and nail, to dispelling the capitalist myth of material comfort and status (perpetuated by most rap artists nowadays), to veganism and sustainable living. It is so uplifting and inspiring to see people trying to organize the

populations most effected by the world's problems, yet who are ironically also the hardest people to reach, even though they are the most crucial to any mass uprising or movement (and doing this from the standpoint of being "one of them," not as a messiah leading some followers). I truly hope that this hip-hop duo can succeed in this, and I consider myself to be a part of their struggle until the very end, even though I come from a very different background and situation, and even though they would probably denounce or distrust me because of my race and background (but can you blame them?). This is precisely what is so powerful about this record: it has broadened my horizons, forced me into the shoes of a ghetto minority who has the most daunting odds stacked against him, who must struggle every day just to survive, and who is forsaken by the motherfuckers in power, ignorantly trying their hardest to maintain the conditions which will take his peoples' very lives away. I have realized just how important it is to incorporate the African(-American) struggle into my/our own struggles for a better world, and to never disregard their perspective, which could teach me/us a lot. I can't comment on the musical aspects of this CD comfortably, as I don't feel I have adequate knowledge of hip-hop music to do so, but I will say that I thoroughly enjoy their blend of aggressive beats, soul, jazz, and blues style riffs and back-up vocals, and samples of speeches by revolutionaries and activists. My criticisms are slight, and tentatively proposed, as I come from such a different situation than Stic. and M1, but mainly have to do with their abundant use of "nigger" and constant focus on race, especially the blacks vs. whites mentality. I don't understand why they would want to use a term with each other that was meant as extremely derogatory by racists for years, and I believe that the world is so much more complex than the dualistic us vs. them attitude they seem to embrace. But, as I do not have a lot of background info on these issues, I would need to have a discussion with Dead Prez themselves before knowing whether these criticisms are actually valid...which brings me to another, more founded criticism: no contact addresses in the layout!! There is a great manifesto of sorts which explains a lot of their stances, and they put a focus on getting organized and active, but if someone wanted to contact them to do just this (which I do), then they are more or less left hanging. All in all, however, this is a powerful, urgent, and important album for anyone with a revolutionary or "political" mindset, who likes hip-hop.

"We sick of workin' fo' crumbs and fillin' up da prisons/ Dyin' ova' money and relyin' on religion fo' help/ We do fo' self like ants in a colony/ Organize da wealth into a socialist economy/ A way of life based on da common needs, an' all my comrades is ready/ We just spreadin' da seeds..."

"When I'm bent up I think a lot about da reasons I'm here/ I think about da things I fear in the comin' years ahead of me/ I'm ready for whatever they bring though/ I'll go against a tank wit' a shank fo' my dreams and that's my fuckin' word!" —n, reprinted from F.B.I. #3 www.loud.com, and/or 79 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10003

EVENING, BY SUSAN MINOT

by Gloria Cubana

So this is what it is to cast off the heavy cloak of pain, to scrub the smoke and shadows of fear from your skin, and reenter your past. To enter your self at last. Not to see it objectively but to see it *truly* for the first time.

They could say anything now.

There it all is, luminous and complete. There your *self* is, suddenly, even at those times you felt you'd lost it, those moments and months where you numbed yourself to the thought of its absence, and you see that you have never been anything else.

I am here I have always been here your true self I was never gone and though you thought it came from him it was really yourself your whole self entire

You know what evening means. You have felt the sun's warmth fading. You have felt loss, you have watched the most beautiful thing slide away, you have known what it is to kill beauty when it has only begun to blossom.

Hope belongs in the same box as despair.

You watched yourself die. You watch yourself die. This time it's different.

I have to go.

You did not try to escape it then. It even seemed inevitable. A perfect dream to carry back into the real world. You have known loss to be natural, even easy. And you know that, scientifically, more is coming.

...eventually one lost everything.

But there is no longer any fear. Even that hurt that you have carried with you for most of your life, that loss that shaped your future until the future became the present and now is ending—even that one, you see now, is joy. You are resigned to nothing but you accept everything, you open up your arms wide to it, overwhelmed, incredulous, that there could be so much beauty in your own life, which you lived with adequate happiness, to be sure, but without realizing the rapture that was hidden within it all the time.

Her life had not been long enough for her to know the whole of herself, it had not been long enough or wide.

This is what it is to feel it all, even the pain, without hurting, without being damaged. This is strength. This is slow and gentle and silent. Laced with pain, even with sorrow, but without regret. The pain: an ache, ghosting through the chiaroscuro memories of your life, but not a stab. How can one find such joy in death,

such satisfaction in oblivion?

It was like him to be wandering around in the night leaving lost things behind him. Buddy held loosely onto things.

But this lets go of nothing. This is what it means to hold on. Not desperately, with a feverish grip that damages and distorts, but with the sense that your hands are cupping infinity. That nothing can really be lost because it is whole.

He was silent for a while. I'm not sure I can go back that far. Can we? It wouldn't be the same.

That's alright, she said. I have it here. She closed her eyes and knocked her fist on her breast.

This is a glow you've never felt before. This is your heart in a paper bag.

THE IDIOTS, DOGMA 95 AND THE VOW OF CHASTITY

by Robin Banks

The Idiots is a film made by Lars Von Trier, a member of the film collective that created the Dogma 95 Manifesto and Vow of Chastity in 1995. The Manifesto is an energetic document describing past and current attempts to revitalize film in order to make it relevant to everyday life. A few excerpts from the Manifesto: "In 1960 enough was enough! The movie was dead and called for resurrection. The goal was correct but the means were not! The new wave proved to be a ripple that washed ashore and turned to muck ... The auteur concept was bourgeois romanticism from the very start and thereby false! ... Predictability (dramaturgy) has become the golden calf around which we dance. Having the characters' inner lives justify the plot is too complicated, and not 'high art'. As never before, the superficial action and the superficial movie are receiving all the praise. The result is barren. An illusion of pathos and an illusion of love." In order to fulfill the vision of the Manifesto, the collective created the Vow of Chastity, which sounds distastefully ascetic, but in fact is a sort of "do-it-yourself" attitude about film. Here is most of the Vow:

1. Shooting must be done on location. Props and sets must not be brought in.
2. The sound must never be produced apart from the images or vice versa.
3. The camera must be hand-held. Any movement or immobility attainable in the hand is permitted.
4. The film must be in color. Special lighting is not acceptable.
5. Optical work and filters are forbidden.
6. The film must not contain superficial action. (Murders, weapons, etc. must not occur.)
7. Temporal and geographical alienation are forbidden. (That is to say that the film takes place here and now.)
8. Genre movies are not acceptable.
9. The film format must be Academy 35 mm.

10. The director must not be credited.

... I swear to refrain from creating a 'work', as I regard the instant as more important than the whole. My supreme goal is to force the truth out of my characters and settings. I swear to do so by all the means available and at the cost of any good taste and any aesthetic considerations."

The film "The Idiots" is an incredible fiction about a group of dissatisfied rebels who are squatting in a nameless upper-class suburb of Denmark. Together they pretend to be a gang of "idiots" — people with severe mental retardation — and with this ruse they maniacally careen through life. Says the official Dogma 95 website, "The project (of the idiots) is a manifestation of an explosive appetite for life in which they confront society with their idiocy ... they want to live out the excessive feelings, the aggression, the curiosity and the uncontrolled, egotistical primitive sexuality." The film plumbs depths and scales heights which most other movies completely ignore, all without resorting to cheap violence or worn-out action sequences. I strongly recommend this film to anyone sympathetic to CrimethInc.'s ideas, and if you like the idea of Dogma 95, I also recommend watching a film called The Celebration, also made by a member of the same film collective.

JUDITH SLAYING HOLOFERNES: PAINTING BY ARTEMISIA GENTILESCHI, EARLY 17TH CENTURY

by Robin Banks

The alleged story behind this painting is almost as interesting as the painting itself. The painter, Artemisia Gentileschi, was raped by one of her father's friends in 1612. She took the rapist to court and testified against him, even when pressured by officials to change her story. Her graphic, harrowing testimony is a matter of public record. It can be found in Mary D. Garrard's book *Artemisia Gentileschi: The Image of the Female Hero in Italian Baroque Art* (Princeton University Press, 1989). After Gentileschi was raped she began painting several versions of a single image: the Jewish widow Judith beheading Holofernes, an enemy general. Holofernes was head of the Assyrian army which was besieging Jerusalem at the time. When Judith heard that her city's army planned to surrender to Holofernes, she put on her finest clothes and made her way to Holofernes' tent. She kept Holofernes amused for hours, encouraging him to drink and flirting with him. Finally, Holofernes dismissed his servants and began making advances on Judith. Being completely sober, Judith was able to overpower the drunken Holofernes, steal his sword and cut off his head. Other artists who depicted this same scene always showed Judith

looking away from Holofernes as if she could not stand the sight of blood and death; but Artemisia Gentileschi depicted Judith as grimly enjoying her task. The painting is quite gory — long spurts of blood erupt from Holofernes' neck as Judith saws through the flesh. His eyeballs roll up as he gurgles his last breath. Judith's servant stands in the background, holding down the tyrant's body. It is a truly brutal painting, thick with passion and revenge. As of August 2000, you can see it online if you want (<http://shrike.depaul.edu/~bblum/gentil1.html>), though any decent library should have a reproduction of the image within its art history books.

STRIKE AT THE FOOLS WHO ARE LAUGHING AT YOU: A PERSONAL REMINISCENCE / REVIEW OF KINGHORSE by Jamie Miller

"When someone tells you to 'think for yourself,' they are really telling you to 'quit disagreeing with me,' which isn't really thinking for yourself at all."

At first, the one thing that for me meant the most about Kinghorse was the HATE—the blazing contempt for other people's shallow opinions and worthless motivations that seemed to fuel every single song. Sure, Kinghorse was a machine the likes of which Louisville had never seen before (at least my generation hadn't), and yes, Kinghorse was ten times as sincere as any given handful of the other bands floating around at their inception, but those shining qualities paled next to the fiery hatred blasting from the stage.

Me, Danny and Drew—the self-anointed Triumvirate—were in the front at every single Kinghorse show, no exceptions. We taped the shows constantly (video and audio), we deciphered the lyrics long before they were published, we helped design shirts and flyers when asked to do so. We were completely in synch with the band's nihilistic individualism (in other words: I don't care what you think of me because I'm a psychotic weirdo and I'm this close to killing you anyway). In fact, after the Columbine shootings in Colorado, Sean remarked to me that if those so-called Trenchcoat Mafia kids had been around in Kentucky in the late eighties/early nineties, they would have been Kinghorse fans, and they wouldn't have killed anybody because they would have had the perfect outlet for all their antisocial rage. Hell, the Triumvirate wore black trenchcoats and listened to punk rock and hated everybody who crossed our path, and we turned out just fine—I mean, at least we didn't kill anybody. We just engaged in heavy psychological warfare with our classmates.

As time passed, I realized that it wasn't hatred that fed the Kinghorse conflagration so much as a fierce, uncompromising individuality. The hatred was a result of conflict between the individual, the bleating sheep, and the idiotic authority figures, but it wasn't the real message. The real message was: be yourself.

This is precisely why Kinghorse was so important. There are a ton of bands out there who tell kids to "be yourself" but they are bracketing this empty advice with cookie-cutter music styles and scenester-approved clothing.

Therefore their words ring hollow in the finely-tuned, hypocrisy-detecting ears of America's Youth. A band like Kinghorse, on the other hand, made up of people who clearly did not give a damn about what you thought of their appearance or politics or attitude or music—yeah, when THOSE guys flew the freak flag of individuality, you BELIEVED it because it was obvious that they LIVED it. When other people confront you with a message of "be yourself" or "think for yourself," they are usually advocating some type of position or point of view which they want you to adopt. Kinghorse was arguing for nothing EXCEPT defiant individuality, which made their message more palatable and believable to boot.

And Kinghorse didn't just say "be yourself," they said "be yourself and define yourself by attacking everything around you that is false, hypocritical, empty or just plain stupid." In other words, be yourself and destroy anything that isn't true to itself. This is why Kinghorse came into conflict with all the various scene factions from the very beginning—and why it united them in the end. This is why the flyers and T-shirts and artwork were so confrontational, because it wasn't just about individuality amongst a nation of individuals, it was about individuality when confronted with a mass of Mary Quite Contraries urging you to conform, conform, conform at all costs.

Nowadays, "individuality" (or "uniqueness" or "eccentricity" or "political incorrectness") doesn't mean that you are truly an independent thinker who challenges the status quo—who terrifies your classmates and co-workers—who spends most of your time thinking of new and creative ways to rearrange people's thought processes, often against their will. No, nowadays it means that you like to be pointlessly rude and repeat idiotic bigoted comments you heard from Rush Limbaugh—or that you kowtow to authoritarian leftists and repeat idiotic generalizations you read in some Catharine MacKinnon book—or worst of all, that you are one of the thousands of hip "retro" people who consider themselves unique because you have embraced a certain long-dead style of music or clothing and don't care about anything else (excluding sex and inebriation, of course).

And now, a brief aside to explain why Kinghorse adopted the imagery of the Process Church of the Final Judgment, and also to

illustrate the uniqueness of both groups (the Horse and the Process) in contrast with the miserable sameness of their peers.

If you imagine the mainstream as Christianity, then the "opposition" would be Satanism, and the apathetic Other would be unbelievers and heathens in general. The Process Church had critiques of Christianity and Satanism, but instead of turning to unbelief, they rearranged the symbology of both religions in a new, interesting and challenging way. They didn't just mix up the ideas in order to be ironically blasphemous, they actually created a brand new set of ideas out of the disordered old ones.

This is why it was entirely appropriate for Kinghorse to adopt the Process Church's rotated "P" symbol as their own. If you imagine the mainstream as the 70s/80s hard rock/metal that the Horse boys were raised on, then the "opposition" would be punk rock, and the apathetic Other would be all those people listening to Boy George and Wham or whatever. Kinghorse combined the best elements of punk (the attitude, the stripped down-essentials approach) and metal (the guitar solos, the double bass!) in a way that provided something new and satisfying. In addition, the confident and emotional tone of defiance found in Process literature rang true with Kinghorse and at least some of their fans, especially the Triumvirate. End of aside.

Retro cool and the mainstreaming of punk/hardcore have proved that there is no more ultimate status quo in terms of aesthetics—which means there can never be another Kinghorse. Ask people what the status quo is and you'll get a dozen different responses. Is it the liberal establishment which admonishes us to eschew firearms? Is it the conservative establishment which frowns upon queer sex or environmentalism? Is it major labels or mainstream media? Is it corporations, the church or the state? Nobody can agree.

Perhaps the true status quo nowadays is this fragmented spectacle of opinions and preferences which make the opinion-makers and product-sellers rub their hands together with unrestrained glee. "I am an individual and a rebel," says one kid, "because I like Rage Against the Machine and I wear baggy pants and I am against racism and, like, censorship or whatever."

"No, I am the true individual and rebel," says another kid, "because I like Ted Nugent and I hate affirmative action and the Liberal Media and immigrants or something."

"Nay, among the three of us, I am the only true individual and rebel," says the other (most annoying) kid, "because I like (insert 'obscure' indie rock band name here) and I wear thrift store clothes and thick framed glasses and I am fashionably nihilistic and I contemptuously spit upon you other two numskulls."

The real joke is that all three of them would have hated Kinghorse—and in five years, you won't be able to distinguish any one of them

from the other two.
SO BE IT.

"Christ said: Love thine enemy. Christ's enemy was Satan and Satan's enemy was Christ. Through Love, enmity is destroyed. Through Love, saint and sinner destroy the enmity between them. Through Love, Christ and Satan have destroyed Their enmity and come together for the End: Christ to Judge and Satan to execute the Judgment."

Salvation is the resolution of conflict. The Ultimate Salvation is the Salvation of GOD. The Ultimate Conflict is God and Anti-God. God and Anti-God are two halves of a divided Totality. And They ultimately must be reconciled. God and Anti-God are embodied in Christ and Satan. So Christ and Satan must be reconciled. The Lamb and the Goat must come together: Pure Love descended from the pinnacle of Heaven, united with Pure Hatred raised from the depths of Hell."
—the Process Church of the Final Judgment

Note to Inside Front readers: If you feel the urge to go out and buy Kinghorse music now, allow me to warn you that the best possible way to experience this band—like all great bands—is live. Their recordings could not and did not capture their essence. That said, their first CD is on Caroline, and their last CD is on Slamdek. Both can be easily ordered from decent record shops. Rumor has it that Kinghorse's final unreleased material may be released in the near future. Let's hope so.

LOUISE (TAKE 2)

by Finn Forester

Movies will never set us free. Only we ourselves could possibly ever accomplish that. But, we here at CrimethInc. have found that particular films have been known to send us running freely out into warm German nights, through the crowded Reeper Bahn, dancing in and out of mysterious smoke-filled rooms, transformed.

A movie about aimless Parisian pickpockets, derelict street-kids endlessly roaming the subway stations. Love. Madness. Escape. And they run and run and run. Ah.

Hip hop, jazz, world beats attempt to keep pace with the cameras (almost all the camera shots were improvised), the cameras try to keep pace with the actors: the actors fly. Admittedly that that *sensation* that we call *freedom* could only be captured on film with great difficulty, if not impossibility! But! Something does occur here: Between the frames something is glimpsed; subliminal freedom perhaps? (I gaze over to see Dörte floating in the seat next to me, my spine tingles, I feel ready for anything). Where does the story begin? With a girl? A bunch of criminals?

Sigfrid. Ah. He wanders the Earth alone,

East to West, West to East. Never is he in one place too long, always moving, learning languages, learning people, customs, secrets. And then, he emerges mysteriously, not as a character in our film, but to compose the music, produce it, write the script and to direct the whole thing! How he managed to make this film can't be told here, a vagabond's secret. I imagine young Sigfrid, having made a film that could explode into a thousand stars, quietly disappears into the night, smiling, not overly concerned with his the monumental film he just made. He walks down a rainy street, and slowly begins running, his thoughts swirling to night, smiling. Ah, the run, the easy, desperate run, a running madness. What next young Sigfrid? Hopefully we'll never hear from you again, hopefully this was the only film you had to make. Perhaps now, *we can come find you.*

The story begins with a girl. Louise. The story begins in a Paris Metro station. But actually the story begins when the theater lights come back on and seconds later, or perhaps days or weeks; I find myself *running* through crowds, lights flickering through summer nights, seeing Dörte chasing, dancing in out of

fear and hope). But really it's all the same: past, future, present, because it doesn't matter at all as I kiss you and you whisper to me of remembered forgotten nights, and the thousand stories of our lives.

Post Script:

A film can be a tricky thing, after all it's hard to do anything more than *watch* a film. We must also consider the risk that a film will simply co-opt one's desire for a particular thing, whether it be a desire for romance, adventure, or a sensation of freedom. It's easier after all to watch a movie and enjoy it than to actually to go out into this huge world of ours and make *our* lives that beautiful exciting story you can see in films. The film industry largely relies on this inability on our part to actualize these crazy dreams we have of Great Love, freedom, action, and mystery. Yet, we all know that real kisses taste much better than any cinema flicker.

So perhaps we have a dilemma with a film like "Louise (Take 2)". How great is the danger that someone will simply watch this film and be content to *see* "freedom" on the screen and

been released in the Unites States, there is a French website: www.louisetake2.com that you could check out – otherwise hold your breath and keep an eye extra wide open!)

THE MATRIX

by CrimethInc. Private I William Warren

Over capuccino we sat to discuss the experience. We oogled over special effects, I pictured myself running up walls and leaping across buildings, firing guns one-handed and moving faster than bullets; we let our imaginations go all the way out. Soon our conversation matured a bit and the caffeine wained in our blood and the conversation took a more sociological turn: "what," we queried, "is the philosophical context here? What exactly is being said?" And finally, "What is the Matrix?" This is how my research began.

From Christ imagery to Greek mythology, The Matrix is full of references and hints, mysterious connections, full of many complex and intriguing avenues of exploration. The depth of plot combined with some of the most spec-

Editor Dee's Top Ten Things Done by People in the Hardcore Community This Issue:

1. Trial live and on the "Are These Our Lives?" CD
2. Zegota live
3. Libertinagem 'zine and CDR/Evasion 'zine
4. His Hero Is Gone live in Greensboro at the end of their existence, and on the "Enslavement Redefined" 12"
5. Undying live and on their incredible new CD
6. Ire live in Montreal at their last show, and on the "What Seed, What Root?" CD
7. Abuso Sonoro live/Newspeak live and on their split CD/Point of No Return new CD
8. Milemarker "Frigid Forms Sell" CD
9. Bloodpact live, on their split 12", and most of all in their lyrics and liner notes
10. Shoddy Puppet Company

Idiot Dee's Top Ten Things Done by People Who Have Probably Never Heard of Hardcore This Issue:

1. Direct action in Seattle, Sao Paulo, Prague, across the whole world...
2. *Gimme Shelter* (not because of the fucking 'Stones!)
3. Children of Bodom "Something Wild" CD
4. Godspeed, You Black Emperor! "Slow Riot for New Zero Kanada" CD/A Silver Mount Zion CD/Godspeed live
5. Bertolucci's movie *Before the Revolution*
6. Cirque du Soleil
7. Dover "Late at Night" CD
8. Greil Marcus' *Lipstick Traces* (great book, but fuck that guy/Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities/House of Leaves* by Mark Z. Danielewski)
9. Trans Am live in Raleigh, N.C./Seeing an orchestra perform Beethoven's 3rd Symphony
10. Clifford Harper's *Anarchy: A Graphic Guide*

smoky, forgotten clubs. Picture this: we dance into a bar in Hamburg, but find ourselves in London moments later. It's not even strange or uncommon, but only essential to understand. For, a great film will remind you about the true nature of time and space: time is yours, space is yours. Do with it what you will and what you must... we find ourselves living, breathing in the night air, not letting fear stop us from transforming ourselves into our dreams, into slinky sexy dancers one moment, on one hand, to vagabonds lost in a world of mist and perhaps beauty, perhaps triste pain the next, on the other hand, clasped in yours. I watch "Louise (Take 2)" backwards, forwards in my head, and the barrier between the screen and myself recede, and the movie becomes part of my past (I'm lost, panicking underground, trains close by) or maybe my future (bright, blinding lights, earth rumbles, sighs of relief,

leave it there, a flicker? I think this question reveals the most important thing about this movie: that is perhaps it contains a different sort of danger. The sort of danger we here love around the CrimethInc. offices. It seems to me that "Louise (Take 2)" inhabits that misty land of paradox (which some of us around here practically live in) where a mostly co-opting medium is somehow infused with a certain alchemy of (dare we say?) liberation.

A movie about a bunch of French misfits won't set you free, BUT there is that danger that you might walk back out into the streets, moved. Go on, we dare you, turn your lives into gold! Thankfully you don't need this film to do it either.

Highly Recommended.

1998. In French, Subtitled.

(Where to find this film: I don't believe it's

tacular action I have ever seen made this film very important to me. Its function as a tool, as a myth, helps me to deconstruct the world around me. I believe in this function, have experienced it, I believe in this parable and I believe it has a potential to reveal the truth of our world.

I will not endeavor here to point out all the individual references to Alice and Wonderland, Zen Buddhism, etc., other than to say that most of the secrets of this movie are revealed in the second scene, when the audience is introduced to Thomas Anderson, a.k.a. Neo. Also in this scene there is a quick reference to a French theorist/sociologist named Jean Baudrillard. After Neo takes the money through the door, he walks to a bookshelf and pulls out a book, which has been hollowed out to use as a hiding place. That book is called *Simulacra and Simulations*, by Baudrillard,

which discusses with the function of images in modern society and the alienation of man from real, lived experience. This critique is central to the theme of the matrix.

Think of it as a system of communication, a social relation among people mediated by images, a system that ingrains itself so deep into your subconscious that you even use it to communicate with yourself, you think in its language, abide by its rules of grammar, etc. We learn what is good and right by observing images of goodness and righteousness. In similar ways, we learn what behavior is appropriate, what choices are responsible, etc. This system acts as a strategy of deterrence, that teaches the mind what is and isn't possible based not on reality, but on representations of reality, which is where Baudrillard comes in. "Simulacrum" is a word used to describe a sign which signifies nothing, but is its own reality, a copy without an original. In the world of the Matrix, human beings live in a neuro-interactive simulation of twentieth century life, a copy of the world as we know it, while their bodies exist only in pods and are used to generate energy. They live in a simulacra.

Baudrillard proports that modern industrial society is also a simulacra, where the images used to teach us what is real no longer bear any resemblance to any reality whatever, and exist only to perpetuate themselves as pure simulacrum. Consider for a moment the things you have learned, do you know they are real? Do you find yourself pacing the halls of your school or workplace tortured by the feeling that there must be more to the world, that there must be more to life? Consider the limits of your world, do they really exist? Limitations, by their very definition, suggest that something lies Beyond.

What if I told you that there is more? What if I told you that you were born into a prison, a mental prison, where iron bars and shackles are not necessary because your mind does their work for them? What if I said that the real is no longer what it used to be, that it occurs now only in moments of falsehood? We have become like cows, held at bay by a single strand of wire, endlessly fertilizing the ground upon which we graze.

The Matrix is about finding the truth in a world of lies. It's about realizing you have been deceived by everything you thought was pure. And it's about awakening to the real world, redefining your limits, and deciding for yourself what is and isn't possible. The first step is discovery and realization, sensing the Beyond, and finding the courage to follow that intuition. The second step involves facing a decision in every moment between truth and comfort, between freedom and safety. The audience cringes when Cipher betrays and murders his friends so that he can be reinserted into the system; but who can deny having that impulse within himself? These two steps are thoroughly addressed by the protagonists in the Matrix;

but there is another step which is not directly addressed.

Throughout his activist training, Neo is repeatedly told to free his mind. "You've got to let it all go, Neo: fear, doubt, and disbelief." He learns over time to release his inhibitions and is amazed as he finds himself with a new freedom of movement that he previously believed impossible, he is astonished as he realizes he can do what has never been done. As anarchists in the modern age, there is something we can learn from this. If we expect to realize our goals, if we expect to ever get our ideas off the drawing board and into physical space, we must learn to see the unseen, we must learn to do the impossible. To defeat our enemies we will need more than guns and violence, above all we need imagination, we need cunning and tact, and we will need to be clever. We have to leave the limits of this world behind and head out into uncharted territory, for this is where our lives are won. We can no longer look to the past for help, tradition has done for us what it can, our eyes must face forward, unwavering.

To the extent that we can accomplish this transcendence in great numbers, is the extent to which we can change the world. The Matrix is a great movie, but it is no manual for HOW. There is no guidebook for us, we are totally on our own. Only our intuition can lead us; it will

SHODDY PUPPET COMPANY— PERFORMANCE IN CHAPEL HILL, WINTER 2000:

reviewed by your editor

I was already vaguely aware of the potential of puppet shows in the punk rock context from the work of Roby Newton, but seeing this performance (which she booked in her basement) really drove it home for me. These kids challenged us on every front, showing us how much was possible in an artistic medium we hadn't thought much about before, educating and informing us of political and social issues while entertaining us so much that it opened us up to learn without suspicion or despair. That was real genius there, for usually learning about something like city government corruption and the way it fucks up the common citizen would really be a miserable, disempowering experience—but taught through an absolutely genius shadow puppet show about a baseball team, it was thrilling even more than it was depressing, and left us all ready to think and act creatively about political issues. The I.W.W. song at the beginning of the set gave us historical knowledge and context, the sock puppets in the piece about the dangers of genetic engineering pro-

Gloria Cubana's Top Ten Ways to Drive Yourself Wild in Bed

1. *Evening*, Susan Minor
2. *At the Drive-In* live, October 2000
3. Paper Hand Puppet Intervention's production of *A Very Old and Unfinished Story*
5. *McSweeney's Quarterly Concern*
6. *Le Tigre with The Butchies*, Summer 2000; Laddio Balacko, Sept. 2000
7. *Art Objects*, Jeanette Winterston; *The Red Leaves of Night*, David St. John
8. *The Millennium Cookbook*
9. *Confederates in the Attic*, Tony Horwitz
10. *Being John Malkovich*, *American Beauty*
11. Interview with Genesis P-Orridge seen in exhibit at Centre Pompidou, Paris, Jan. 2000; Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, especially exhibit on Futurism, March 2000; Musée de la Vie Bourguignonne, Dijon

manifest itself in the world, it will yell at us from the pages of books and zines, from music, from people in our lives, and even from the silver screen.

Every day is a war against evil, a fight for mobility. The key is to focus inward and let nature take its course. Do not set yourself out to change the world, who can move for very long under that weight? But do not doubt the world is changing. Reinvent yourself in every moment, find your way to a state of choiceless awareness, without condemnation or comparison, formless and unpredictable, no waiting for a further development in order to agree or disagree. This is how our revolution will be made real.

Further reading: *Simulacra and Simulations*, by Jean Baudrillard, *Society of the Spectacle*, by Guy Debord, *The Tao of Physics*, by Fritdof Capra, and *The Tao of Jeet Kune Do*, by Bruce Lee.

vided hilarity; the amazing homemade set for the dramatization of Subcommandante Marcos' "History of Melons" made us wonder what our own hands might be capable of, and the spoken word pieces accompanying everything made us feel at home while showing the confidence needed to make us all listen up and take things seriously. This is where it's at for a lot of you out there who haven't started bands yet but want to do creative things in this community—try another medium, there are thousands of them out there begging to be explored. *Shoddy Shack*, 4719 Hazel Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19143

THIEVING KINKO'S EMPLOYEES

by Robin Banks

If there is any one group of people in our so called "scene" who need to be regularly thanked for their immense contributions to our ongoing struggle, it's renegade Kinko's employees. How many seven-inch covers, CD booklets, LP inserts, flyers, and zines have been produced for free by naughty punk moles at Kinko's? I was inspired to write this review when I got back from my local Kinko's with approximately \$500 worth of free stuff — photocopied zines and flyers and office supplies, all thoughtfully liberated by my Kinko's comrades — which only cost me thirty eight cents at the cash register. There are endless tales of punk rockers making similar scores at their local branch offices. So let us honor all of our Kinko's amigos. Let us give them free food, drinks, music, kisses, and clothing. Let us finally acknowledge our great debt to those unsung heroes of the so-called "scene" — thieving Kinko's employees. I give them four stars. Highly recommended. Available at the Kinko's nearest you.

ble acts, take place on this front. The author of the introduction calls this a tale worthy of Dostoyevsky, and that's absolutely right—this ultimately turns out to be about the most fundamental questions of being human, and the specific details of the lives chronicled here just makes it all the more real and persuasive (and, thus, universal). It's massive, 328 pages, practically a life's work considering the quality and intricacy of the graphic art as well as the storyline. It's no hyperbole for me to say I was as deeply moved by this as by *One Hundred Years of Solitude* or *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*.

Autonomea, P.O. Box 568, Williamsburgh Station, Brooklyn, NY 11211-0568

WLOCHATY [EPONYMOUS] 12"

by... anonymous.

"Let me pick a rose before the storm breaks out—Let me take a bite of bread before it turns to stone—Let me look at the sun before it's covered in ash—Let me touch your cheek with my lips before the bone starts to show." One afternoon, not so long ago, I got off of the school bus and found a package with my name on it propped up on the steps of my father's house, bedraggled

for the ten thousandth time, and I open up the lyric sheet. Wlochaty. Would it have been better if I had never heard music like this, if I had never read these words? Would it have been better if I had come to terms with reality, with this best of all possible worlds, this sick farce, and gone about my business accordingly? I have gambled my freedom, my health, my sanity, my very life away in desperate hopes that I could indeed "live differently", that we could all still "fall deeply in love". Was I mistaken? I don't know. But when the music stops my broken old (Ha!) heart beats thunderous and strong once more, and I do at least know that I am not alone. "Somewhere in the darkness of uncertainty—You still harbor a small hope—That you'll live differently—That you'll fall deeply in love—Even though you're walking in a barren desert—And you've been spared nothing—Somewhere in the darkness of uncertainty—You still have hope." "I'll tell you nothing, although I want to scream I feel like a hounded animal—But I don't want to infect you with my fear I'm so scared, give me some of your strength—Maybe it's the last time, don't turn away—Maybe I'll wake up strong tomorrow morning—And when you nestle your arms in me frightened I'll wrap you up in myself and carry you—"Til

Jon Smith's Top Ten Reasons Why Activity is Better Than Sleep:

1. The marriage of Amanda Louise Smith
2. Roof access at UNGG
3. Catharsis in Bosnia
4. Submission Hold at the House of Thieves
5. *Safety Three Frequency Geodesic Icosahedron* by F. Dixon
6. Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* (ballet)
7. "in the fields the bodies burning" mix tape from Jason
8. RunHaveFun in Greensboro 1/8 - 6/30
9. Poetry, love letters, and untold secrets
10. Malabaster at Wilson St.

Paul F. Maul's Top Ten Reasons To Not Kill Himself (So Far. So Good.)

1. Bottled Root Beer
2. Avocados
3. Yellow Tomatoes From My Friend Austin's Garden
4. Charles Bukowski
5. First Annual CrimethInc. Bi-Coastal Moonlit Wild Nature Walk
6. 17 Distinct Memories From the South American Tour
7. Cuban Cigars (Esp. Bolivar)
8. Crisp Air
9. George W. Hayduke's Victorious Final Escape Into The Sea
10. Walking

WAR IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD: A GRAPHIC NOVEL BY SETH TOBOCMAN

also reviewed by the editor

This is one of the most beautiful, important books to come out of the underground (or anywhere, for that matter) in a long time. With breathtaking images and graphic design, it tells the stories of a variety of individuals struggling to work together in the Lower East Side of N.Y.C. through the late '80's and early '90's. Together, they struggle to preserve their freedom in Tompkins Square park, to defend squats, to get along with each other; separately, they struggle with their own demons, doubts, and destructive tendencies, and the real heroism, as well as the most cowardly and despic-

and covered with foreign stamps. I had long since forgotten that months and months before I had mailed a ten dollar bill to Poland, requesting a twelve inch record by a band named Wlochaty. I put the record on the turntable, and I opened up the lyric sheet. My pupils dilated. My heart beat faster. I was not alone. Six years later. My life is utterly wrecked. I see no prospects that anything is going to get any better any time in the foreseeable future. No, my situation is only going to get worse, and I am paralyzed with fear; nameless, unspeakable dread that haunts me every second of every day. I can not make it go away, no matter what I do, or think, or say. I go to the milk crate, to the special place between 'Warzone' and 'Wrecking Crew' where Wlochaty lives. I put this battered piece of vinyl on the turntable,

I've got enough courage—"Til I've got enough strength—It's rumored that people fight somewhere—It's rumored that they still pick up stones They hit blows and win, and only that gives you hope—Be the hope for them when they'll be bled to death—So don't die yet, here's praise for life—Be the hope for me, have strength to scream and call—We'll find our good side in ourselves—We'll open our hearts and minds—And we'll be free at last—Because our future will be the one we will win for us."

Wlochaty - PO BOX 68, 70-821 Szczecin 12, Poland

Wlochaty - S/T - on Nikt Nic Nie Wie - Zielona 16, 34-400 Nowy Targ, Poland

MUSIC

Actitud Subversiva "Ni Tu Ni Dios Ni el Mundo" cassette: At eighteen songs and a quality recording, this is certainly not a demo, although the price is still cheap. The music has an oi/punk feel to it—the simple melodies, occasional major key guitar leads, gruff singing with back-up ooo-ooo-ooos—it's well done, spirited, and non-monotonous, if firmly entrenched within the conventions of the genre. A Puerto Rican Kriticka Situace without all the unique stuff (and some of the energy) comes to mind. No lyrics printed in the insert, but they're singing (in Spanish) about basic, empowering things (do what you believe in, work towards unity with others...) in everything we can make out. —b with help from @

Colin Dover, 123 c/Marte, Isla Verde, P.R. 00979

As I Bleed "Fire in Summer" 10": This introduction, with beautiful, distant Middle Eastern singing, is gorgeous (though it is a sample, I fear) and so when the music comes in they have my trust. For the most part, they don't abuse it. There are a few moments when they throw in some hackneyed, overplayed double-bass-guitar-chunk-and-groan parts that the world could have done without, and they also seem to have a hard time getting their Judas Priest guitar harmonies to sound tight and right. But when the singer tries to pull off the singing-during-the-emotional-part of the song, he just barely gets away with it, despite obviously having little singing experience; and just after that they execute a great arrangement where hard jabs of guitar and drums stab in staccato over an acoustic part—it's something I've never heard done quite this way before. In case there was any doubt in your minds—this is modern U.S. metal/hardcore, with the low guitar tuning, frequent tempo changes, the fancy transitions and complex riffs. By the end of the record, I'm satisfied with their musicianship, and I've enjoyed this at times... but I'm a little tired of hearing the sample I liked so much at the beginning between every song, and I've come to a realization: I look at the lyrics to this kind of music *after* I've listened to the

record, because I generally think of them as being separate from the music, which is too bad—and then, I see it: one of their songs ends, incongruously (he was talking about autumn leaves falling) with the words "never trust another whore." Kid, what are you talking about? In a world of pimps and whores, I'll trust my fellow whores first any day. Seriously, saying things like that has some bad implications... anyway. —b

Voice of Life, P.O. Box 1137, 04701 Leisnig, Germany

Analena "Arhythmetrics" 7": This record is suffused with plaintive longing: it cries out from the guitar melodies and vocals, and attains an extra bite and urgency from the driving force of the drums. The singer doesn't hold back the sorrowful beauty when she sings, nor the rage when she screams. Her lyrics are simple but thick with feeling, just a few lines for each song. The final song is, improbably, the same

that what all of us are hoping for in this genre? These tracks are intended to be anthems instead of just songs. They are a rallying cry towards something better, and they have the immediacy necessary to inspire people to achieve. Is that too vague? Well, looking at the lyrics will help us specify a bit. There are four songs on this record and all of the lyrics are translated into both English and Czech, though sung in Czech (which I love...more bands should be singing in languages other than dumb old English...English is the McDonalds of the language world). Each song has a quote that describes in a few words the focus of the song, the lyrics, and then a song description as well. Topics include: inspiring people to get involved with hardcore, overcoming "barricades" within ourselves, animal rights and unity. Each of the members contributed an essay for the post song descriptions and they work well to convey what the songs are trying to express. The

Reviewer Code:

b—your humble, bumbling editor • WG—Will 'Gota @—mistress of foreign tongues, Gloria Cubana

WW—William Warren, martial artist, traveler, anarchist, wild romantic
n—Nicholai Baxter • BB—Bruce Burnside

JUG—Greg, King of the Bennicks • taz—Moe 'Gota

Note: The following releases have not been reviewed in this issue, in the interest of avoiding redundancy:

- Harbinger, part 3 (which came out and was gone in a month. all 25,000 copies of it!?)
- Zegota "Movement in the Movement" 12" (nearly out of press from CrimethInc., also pressed by Reflections in Holland) and CD (CrimethInc., in press for a long time to come)
- Ire "What Seed, What Root?" 12" (Scorched Earth Policy) CD (CrimethInc., very much in press)
- Catharsis/Newspeak split CD (Liberation, in Brazil... out of press now, anyway)
- "Days of War, Nights of Love" book (CrimethInc., of course)

It shouldn't need saying that we think these are all great, and I'm sure the last thing you want is to read more of our ranting and raving about projects we've participated in.

Kylie Minogue song that Systral covered, although it sounds totally different here, and no less touching, although in a totally different way: she sounds doubtful of the consequences but sincere as she offers herself, easily transcending the meaninglessness of the original track, and replacing the nihilistic destruction of the Systral take on this song with something more human. They even get away with using electronic drums on that song without losing any of the immediacy of the song. Beautiful. —b
Get Off, Sergej Vutuc, Bahnhofstr. 2, 74072 Heilbronn, Germany

Balaclava "—" 7": This record is really excellent. The music is difficult to describe, and that is because it is creative and unique...and isn't

music benefits from dual vocal tracks, one higher and one lower, and itself is heavy without being patterned or contrived. The song topics might sound as though they are played out and overdone, but this band brings to them a passion and energetic twist which defies all the other bands out there talking about the same things. Definitely original and definitely recommended. —JUG
Hopewell Records; Ondrej Benes; U Hraze 1; Praha 10, 100 00, Czech Republic; reskator@post.cz; or rescator@post.cz for more information

Blood Has Been Shed "I Dwell on Thoughts of You" CDEP: This is an incredibly talented metalcore outfit hailing from CT, who gets mad DIY props for releasing their own CD.

This debut EP has seven songs of brutal and blistering moshy metal, with excellent vocals that range from beautifully mournful singing to a raging scream. Lyrical topics are also somewhat varied, from personal to slightly political (anti-rape). My only problem with this is its tendency to fall into clichés and things expected of every metalcore band, like the visual imagery (computer-manipulated artwork of angels and other vaguely depressing computer craziness), some of the common “metal” riffs, and the lyrical style (almost always addressed towards the infamous, but never really identified “you”). However, this should not overshadow all the ways that this kicks serious ass...and I have heard their new stuff via MP3 (to be released soon in an album on Ferret), and it is even better, so hopefully they tightened up on those few aspects that were lacking. —n
Goodness, I think Nick's forgotten to include their address. Write him at the F.B.I. address and demand it, if this sounds interesting...

suddenly shift to the ride cymbal, becoming totally spare, cutting the beat in half—only here, instead of a falling guitar wail with the tremolo bar, it's Andy's scream that descends into the darkness before the next part begins. By the way, kids, you misspell the word “weird” on the back cover, in the song title. —b
 +/- records

Born Dead Icons “Work” 12: At first, I was expecting (due to their name, and former members and associations) something along the lines of the dark, political post-metal/post-Neurosis music bands like Ire play, but tat was totally off. Remember (you may not) how the Amebix thought they were Motorhead? This is like Motorhead, if they thought they were the Amebix—it has the Motorhead workman-like approach to songwriting, the Motorhead aesthetic (gravelly vocals, ridiculously fast single bass drumming, bare-bones rock'n'roll chord progressions—shit, come to think of it,

Brazen “As Floods Decrease” 10: Hm, no lyric sheet, or at least I'm missing one (in addition, both sides of the record are absolutely identical, down to the etched i.d. number, so I'm not sure if I'm listening to “The opening curse” or “Frozen Gossips”). The cover is gorgeous, a rectangle of cardstock folded around the vinyl, with a hauntingly simple image of an old man's bare head on the front. The music is artsy in ways similar to the packaging—it seems to have something to communicate, but to be expressing it in a code for which the key is not provided. Or maybe that's making too much of it. They opt for the less-distorted guitar sound (no metal here) of bands like Fugazi, vocals that flutter between song, yell, and scream, songs that wander through strummed melodies for quite a little while, without sudden transitions or shifts in mood, but gathering tension and force as they go. Every once in a while their chord progressions and arrangements actually remind me of

Aluminum Noise “Collection CD”: This is a noise CD my friends Jason and Nate put out, and they asked me to review it because I know nothing about noise, so I thought I would have some fun. This starts out with multi-tracked, pulsating, meandering, harmonic guitar notes that remind me of when you and your favorite person are swinging around in a circle with both hands grasped, the background going around and around, but the beloved's face always in front, focused and smiling. Then I get into a rocket sailing to the unknown and quickly hear evil note progressions in front of a hurricane of white noises, which get louder and then crescendo into octaves and various other riffage. Then I swear I hear an AC/DC melody (“c'mon, c'mon li-sten to the mo-ney talk...”) that goes into a string scraping session, and then into some screwed-with samples. And suddenly I'm watching my life pass before me backwards, projected on the sky, and some dude appears and talks to me about traditional musical notation, and before he can finish what he has to say a big monstrous beast comes and tears him apart with *untraditional* musical notation (and execution). Then I spend a while walking around the UNGG area of Greensboro, NC, but nobody is around; I'm alone; the *only* life. Soon buildings sprout out of nowhere, like in *Dark City*, and I hear a drumbeat that I try to follow, but every time I turn the corner to where I think it's originating from, I see nothing and am forced to keep going, frustrated. And then I realize that the drumbeat is merely a soundtrack to me looking for something, and I stop, and the drums stop. Then I proceed to experience in succession a plane crash in slow motion, what it's like to live on clouds and then fall off, what it was like to be on the set of *Star Trek* in the 70's, and the likeness of having the most scary fucking beast ever imagined roar in your face for 38 seconds so close that all you can feel is it's warm breath pushing against your nose hairs and all you can see is it's tonsils dangling like rover's excited tail. Things cool off a bit and I am visited by my dead grandmother on my father's side, and I watch myself sleep for a while. I wake up in a factory with only one person working the line, assembling sprockets with an expressionless countenance, undeniably sad. She sees the sun, people playing soccer outside, but if she stops, she will for some reason *die*. I feel helpless and guilty, and leave, head hung low. I bump into a TV and get sucked into it, the hypnotizing computer chips scraping at my useless skin, bleeding me, getting in my car and making the most godawful noise I've ever heard that reminds me of what it would sound like if you took a multiple-car accident and slowed down the metal on metal friction of the teeth-grinding, heart-breaking impact. Then... it's all over. Silence is sweet. —This was written haphazardly and at the last minute, so sorry if it makes no sense whatsoever. I like the CD. —WG
 P.O. Box 66146, Greensboro, NC 27403

Bloodpact “Bastardization” CD discography thus-far: Check out my review of their split 12” somewhere later in these pages to get a more thorough idea of why I love this band so much. This includes those songs, along with their 7” (which had, um, much better drumming), and a series of Black Flag covers, I mean compilation tracks. They also cover 7 Seconds, and Chokehold, and get massive bonus points for listing the lyrics and credits to the Black Flag song as simply “depression. fuck.” Listen, this is awesome, this is way up there with the best hardcore being made today, if you ask me. Finishing this review, I realize that on the third to last song of their split LP, they totally ripped off Slayer—it's that moment on “South of Heaven” where the guitars strike an open chord and the drums

the Amebix had all that, too), but the Amebix politics and ambience of doom. My favorite moments, artsy bastard that I am, are when they do the spooky, unexpected breakdowns and buildups that all great rock and roll has in it—but all of this is high energy in a way that Motorhead rock can be and hardcore never can be, you know? It's fucking good. By the way, after reading their right-on but linguistically tortured Conflict-style essay on the reverse of the lyric sheet, I'd like to publicly offer my assistance to any non-English speaking band who want help polishing the English translations of their writing. Seriously, just send me what you're working on at the Inside Front address and I'll help smooth it out. —b
 Deadalive, P.O. Box 97, Caldwell, NJ 07006

what Neurosis would do if they were playing on Fugazi's equipment. I'm becoming more and more convinced as I listen to this, rather than bored, to their credit. There are ideas being developed here that will prove powerful, if the ones pursuing them are ready to follow them out onto the wild, unexplored plains, rather than remaining crouched in the suburbs with the generic bands who don't even know that movement is possible. —b
 Brazen, 8 Bld James-Fazy, 1201 Geneva, Switzerland

Breed/Extinction 7: This is the first time I get to hear my friends' band on record, and it's awesome to find out that their recording lives up to their performances. This is bitter, ugly music in the tradition of such bands as

Gehenna and His Hero Is Gone—I don't mean the musical tradition so much as the psychological one: in which, sour on life and exhausted by failure and tragedy beyond the point of believing in anything, a band picks up instruments to express their misery and rage, and in the act of playing rediscover passion in the one place it still remains to be felt, in the singing of a dirge for its loss. For those who haven't suffered and struck out blindly, this can be alienating, fearsome stuff... but for those of us who have been dragged to the edge and clawed our way back by vomiting the filth out of us, though it seemed like the stream would never end, this hateful noise is an affirmation of life, of the indomitable will to live and create. The guitars arise from a black sea, soaked in oil, rumbling thunder... the acoustic parts have the ruined, trashed post-apocalyptic beauty that can be persuasive when anything cleaner sounds like a mockery. And they're smart kids, too—the lyrics and writing leave nothing to be desired. They have six more songs that aren't on this 7" (maybe on some demo somewhere?), which are equally worth hearing. —b

my only complaint is that these morons didn't put a ground address anywhere here! try to find them somewhere in Connecticut, or use email (much as I fucking hate it): breedextinction@hotmail.com or eighthdaydissent@hotmail.com

Brethren "To Live Again" CD: When I first received this in the mail I noticed the sick artwork/photography and read the awesome, insightful album explanation in the lyric booklet, and was excited at what I would hear. But what I heard was just way too generic sounding and boring to spark my interest and emotions any further; it was just the typical heavy east coast hardcore sound. I tried to let it grow on me the way some music can do, but to no avail... I guess I've just heard all the riffs and song structures and vocals too many times before. I hate to give a negative review to a band that seems very sincere, dedicated, and intelligent, but I guess I just don't like what they're doing musically. My advice for them is to keep pushing the boundaries further, try to be innovative and a little crazier, and try not to get caught in one overdone style of hardcore. Overall this band is doing a really good job at what they're doing, I just don't like what they're doing all that much. —n

OHEV (address at 23rd Chapter review)

Broken Promises "" CD: This has a very genuine feel to it, not forced or fake at all. It's metallic hardcore, with the chunk-chunk-note-chunk-chunk-note riffs and screaming vocals, but they definitely have an aesthetic of their own here. When the singer pauses to speak in the most troubled, angst-ridden, trembling voice I've heard in one hundred reviewed records, it sounds like real, troubled,

youthful emotion being expressed for its own sake, without regard for anything except getting it out, and I really appreciate that, especially in a genre (metallic hardcore) weighed down with so much baggage of posing and expectations that one can hardly expect to hear something honest and open from it anymore. I guess Starkweather was this emotionally raw and real [well, more so, honestly], that's the best example I can think of. I'm surprised by how polished the playing and the recording are, too, and though the music doesn't stray far from the formula laid out by Unbroken they use enough ideas of their own invention to keep it sounding unique (a naked double bass blast, abandoned by the guitars, segues convincingly into a soothing melodic part, at one point). The lyrics and various writings from the band (which are numerous, thankfully) also bleed the same troubled emotion, alternately giving and pushing away... "this is about love, but no thanks to you," writes the singer over and over, and you know he desperately wants to say the opposite, whether he can admit it or not. I like this a lot. —b

Stick to the Core, Hogeweg 31, 3200 Aarschot, Belgium

Burden "Strength of Conviction" 7": I reviewed this in the last Inside Front so I will just give it a mention here to say that the demo has been rereleased in 7" format from Badman Records in the Czech Republic. I love this record, as it is reminiscent of Judge in terms of being powerful SxE hardcore, but these guys do the genre justice and really hammer these songs home. There are a lot of bands out there playing straight edge hardcore, but Burden is one of the best. Check out the 7" and support a new label in the process. —JUG

Badman Records; Martin Cesky; Nebrehovice 7; 38601 Strakonice; Czech Republic; mcesky@pvtnet.cz for more info.

Buried Inside "In and Of the Self" CD: The first song starts out in the screamy modern metal/hardcore format, then goes into a more retro deathmetal-growling chunky mosh-pit-windmilling dance part near the end, which surprised me a bit. They're not as polished yet as their musical ambitions demand—sometimes I feel like their timing is a tiny bit off. But at the same time, I appreciate that they're working at and sometimes past their own limits, and they are able to do some things I haven't heard before in such an overcrowded genre—the echo effects on the metal guitars give then chunky/melodic parts a faraway, spooky sound, for example, and they are always messing with sound textures and arrangements in similar ways. The lyrics are taken seriously (dealing generally with living under the yoke of our rape/consumer/domi-

nation culture) and are right on, and that makes me feel a lot more comfortable about them. In fact, the lyrics are fucking awesome, now that I go over them again: "personal interest is the steam that fogs the mirrors of our very existence" "so here we are, sitting on the edge of it all, waiting for the sun to rise." *Apocalypse Now* samples over a piano/opera intro to the last song, and I'm sitting here with the lyric sheet, listening to the first, coldly beautiful, severe notes that follow, realizing now that if this band could distance themselves from the pack just a little more they could do some amazing things. —b

Standingwave, 422 Leighton Street, Ottawa, ON K1Z 6J6, Canada

Caliban "A Small Boy and A Grey Heaven"

CD: Just for fun, after I had written the first three lines of this review, I went to www.altavista.com to the 'translate' section (which, by the way is the very best web page on the entire internet. I promise that it will provide you with hours of laughs) and translated the three sentences from English to Italian and then back to English. (Is it obvious that I don't get out much?) Anyway, the review starts out like this: "This CD opens with an 'Omen'-like musical intro and then blasts immediately into a death metalish selection of songs. Think of The Year of Our Lord (reviewed elsewhere in this issue) but more to the intensely heavy hardcore side rather than towards metal. I love it!" Now, take that and plug it into altavista. Translate it back and forth a few times, and you get: "This CD is opened with 'Omen'-as the intro musical and then ago in order to jump immediately in one selection of the metalish of the dead man of the songs. In order to think elsewhere close next to the year of ours gentleman (to see still in this edition) but more neighbor to the intensely heavy side of the hardcore rather than towards metal. I love!" Whew...I am wiping tears of laughter from my eyes as I type these soon to be spell checked words. I wholeheartedly recommend that you try this altavista trick with any piece of text in the world. It is amazing and will make you the life of the party, especially if you actually try to use the site as a tool for bona fide translation. If an Italian kid ever comes up to me and speaks like the above translation, I will have to be committed to an insane asylum. Okay...stay on target ...we have a CD to review here. The Caliban CD has an immense sound, with growled higher pitched vocalizations and varied well orchestrated music. It isn't standard by any means. Instead, it brings you on a journey, ostensibly through the hell which our world has become due to pollution, greed, hate and fear, with music which adequately represents the doom expressed in the words. There are definite black metal influences in the guitar work, as

well as a tendency towards the incredibly complex which brought to mind Botch at times. They don't rip off anyone however, so don't get me wrong. The CD is full of shards and glimmers into the band themselves, in terms of samples and interludes, intros and outros. Lyrically good as well, with a beautiful layout: a booklet with painted pages and full lyrics. Lifeforce is on a roll with these metallic hardcore and hardcoric metal and metallic metal bands! —JUG

Lifeforce Records; PO Box 04011 Leipzig; Germany; cartel@bigfoot.com; www.carteldistribution.com

Cast-down "these autumnal tints" 7: Four songs of slightly melodic, slightly post-hardcore, emotional hardcore, if that makes sense to you. These guys are doing a really good job finding their own sound and not imitating, so they're a little harder to describe, but I guess if you imagined a mix of Shai Hulud and Endeavor after mellowing out on some huge bong hits, you might be in the ballpark. There's some really catchy riffs, interesting musical changes, great raw, sincere vocals, as well as some snappy graphic design work,

ly is an accurate, although I'm not sure how flattering, comparison. For those of you unfamiliar with this style of hardcore, its straight-up heavy as hell, nuts and bolts, gritty and tough moshcore from Michigan with half-yelled, half-screamed tough as shit vocals. I think this rocks, mainly because the vocalist has such an awesome voice and style, and admittedly, simply because I like Earthmover. The artwork on here is beautiful, the lyrics are simple and to the point, and the personal writing by the band in the booklet is a sincere touch, but I can't get over the recording quality. It's simply not as full and dynamic as it should be, and it really bugs me. It sounds very quiet, weak, and trebly, like a demo recording, and I'm kinda wondering what happened...everything else is so top-notch and slick, I feel let down in a way. Aside from that, I like this a lot and am excited to hear more from these guys. —n

Genet Records / PO box 447 / 9000 GENT 1, Belgium

Children "Impedimenta" CD: This is without a doubt the best CD to ever begin with the lyrics "you stabbed me in the back." Brilliant,

do whatever it takes—it's a flawless executed acoustic piece, spanning the jazz and folk and classical styles over about twelve minutes, really beautiful. —b

Overcome, B.P. 7548, 35075 Rennes Cedex 3, France

Clear "Deeper Than Blood" CD: Clear play metal influenced hardcore (the drummer thanks Slayer, Candiria, Iron Maiden, among others) that I've heard many times before from many bands. Same goes for the packaging. Not much new or original here. But, alas, if you dig the heavy moshable scream-alongable chug-chug tunes that seem to be popular these days, than this is for you. The recording is fairly dry, and the drums are way too loud. It sounds to me like this was done in a hurry. Alone in the drum mix, the bass drum (which is a main asset of the entire album) has too much click making it sound like someone is standing in the recording studio with a freaking pair of sticks and hitting them together every time the bass drum is struck. To stand out in this type of music, the bass drum itself needs *some* click, added in during mixdown, but this is off the hook. And just for fun I'll say too that the

Black Dice 10: celebrity review courtesy of Ben Clack

"I can honestly say that I don't give a fuck about anything anymore." —an unnamed member of black dice during a post performance discussion, Philadelphia, Pa July 1999

I sit to write this on the day that I have learned that I have begun to lose hearing in my right ear. This damage is irreversible and thus I must begin looking at the capabilities and limitations of information carried within sound and the implications of not being able to process this information. Across the room sits the black dice 10" propped against the shelf containing my record player. Seeing this I know my days of sound are numbered and I admittedly never want this beautiful noise to leave my memory. So I must keep playing it over and over and over again. For this is not just sound, it is the physical manifestation of depression, anger, frustration, and energy.

The black dice are not merely the next darlings to whom all of the young dolls will be thrashing about, instead the black dice are the stoned drunk pissed off children of the night. Blasting away without fear, bleeding screaming, wholeheartedly embracing everything you ever wanted, needed, and dreamed of becoming. The audience was the instrument, the band becoming the wandering voyeur. The music came from these worlds colliding. With this comes something great: noise for the fuck of it. The black dice are proof that punk rock still happens in this world of insufferable greed. Don't go buy this record. Steal it, tape it, and then break it over your head slashing all nearby with its broken shards, and then maybe you'll begin to understand what it will be like to never again hear this noise. Oh how darby would be proud. available on Troublemaker unlimited... Ben was too busy taping and smashing to give us their address. Right on!

which all make this release worth getting despite the following drawbacks: The cynical attitude expressed in the liner notes, some awkward parts to the music where it just doesn't seem to flow well (I don't have enough technical knowledge of music to explain what I'm thinking here in more depth, sorry), and some of the lyrics that sound cliché in their introspective poetic vagueness or struggle to find rhyming words at the end of lines. I think that in two more releases this band will have worked out all these little kinks and will be doing some amazing, unique shit, but for now, this effort is still good. —n
Watch 'M Burn / Kauwplasstr. 28 / 3545 Halen, Belgium

Cast In Fire "Apology" CDEP: Earthmover on steroids, plain and simple. With ex-members of that now-defunct mosh machine, this real-

maximum energy groundbreaking hardcore from the cutting edge of the musical movement, with a perfect recording (that sounds scary all by itself, with the rumbling bass, the stab of the snare drum...), acoustic arrangements of classical quality, extra dynamic songwriting with flawless transitions and well-constructed riffs, plenty of little experiments and new ideas to spice everything up. Most of all, this just rocks in the way that really good metal/hardcore can, but it also has some moments of chilling beauty. The lyrics are pretty desperate, not in the typical stylized manner of most lyrics in this genre (OK, the first line, the one I cited above, is not so original), but really persuasive, disturbing. If you thought there was anything good about what Overcast was trying to do a few years ago, you should find this at least as interesting. The final track proves their skill and readiness to

snare is getting all run over by the hi-hat and ride cymbal; what's important here? The vocals are pretty good when they are screams, but there are times when they are sung, and this is a bit weird. Packaging wise: imagine the typical fold out glossy insert, complete with action pictures and lengthy 'thank you' lists. The lyrics are included, with topics usually circling around the personal and infamous "you." I can definitely relate to them, though. Yeah, this is not a bad record, but I will probably never listen to it again. —WG

Clear clo Sean; 7529 South Campus Circle; Salt Lake City, UT 84121. Stillborn Records; PO Box 3019; New Haven, CT 06515.

Cloudburst "Love Lies Bleeding" 7: This French band plays a personalized version of the melodic metal hardcore played by legions of new school bands (many of whom have

been released by Good Life records). They have the same basic features here—breaks for bass melodies to which guitar chunks are soon added for build-ups, hoarse screamy vocals, pounding metal chunk breakdowns, rare moments of blastbeat frenzy—but it doesn't sound derivative, just modern and nothing more than modern. They set themselves apart on the b-side when they cut everything but the acoustic guitar and vocal harmonies—more of those unexpected moments and the hardcore formulas would hit harder when they come in. Lyrics in English, explanations in French and English, all dealing generally with the strain on humanity created by the latest steps in our cultural/technological/political “evolution.” —b
Mosh Bart, address below

The Control: Ruination is a perfect point of reference, although I think these kids practice more. A lot of oldschool hardcore songs here about getting lost in the working world. The melodies are good, not so simple as to be

good (roughness doesn't hurt this kind of music)—in a total of eighteen minutes. I'd be wrong to be critical of this—basic, straightforward, rebellious hardcore bands made up of socially challenged Black Flag fans are pretty much the backbone of our community, in some places, and there's nothing wrong with that. —b

+/- records, address nearby goddamnit or I'll be a monkey's uncle, blaghh!

Correja “” 7”: This record begins with strange humming noises and the drums (which have a really hard-hitting production) playing by them selves for a little while, and it really drew me in. The fast, double-picking, double-time metallic hardcore kicks in, and I'm still enthralled. The vocals are mixed below the guitars, emphasizing their harsh, indecipherable rage; the first song is a wild-eyed assault on Christian hypocrisy that ends in a naked roar—this is good stuff. The second song quiets down in the middle to an acoustic part that is momentarily less com-

stuff, I'm talking later, psychedelic, 10 minute long, lounge-music shitty-ass Melvins material. I'm guessing Cover were on lots of drugs when they did this, hopefully heroin, because the lyrics are stupid and nonsensical, and the songs are all in the range of 10 minutes and played really, *reecally* sssslloooowww... What's worse, the last three tracks are fucking 15 minute long radio interviews with Celtic Frost and none other than the Melvins (who are actually damn funny). I really do not understand this release at all; I think it's not much more than a self-indulgent, pointless waste of time and resources, to be quite frank. Whatever... —n

Delboy / PO Box 75 / B 9000 Ghent 12, Belgium

Cross My Heart “The Reason I Failed History” cd/ep: Ok, the first thing I usually do when I'm given a cd is put it in the player, press play, pull out the insert or booklet and mostly block out all the sounds coming through the speakers. That's just me though.

Botch “We Are the Romans” CD: There is no other way to start this review, than to say that this musical group is damn absolutely mindblowingly *otherworldly* incredible, hands fucking down. They hold a concrete place in my brain, a space that is reserved only for the few bands that dare to push the limits of *impossible*. I just can't understand how Botch plays what they do. I just can't understand how this guitar part fits with this bassline and that drumbeat, with vocals and everything, and have it come out so insanely beautiful. All of them know their instruments like the back of their hand, and fuck, they are just one of those bands that you can't put in a category because they're so damn good. I mean, they're hardcore and everything, but not of the usual strand. All the components of the music are pieced together tightly, even leaving room for each instrument to go off on it's own and dance a little and then come back to it's anchor, all the while keeping the flow of the song. Remarkable. Ok, here's the technical dirt: Botch plays carefully orchestrated relentless rhythmic hardcore music with a twist of more rhythm and some soft grooves that are great to slow dance to (just get ready to rip your partner apart at any second). I'm guessing that all or most of the sounds made are guitar, bass, drums, and voice, but a good part of the time there are noises coming out that I don't know where the hell they came from. I can tell you this; the guitar player is all over the place, with all kinds of effects (that don't sound like *effects*) and tons of riffs that are very unconventional and have been known to make people dizzy and pass out. He goes from winding runs that go all over the fretboard into a collection of notes that are just pounded away at with the most chaotic sense of gentleness. The sound on the CD is very loud, strong, and thick, and *self-confident*. The bassist is right up front too, refusing to take a back seat, and really shines during a few pockets in the chaos. Also, all during track nine, the bass sound is so cushy and distorted, I just want to lay down on it and have it lull me to sleep. The vocals on previous Botch releases have always confused me a bit; I could never understand what hell he was talking about. But here I see the vocals as being right on, in perfect places with the music, not merely sung in random places along the way. In fact, for most of the CD, the vocals are coupled with the accented beats of the other instruments, making them so much more powerful and meaningful. Some of the songs are about Christianity (“I know that it is all shit”), American conquest (“never satisfied...”), other bands (“can't hear the notes you play or the words you say and you're not changing the world”), and a song entitled “I Want To Be a Sex Symbol On My Own Terms.”

hopelessly generic. On the second song the verse riff ambitiously packs a lot of notes together, which is awesome (until a later part, when they sort of ruin the energy with a singing part in the vocals—the singer is much better when he's just yelling in his gravelly, post-Born Against voice, as he usually does)... the fifth song has a nice (if not entirely new—the seventh song is even reminiscent of it) melody to it, which they almost take to another level of intensity at the end (but instead, since they're an old school band, it's time for the song to be over). Their best lyrical moment comes in the fourth sing, “Fury,” for which the lyrics are simply “We've got the fury!!” Thirteen tracks altogether, the last three from an earlier recording but just as

elling, but the all-out attack returns with blood-curdling shrieks more fearsome than anything I've heard in this day's worth of reviews. They get points for mysterious, classy d.i.y. packaging too, which includes black-on-black print and a transparency. This is an excellent record all around—it's well-played, sounds good, has plenty of emotion and some innovation too. —b

Increvable, P.O. Box 425, Ithaca, NY 14851

Cover “The Annual Hornvenders Convention” CD: God, this is just plain weird. I guess the best comparison I could give you is 2 tablespoons Melvins mixed with half teaspoon Eyehategod. And I'm not even talking about the halfway cool early Melvins

I'm often more interested in how the artist(s) use their space to present themselves visually before I can let myself become completely attentive to the music they're performing. In the case of Cross My Heart, they offer the two-panel insert that informs of who plays what (instrument), where they recorded/mastered, who did the graphic design, and the right people to contact (Dim Mak records) if you're interested in receiving a lyric sheet. To me all this adds up to very poor packaging. Musically Cross My Heart plays soft, melodic pop with the occasional up-beat moments that have a falling-short-of-rocking-out feel to them.

P.S. The only reason I'm not making a fuss about the lack of printed lyrics is because i

could actually understand the words when sung. How often does that happen for an Inside Front reviewer?!?! (taz)

Dim Mak, address elsewhere

Dawncore "Obedience is a Slower Form of Death" CD: Metallic hardcore with some good riffs and energy, screaming vocals (with the aggressive delivery of some "tough guy" bands, but without seeming stupid or insincere), lots of transitions between fast parts and moshier parts with guitar chunks, a recording with the weight and brightness to give them the edge and thrust they need to make this work... and a really prominent double bass. . The lyrics reject earthly and religious hierarchies, push through the scarring pain of life's difficulties, and reach for inspiration and idealism through everything. The tough-guy influence that I mentioned manifests itself at the end as a Cro-Mags cover ("World peace can't be done, it just can't exist!"), which is fucking awesome. The fact that they can do a Cro-Mags cover and make it exciting should give you an idea of

back, and this 7" won't do for a substitute second coming; but it fills out their legacy—it has the same things going for it, without sounding like an imitation at all. —b

Per Koro, address elsewhere

The Dents "The End of All Civilization" 7": Hey, this is something I haven't heard too much of in this issues reviews: fast, fast, snotty, angry high school punk rock, Government Issue shirts, yelling vocals (that end in a hearty "Fuck off!" at the beginning of the breakdown at the conclusion of the first song), simple three-chord riffs. In my head (and perhaps theirs?), these kids are opening for Social Distortion in 1982, wearing flannel and moshing to Black Flag blasted on the car stereo between bands. Their simple values (fuck the greedy rich, do what you want, teachers and parents get outta my life, break shit! yeah!) are right on, and the rebellious energy that makes this stuff work is all there. —b

So Fucking What?, 253 Alexander Street, Apartment #322, Rochester, NY 14607

are in Portuguese and English, and the insert includes an essay about why they choose to play their anarchist/political music to the deathmetal scene as well as the hardcore scene (to try to bridge the gaps). —b

Marcolino, Al. Mal. Floriano Peixoto 56, Centro Guarujá, Sao Paulo 11410-240, Brazil

Dragbody "transgress. nullify." 7": This one's worth it for the lyric sheet alone—it's clear plastic with black printing on one side. And the layout and artwork is exceptional too, with these sick, organic-looking photos of people with slashed skin and wires. But the music rocks so hard too; it's heavy as fuck all-out chaotic metal that doesn't get boring, with tortured screams to boot. But all these aspects that I like are also what I don't like. So you have the money to get some slick-ass packaging, but you're just playing up to all the metal stereotypes with disgusting pictures, vague and morbid lyrics, and heavy metallic riffs one after the other... I guess this release is a mixed blessing then—you can listen to it just to rock

Now the drummer; he is one of those that at their shows you see tons of people crowded around him just to watch. You know the kind I'm talking about. Surprisingly, he plays mostly with snare, bass drum, and cymbals, but he doesn't limit himself by any means. As a drummer, he has lots of rhythmic (how many times can I use the word *rhythmic* in this review?) tools to play with, and I think my favorite is when the guitar and bass are playing some part that's in a weird time signature, and the drums are accenting those, and then they suddenly break away and play a straightforward beat over the 5 or 7 or whatever the case may be. For those of you that don't understand, see it like this: you will be bobbing your head to the beat, and all of a sudden the beat won't be there anymore, but your head will keep moving to the rhythm, and then before you know it, the downbeat is right back where it started. I seriously could write a whole 'zine on Botch (maybe I will, dammit) but here in this review I want to keep things at least a little concise, so I am being a little more short-winded than is called for (if you can believe it). Notable parts of the CD include all of track nine, which is some sort of historical anthem of serene destruction; at precisely 0:51 on track one, when the beat changes so smoothly and graciously; the slow-dance ending of track four; the fucking soundtrack to my life concluding track five, especially the double bass. Actually I don't know who I'm kidding picking out *notable* parts of this; every part has a vision or attribute to it that is fucking notable! As far as recording quality goes, this CD sounds great; none of the common mistakes exist here that you see on a lot of hardcore/punk recordings, such as too much click on the bass drum, not enough bass guitar, overall dry sounds, or overly enhanced vocals. The sound is full and moist, just like it should be. A criticism I would have for Botch is that I think a lot of their music goes over the head of listeners, and things are happening so fast that there is no time to grasp them, not to mention enjoy them. But hey, I guess that comes with the territory. The packaging is very well done, featuring a paperboard foldout cover, and beautifully chosen colors and graphic artwork. The lyrics are inside, and are easy to read, unlike a bunch of words that are thrown together with no beginning or end. *We Are the Romans* is definitely more epic than their last CD, and breaks new ground that shakes the listener into a whirlwind of precious stimuli, creating more than music, creating a world all its own. Get this. —WG

Botch, Suite #364; 2522 North Proctor, Tacoma, WA 98406, Botchrock@hotmail.com. Hydra Head Records; PO Box 990248; Boston, MA 02199

what their strengths are. —b

Trottel, 1192 Budapest Kos K, Ter. 14, Hungary

Degarné "The Last Dance" 7": Acme is the crucial point of reference for all these German metal/hardcore bands, but they're particularly relevant here, since some crucial details match up: the guitars have that same menacing slightly-out-of-tune sound, the first side begins and ends with the sound of a choir hum (something Acme would have used), the riffs and transitions have that same discordant, spooky feel, and when they get going like a machine out of control their singer's torn, trebly screaming voice merges with the spasmodic, jerking music, creating a sand-blasted effect similar to the one that made the Acme record so amazing. Acme isn't coming

Desecration "Broken Peace" 7": The punk music on this 7" has the same grim resolve and boiling energy that I associate with their comrades in Abuso Sonoro, although Desecration takes a more metal approach (blastbeats, double-picked riffs, dramatic breakdowns). The recording is good enough not to hold them back, and the playing is pretty tight; the only drawback here is that their lead singer (who I know from meeting him to be a very cool, smart person) sounds like he's trying a little too hard for the grind-core growl sometimes, like it might work out better if he would just let go and not worry about what his voice sounds like. All the same, the recording has a good, heavy atmosphere, which makes the music here matter. The lyrics

out and groove and stare at interesting artwork, and you can also notice all the boring clichés and predetermined molds that prevent you from getting anything really meaningful out of it. —n

Jawz Records / 5145 N. Bridges Dr. / Alpharetta GA 30022, USA

Endstand "To Whom It May Concern" CD: Shall I outline all the things Endstand have going for them on this CD? 1. A great recording, with really powerful guitars and drums, heavy bass, like a modern rock recording (uh, good rock... hm...), makes you want to dance just as soon as it comes on. 2. A great, great vocalist. Vocals make or break so many bands, and Janne gives everything he's got on every

syllable. Just listening to him on the CD, his passion and sincerity come across and make you feel welcomed and safe. 3. Honesty—that comes across in the straightforward lyrics, which proclaim positive, d.i.y. values... I mean, fuck, at the climax of the fourth song, when Janne is screaming the refrain “the older I get, the more I know—the more I know, the more I just can’t let go” and the rest of the band is chanting “hey hey hey hey” like a Bolshevik dance squad, how could hardcore get any better than that? The ‘rock’ reference I made earlier is not too off the mark, there is a really rocking feel in a lot of their hardcore, but they’re totally right on about everything

Eradicate s/t LP: From Germany comes this political hardcore outfit that reminds me a lot of Gehenna in their sound, but with maybe a little more crust-punk flavor, especially in the artwork and lyrics. I am impressed by their intelligent subject matter that’s presented in a very street-level, kind of old-fashioned punk way, and the thick, cut-n-paste (punk style) booklet is very attractive. I think it’s great that they print the English translations to their lyrics so us yanks can know what they are growling about. They really seem to be sincere and well meaning, and I wish I could get into their music as much as their message, but it just bores me. There just wasn’t any-

Exigencia “Usando la Conciencia” CD: Weird. Old school (all the predictable features, including the generic invocation of our collective conscience to solve all injustices) but the vocals are incredibly sloppy, making them almost impossible to understand without the lyric sheet, unusual for a genre that has focused so much on the tendency of their fans to sing along—and if they don’t have a rallying cry that blazes out, summoning to its powerful voice and enviable elocution the energies of the masses, how exactly can anyone sing along? I am tempted to construct complex theories on masks and disguises, on a

Catharsis “Passion” CD: celebrity appearance record review courtesy of Al Burian

I’m sitting around Bordeaux, France, completely aware that I should be out exploring, or taking in the landscape, or absorbing the history and culture of this place, and I’m mortified to be sitting instead in a Frenchman’s apartment listening to the new Catharsis album. Frog legs? No thanks, sounds weird; let’s order a Domino’s pizza. The French seem crazy about this record—language barriers notwithstanding, the point is made clearly by their pantomimed slamdance moves and vigorous air-guitar riffing. I admit that I also enjoy air-guitaring to Catharsis. Air-drumming is a bit more challenging: my legs get tired. Still, I enjoy many of the fine products of the United States of America, and nonetheless I feel a pang of regret that what I have found here in a foreign land to forge a bond of commonality between myself and the locals is not political conviction, deeply-felt humanitarianism or some other recognition of the basic human similarities which transcend all nations; rather we all seem bound by our common appreciation of my down-the-street neighbor’s heavy metal band.

Well, the die is cast, the French are going to self-induce whiplash and ask me excitedly about all my intimate knowledge of such riveting subjects as what kinds of sandwiches, toothbrushes and pedicure products Brian D— prefers (information which I am glad to provide, albeit in the form of ludicrous made-up stories about his extensive collection of loofahs and secret hunger for sunrise biscuit kitchen sausage and cheese biscuits, which causes the sweet, gullible Francs to run around the room in circles from amazement). I have no choice but to make the best of the situation. Producing an air-pick from my conceptual wallet, I hit the standby switch on my air-amp and stand with my imaginary B.C. Rich Warlock at the ready.

But suddenly a thought occurs: hey, is the new Catharsis album going to be reviewed in the next *Inside Front*? That seems like it would be a little strange. Conflict of interests at best. Kind of like reading up on what new music is cool in some magazine published by The David Geffen publishing group. We expect such crass marketing ploys from the capitalist pigs, but what about the revolutionaries over at Crimethink™, well-known and self-acclaimed as severely uninterested in the profit motive and “moving units?” Would they stoop so low as to review their own flagship product? Doesn’t it seem like the (inevitably raving positive) write-up is going to be blatantly self-serving in an uncomfortably Geffenesque way? Who are they going to find to give it an objective review? On the other hand, for *Inside Front*, being a journal of the goings on and important events in the universe of Crimethink™, the release of this record is an event of millennial magnitude. How, then, can the magazine be true to its editorial mission without reviewing the record?

The mind reels at these ethical and artistic quandaries. I certainly cannot put myself forward as a candidate for objective reviewing of this record, much as I’d like to write it up and give it the minimum stars rating, just so as to be able to send it in to Brian and have him refuse to print it and revoke my Crimethink™ I.D. and firearm to boot, which would then give me the much-sought-after excuse I’ve been looking for to rip open the jewel-case of the CD, to reveal the—oh yeah, here’s a hot tip the french gave me—reveal the extra hidden manifestos cleverly folded therein, and yell, “Anarchist collective?!” You’re fucking kidding me! These guys are just a bunch of self-promoting capitalist bastards like David motherfucking Geffen! Yours for a world free of charge? Give me back the ten bucks you, Brian D—, made me PAY for the last Catharsis CD!” (and he actually asked me to pay him the ten bucks while waiting in line to scam some free food off of the local Hare Krishnas. In line for FREE FOOD! And again, let me just stress that you really should see his loofah collection).

But, hell, I’m shredding on the Warlock to it, so who am I to give it the minimum stars. Then, the next-to-last song, a reggae song, kicks in. Odd. “What do you guys make of this?” I inquire of the french. They nod, enthusiastically to the end. As the last note of the reggae song rings out, I hear Brian D—, a man I know as lithe and sensitive, with a sensual side he has never quite been able to bring into his music, whisper, as if I’m in a pick-up joint and he’s muttering boozily into my ear, “kiss me, you’re beautiful—these are truly the last days.” KA-ZONG!!! My mind is blown. “They have done it!” I yelp enthusiastically to my French friends. “Catharsis has broken new ground, they have done something completely original and unexpected and taken me totally by surprise. The reggae could have been predicted—sure, they’ve heard the Bad Brains; but bringing in the slow-jam sex-talk aesthetic? Catharsis?”

they do, so it’s not a guilty pleasure. And they’re not beating some hackneyed, generic formula to death, either, so when their seventh song (“Small Sacrifices for Big Changes,” about veganism) begins a little like early Nirvana, it’s just fine by me. Hell, I like some old Nirvana. But I’d rather listen to this. —b

Impression, P.O. 938, 09009 Chemnitz, Germany

thing amazing happening that caught my attention—I think it sounds like 2836 other modern hardcore/punk bands. I think I could have gotten really into this back in the day when I only knew about a couple of good bands, y’know? Insert last sentence of Brethren review here. —n
Whirlwind Productions / PF 770338 / 93076
Regensburg, Germany

band hiding within their old school guitar riffs a rougher kind of aesthetic. The songs treat basic themes: “I’m Not Going to Change,” “Compromise,” “Pure Ignorance.” That this isn’t a very original recording perhaps only means that they haven’t yet found their own style, although they sound pretty comfortable in this one. The music is energetic enough, although the drumming can be

a little erratic. Old school hardcore is probably a lot newer in Colombia than it is here; we can only hope that they are able to move past this to a more innovative, compelling sound.—@

Dirección Positiva, can't find the address anywhere on the CD, perhaps you can try writing to Diego Paredes at 8372 NW 64th St. #1595, Miami, FL 33166

The Exploder "West End Kids Crusade" CD: When one goes on tour, one experiences many bands, the majority being ultimately dismissed to the back of the skull into a file

shake a part of your body, and maybe shake the person next to you for fun. Putting them in a genre of punk is tough, but I'll say that they've got emo hardcore overtones. Their music is kind to the ears, and I could see a lot of people liking them right off the bat. The drums are played well, using a technique that has a way of forcing the blood to flow with more gusto; I like it. The vocals are screamed and sung, both working very nicely. The two guitars dance with each other very well, most of the time playing in harmony with each other, which I like very much. They have a real rock-n-roll sound, too. The bass is often

them...three graphics. There are lyrics and info provided, and a picture, but it looks like the band didn't care about having a meaningful insert. On the other hand, cheap and simple is no problem in my book. —WG
The Exploder; PO Box 18034; Richmond, VA 23226. *Dimmak*; PO Box 14041; Santa Barbara, CA 93107.

Face Down "Angels with Soiled Wings" 7": This is the New Jersey Face Down, in case you're wondering. They're pretty damn heavy here, with a production that emphasizes the thickness and bass of the chunky guitar riffs

"Oh, yes! We love that part!" the French agree. "The *God Speed You Black Emperor* lyrics add so much..."

"Er.... what?" I say.

I am, at this point, shown the lyrics to a song by the band *God Speed You Black Emperor*, which, to my horror, bear a striking resemblance to the Catharsis reggae song's lyrics. Striking. In fact, let's just call it like we see it here. Plagiarism!! I, of course, am aghast. Brian has totally ripped off the lyrics to this song. His booty call moment is not even his own damn booty call, he's reading someone else's pick-up lines. Plagiarism is unethical, dishonest, and, what's more, it's against the UNC-Chapel Hill honor code, a code which I know for a fact that Brian pledged his allegiance to at some point during his tenure at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill (a university I have always suspected he chose to attend primarily because of its close proximity to Brian's personal crack-house, the sunrise biscuit kitchen).

Don't get me wrong. I don't have wild, romantic notions that my friends should be able to come up with ideas on their own, and I have myself engaged in certain behaviors which might be considered borderline "plagiarism," but there is a difference: when you cite your sources, you can get away with calling it an "homage" or a "sample" or whatever; when you try to pass it off as your idea is when you get kicked out of school.

Well, I don't know. I think there is a Crimethink manifesto somewhere where they talk at length about how great they think plagiarizing is. I suppose it does have somewhat of a noble history, in punk rock at any rate: everyone seems to be falling over themselves to express how original and innovative a band like Refused is for having the brainstorm of combining the Nation of Ulysses' wardrobe with the rhetoric of Situationism and the music of Rage Against the Machine. And the Nation of Ulysses stole their entire aesthetic from jazz in the first place (making Refused plagiarist plagiarists, thus double plagiarizers), while the Sex Pistols already plagiarized Situationism (making Refused triple plagiarists), and in any case had the word SEX in their band name which was, in terms of societal upheaval, a much more immense deal than Situationism ever was or will ever probably be, at least as far as social-impact-measured-through-band-lyrics goes, and the whole hare-brained scheme was, in any case, a publicity stunt for a clothing store, conceived of by a man named Malcolm McLaren who no doubt threw in the whole Situationism bit because of some Guy Debord book he noticed on his coffee table while getting stoned one day and scheming the whole thing called punk rock up. As for Rage Against the Machine, well, they are not plagiarists at all because unlike Catharsis and/or Refused, they include lists of recommended reading in their albums, thereby giving footnotes for where they stole their ideas from, and making them not plagiarists but scholars. Why no reading lists, Dennis Lyzzen? Why no reading lists, Brian D——— and Catharsis? Is the intent to educate and inform or is it to make yourself seem really cool so as to move more units while maintaining your supposed total disinterest in unitizing and franchising? Is the use of the last line in John Gardner's *Grendel* as a Catharsis lyric ("Grendel's had an accident, so may you all") intended as an ode, a nod to a book which moved you, or is it a crass attempt to spoil the ending of the book, so that potential readers will spend their hard-earned ten dollars (the price of the Gardner book, softcover, and the price of a Catharsis CD—mere coincidence?) on a record instead? (Why not just make songs entirely composed of lists of who did it in every Agatha Christie book, Brian?) And if my dire suspicions are indeed the case, how are we then to differentiate ourselves, our culture, this thing we attempt to call our own, DIY punk rock, from the David Geffens, the Tower records, the ominously encroaching corporate world which is slowly but surely replacing books with books on tape, newspapers with televised infotainment, politics with entertaining pre-packaged political entities including both the major and minor political candidates, as well as the various hip "political" bands increasingly in fashion as it becomes increasingly clear that their toothless sloganeering poses no more threat or possibility of change than the toothless sloganeering of our actual world leaders? No, no, things cannot go on like this. Something must break; something must be done. I draw a line in the sand, I raise my fist in defiance. I throw down the air guitar and scream it into the cold French night. The new Catharsis album: no stars! No stars! [editor's witty repartee disguised as note: that's "Situationism," Al, not "Situationism." Or perhaps in your case, it is—: "SituationAlism."]

with a "suck" heading. But if one is in the right place at the right time, a band will appear that stands out and is given a permanent place in the tourist's memory; The Exploder, alas, is one. I saw them in Jersey 2 years ago, so when I spied this CD in the review box, I grabbed it with high hopes. And let me say that this record is no let down of any kind. The music just makes you want to

hard to find in the mix when the music is rowdy, and it hugs the guitars a lot; and it could be louder. Overall the music is rhythmic and sweet, and is far from being boring. As for recording quality, I think, for this music, the tones are well-placed and the levels of all the instruments are fairly tight. The packaging of the CD, however, is pretty sad, mostly following a light pastel blue motif with, let me count

and the cutting attack of the drums, and the vocalist comes through with deep, anguished roaring that complements the music perfectly. They cut the slow chunky hardcore stuff from time to time to play more disorienting breaks with effects, that make me feel like I am falling slowly in a dream about to turn to nightmare. Nice hand-drawn illustrations on the packaging. The lyrics (and lack of any-

thing else) make it clear that this is a personal emotional testament, about friendships that end in tragedy and such, rather than something with broader implications, but it's delivers the goods as emotional expression, and that's what counts here. —b
Malph, P.O. Box 2066, Neptune City, NJ 07754-2066

Fear is the Path to the Darkside "Someday this war is going to end..." 7": Starts with a Star Wars sample, hmph. As they come from Germany, it would be easy to lose this band in the crowd of well-recorded, heavy German metal bands, but they have plenty of personality of their own, so it's worth listening a little closer. That personality comes out more on the slow parts, which throb with a hypnotizing power and grace, creating a haunting atmosphere, the vocals evoking a palpable pain. When they play faster, it's harder to tell them from the other bands screaming and playing fast chord progressions. It's not too often I find a hardcore band that can really handle playing slow, so hats off to them. German lyrics that I'd like to understand, since I think highly of their singer's intellect. I want them to push the limits a bit, surprise me a little more (like they do when everything stops and the two guitars alternate, with totally different sounds)... until then, this music will do just fine, although I think it would be at its best as the soundtrack to a dark, ominous movie... —b

Scorched Earth Policy, address below

Forstella Ford "Insincerity Down To An Artform" CD: Whoa, this band is all over the place, and it's fucking great! A breath of fresh air amongst the widespread blandness of common hardcore/punk bands. FF is chock full of what I love most, rhythm manipulation on all levels by all instruments while maintaining a cohesive groove. The instruments used are of the norm, but FF seems to have found a new way to play them. The drums are jazzy and free, the screams are sporadic and strong, the guitar is all over the fretboard and at times unintelligible, and the bass is not merely following the guitar— it finds a creative path of it's own. All of these are great assets for a band to have. This is hard to put in a category; I'll have to make one up... Chaoslovecore? Garbagecan algebra rock? Jet-puffed albino jazz? Fuck, I tried. Anyway, this is a very diverse piece of work, with fast parts, slow sleepytime vibrations, and straight up noise. Good samples and piano, too. The lyrics are all about the infamous and ever-so-worthy "you," and are often hard to follow even when reading along in the insert. The singer could enunciate the lyrics better, unless of course it's part of the music to just scream gibberish. The packaging and layout are done well, including lyrics and a few pictures. Interesting song

titles, too. All in all a great work of art. Get this. —WG
Forstella Ford; 1301 Albion Ave, #5; Milwaukee, WI 53202. The Mountain Collective; PO Box 220320; Greenpoint PO; Brooklyn, NY 11222-9997.

Foundation "Fear of Life" 7": Yet another great visual performance undermined by a not-so-great musical performance. The packaging is attractive, with great use of space and good-looking stills from the movie "The Shining" (although I don't see any meaning behind this other than trying to be scary), and has a cool gatefold-type thing happening. But it's all downhill from there, with simplistic fourth-grade level lyrics and simplistic, high-school garage-band level songwriting. There is nothing new or exciting or profound happening here, so I'll talk about the only intriguing part of this release for a minute. On the 7" center label is an imitation of the famous Slayer photo of two arms over a bathtub, with the word "slayer" carved really deeply into one of them and blood everywhere, only on here it says "foundation," obviously. I once read an article about the original photo and apparently some guy was paid to have his arm numbed, then carved up, then *set on fire* to make it even bloodier and gruesome looking. What I am intrigued by here is whether or not this imitation photo is only really well done computer trickery, or if some brave, psychotic band member or friend actually did that to themselves just for this. I really hope it's the second one, because that would kick so much fucking ass and be so goddamn metal that I would cherish this 7" forever, and not feel duped by nifty computer graphics. —n [editor's note: on Nick's behalf, I'll offer a rave review in his 'zine and a place in his top ten list to any band willing to hack themselves up, set themselves on fire, throw themselves off cliffs into pools of hydrochloric acid, and send us proof. See, getting a positive review is really not so complicated...]

Dead Alive Records / PO box 97 / Caldwell, NJ 07006, USA

Giveuntilgone "Settled For the Art Official" CD: Damn, another example of being excited by absolutely stunning artwork/graphic design only to be let down by music I don't care for, in this case very mellow, sappy, sugar-sweet emo/indy rock with annoying vocals. Well, there's actually one thing I liked musically here, and that is when there are the most serenely beautiful female guest vocals accompanying the usual male whining. Other than that I could barely stop myself from falling asleep to this Sunny Day Real Estate sound-alike. I know that the two band members who did the layout and artwork are in art school or recently graduated, because it's just that good. But besides basic aesthetic appeal I

can't relate one bit to the overall cleanliness and just plain sugary *prettiness* of this release, both visually and musically. And furthermore, I'm not convinced that this band is concerned with being or representing anything deeper and more profound than artsy, creative candy-coated imagery. —n
Dim Mak (address in Ninedayswonder review)

Goat Shanty "Encroachment" CD: Twelve songs, all named with numbers (presumably according to the order they were written, like Zegota), in twelve minutes, with a rough, abrasive recording, incoherently outraged lyrics (reaching their best moment with "solace in dependence, soulless independence"), insert artwork that wasn't taken too seriously (lots of images of goats, if you didn't see that coming... also a couple skulls, etc.), general d.i.y. atmosphere, last song ends with fucking mess of noise for a minute (the standard length of all their songs)—yes infuckingdeed, this is punk rock. What else can I say? I'm tempted to deliberately misspell words in this review just to get into the spirit of the whole thing. —b

Moot, 255 Hillcrest Avenue, Athens, GA 30601

Imbalance s/t CDEP: Here is another band that appears to be sincere and very intelligent, able to put out an attractive release, but is lagging behind musically. I love the artwork throughout the packaging of this CD; it's a mix of really weird drawings, paintings, and collage, all in very drab and subdued colors. The lyrics are well written and deal with important personal and social issues ("feud like Montague and Capulet/fight like cat and dog/take pleasure in ridiculing each other/lose sight of what we've got"), but the vocals and music just didn't do anything for me. The songs are not too fast and not too slow, the riffs are the kind you'd hear in any punky sounding hardcore record, and the vocals are pretty standard hoarse yells. Read last sentence of Brethren review and insert here. —n
Hermit / PO box 309 / Leeds LS2 7AH, UK

Ire "Adversity Into Triumph" CD: This CD is a collection of songs from previously released stuff on a 7" (Schema Recs.) and a split LP (Spineless/Fetus recs.). Ire plays medium to slow paced heavy hardcore with a huge helping of rhythmic changes and great thick slow chugs. A lot of the musical themes have an evil sounding edge to them, and at times I picture people struggling, fighting against some huge fucking ugly enemy, but failing miserably. Damn, some of this is sad. You can feel it in the singer's effort. The rhythm is strong, always up front and under your nose. The vocals are about as passionate as I've ever heard, but sometimes they don't mesh well with the music, like they were conceived totally separate and pushed to fit in holes that they

aren't shaped for. And the singer went crazy with double-tracking, which gets in the way sometimes. The bass is no doubt *here*, and is glorious, better than most of the lot of hardcore/punk, which has an infamous reputation for uninteresting bass. The guitars have great minds and dare to venture off into uncharted territory, and they have a solid, powerful drive. Same goes for the drums; essential. For the most part, the songs are long, and every once in a while we get a sample of haunting chants (Tibetan?) and other intercontinental expression. The packaging is standard and done fairly well. The cover folds out to reveal the lyrics (including one song in French and one in Arabic) and fabulous song explanations. Ire's songs are about Palestinian struggle, Native American assimilation, consumerism, the problematic U.S. social structure, widespread denial of humanity being a part of nature (take this both ways), and self-realization. Ire really has something to say, they don't just play music and then go home: "we are disillusioned from the sight of fields where plants and trees fade into symbols of profit, where success is a seed sown in a plain of rocks where nothing grows." Yeah, this is good. —WG

Ire; PO Box 902, station C; Montreal, Quebec; H2L 4V2, Canada.

Kafka "Truths" CD: Their vocalist has a high, screaming voice that is just the right frequency to cut through the simple, metallic hardcore and become the main thing that I focus on when this CD is on. It's a little hard to bear, that one high, ringing note over and over, screamed at me—there was a CD released by Mountain records a couple years back that had exactly the same thing going on with the vocals, I think the band was Devola. Anyway, the music has some hypnotic power in parts, and they use jarring chords to some effect in places; over all it's not brand new or top of its class, but it is a hell of a lot better than some of the work of Kafka's more generic colleagues. They experiment with a piano piece and some spoken word for the sixth track, and if they can incorporate that into their hardcore they'll be on their way to something good. A fascinating quality of Italian hardcore is that bands from that country seem to be somehow incapable of producing generic lyrics (praise Allah!)—so the lyrics here are all interesting; the last song is the (true) story of a coastal town in Brazil in which the poor hunt the crabs who live on the garbage that accumulates on the beach: the tragedy of our age, recycling rubbish into shit and disease... —b

No! Records, via Cadighiara 18/14, 16133 Genova, Italy

Kill the Messenger "Five on Seven" 7": This 7" has more music on it than I'm used to from a polished band like this. When K.t.M. are going

at it, they play jumpy, experimental punk/rock stuff, with plenty of new ideas. For example, the first song begins with a scary, whispering, dragged part that I was sure would lead to the predictable metal/hardcore thing, but instead surprised me by going into something much poppier. Their singer has a deep, hoarse voice that is reminiscent of something else I didn't like much, but he's not the most important thing happening here. There's a "post-hardcore" taste in my mouth here that I'd like to be able to wash out or ignore, because what these guys are doing is new and exciting... I just hope they're trying to expand the genre rather than escape into the arms of something more commercially accessible. Oh fuck, I shouldn't complain—any band which, when the vocalist sings "hold my breath and count to ten" actually pauses so he can count it out loud, has to get my go ahead. Gorgeous hand-drawn insert artwork, too. —b
Phyte, address nearby, c'mon!

bass and blastbeats sound like the maximum-velocity workings of an industrial killing machine, fragments of resigned, lucid death poetry: "feel numb to the carnage all around me"—"killing to lose ourselves in it"—"is it the blood which awakens the monster in us...?" In the opening instants, after the classical introduction (which brings to my mind Wagner, and his proto-fascist dreams), the guitars come in like the hiss of the air on Judgment Day, and the snare drum begins banging out the rhythm of a witch's Sabbath, or perhaps the same rhythm the skeleton is playing over the mouth of Hell in Breughel's terrifying *Triumph of Death*... and at moment, like it or not, I catch myself glorying in my own cold-blooded, contradictory nature, and it hammers home the tragedy all the more inescapably. —b

Alveran, P.O. Box 10 01 52, 44701 Bochum, Germany

Countdown to Putsch "Handbook For Planetary Progress" CD and Book: I find myself mute in the presence of greatness. Anyone who likes to read Inside Front would do well to check this out. It's challenging on all levels: intellectually, this is brilliant, all-encompassing, as thorough a literary/academic work as has come out of the hardcore community, on a par with *Dry of War*, *Nights of Love* and very little else. The book compiles everything from an exploration of Melville's *Moby Dick* to the distinction between regressive and progressive taxation to stories of meeting giant rats in the subway. Fuck, this is awesome, and I can't sum it up any more than I could sum up *Society of the Spectacle* or *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Musically, they're doing what I think That's All She Wrote wanted to do, but couldn't cut the cords tying them to hardcore conventions thoroughly enough to really achieve: this isn't hardcore with free jazz influence, this is genuine free jazz played by a hardcore band. Unqualified craziness, no idea what to expect next, that intoxicating immediacy of something new and dangerous being tried right in front of you—fuck, this is top notch. As a rule, these wild experiments don't last long; that's too bad, because I'd be fascinated to see what these kids would do next, to polish this approach and explore further. In any event, find this and explore it, learn what you can and steal some ideas to try yourself. —b

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

Jane "A Doorway to Elsewhere" CD: The best Systral record (*Maximum Carnage*) did something that transcended the world of "brutal" hardcore music—it took that brutality to its logical conclusion, revealing the bloodlust and desire for total annihilation that lies at the roots of our civilization and the music made by the rebels within it. This record does the same thing, in just about the same way Systral did it (if not for the first time, this time), and for those who were disappointed when Systral became fat and self-satisfied and stopped trying, this will be a welcome sequel to their aforementioned masterpiece. Not to say all the elements that made Systral so important are present here—really, this is just an exploration of that particular aspect of their work, with the same merciless metal arrangements, shrieking-suffering high vocals and murdering-without-feeling deep roars, thunderous bass-overloaded mix that makes the double

Lariat "Means of Production" CD: OK, first off, the idea to review this came spontaneously when I found this CD right after writing the review for the Lariat demo tape, and goes *hand-in-hand* with said review, this review building upon the other. That said, I am convinced that Lariat likes bullets (this CD came with one in the narrow space on the left side of the jewel box, I love it). This release is out of Denmark, and contains the same recordings from the demo, with three new tracks of their political machine-gun firemusic. These three new songs are not recorded quite as well compared to the demo quality (which is good), but they are nonetheless powerful and fucking intense. Especially notable is the second tune, a tune that fucking made me cry as I listened to it over and over. It concerns the police shooting of Amadou Diallo, an event I am familiar with, and the chords chosen here, the notes, the rhythms...they represent the

event musically, tearing at my very fucking marrow, ripping out anger, hopelessness, sorrow, and pain that I feel when something like this goes down. This song says 'Fucking look! Look what you fucking did!' Shit, now I feel like I lost someone that I knew and loved; is that supposed to happen? The CD booklet is beautiful black and silver, and it contains more focused and less writing than the demo booklet (including, of course, lyrics and explanations). Lariat are bare-naked here, and come across as more mature in the sense of their ability to get things accomplished. I'm guessing that they have lived what they have been talking about, and learning things along the way. If you want to make a change in your life and your world, you would be doing yourself a great disservice by overlooking Lariat. Their live show is impressive, as well as serious and confrontational; so when you see them, by all means, *talk* to them. -WG

Lariat; PO Box 443; Round Lake, NY 12151. *Last Effort Recordings*; *Dankwart Dreyers Vej 9*; 5610 Assens; Denmark.

Luddgang "Collateral 18.06.99": At first, I was afraid this was going to be more painfully derivative imitation Crass shit, with the circle-A-derived logo on the cover and the BBC sample at the beginning—but no, this is fucking awesome! The first side turns out to be a Public Enemy/Consolidated-style sample collage with an oil-drum ensemble percussion backdrop. This is the kind of shit that bands like Crass deserve to have done with their legacy, not copycat bullshit until we're all bored to death... I've heard nary a guitar yet by the beginning of the second side, and yet it's clear to me that *this* is the punk music of today, the music that can keep the whole genre and musical aspect of the community itself vibrant and meaningful. The b-side is a similar percussion/sample collage, but since *this* formula hasn't been explored 10,000 times in 10,000 songs on 2000 records, two times is not too many! Hmm, I wonder what the ideological implications of using samples from the electronic/mass media on a vinyl record are for a band with a technophobe name like Luddgang... I guess they're trying to "deconstruct" the power of that media and technology with "recontextualization" of its constituent elements (hope it works!). You don't have to put up with my political rhetoric and theory about them, though—they offer plenty of their own in their packaging (and plenty more in an explicatory 'zine available from their address: Luddgang, P.O. Box 1095, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S2 4YR, England). They're coming at everything from the standard bookish modern anarchist perspective... the issues they address in the 7" packaging are the June 18 Reclaim the Streets event in London, and the NATO bombing of Serbia. -b
Crashhole, P.O. Box 65341, Baltimore, MD 21209

Malefaction "Worship Nothing" 7": Ragged, growly grindcore, with some of the typical characteristics of the genre: for example, the guitars and bass are remarkable low in the recording, so much so that at one point the ringing ride symbol practically eclipses them. Samples include death screams, talk of slavery and how humanity is a plague on the earth, an argument about Jesus between a believer and blaspheming nonbeliever. There's a Slayer cover from *Reign in Blood*, in which (remarkably!) the band does just fine, keeping some of the energy and all the speed of the original and playing tightly enough—the only drawback is the singer, who is at his least inspired there. On the originals he ranges from a predictable grindcore grumble to a decent angry roar. Lyrics cover nationalism, religion, sexism, servitude, all anti- of course.

Commode, #5, 227 21st Avenue S.W., Calgary, AB, T2S 0G5 Canada

Man Afraid "Complete Discography" CD: For those who haven't heard Man Afraid before, they came from a strand in the family tree of hardcore somewhere after Born Against and before Dillinger Four—anti-patriotic lyrics and samples, rugged down-to-earth approach to everything, energetic music with the distinct oi/punk roots still barely discernible, gravely vocals, haunting moments between the full throttle punk rock parts. It's good stuff, unpretentious and yet dramatic in the way that this music can be. Everything they did is collected here, fourteen tracks plus their demo, and the insert is excellent too; it contains all their lyrics, all the information we could have wanted, plus little retrospectives by Brian Alft (editor of *Contrascience*) and Alex Coughlin (editor of *Dwgsht*, my old friend who went off hiking one day and never stopped). The last tracks (the rough demos ones) are some of my favorites, the sound is perfect for this music. Man Afraid was a band that was important to a lot of people, and not only because the project ended in tragedy; this isn't the most "current" record reviewed here, but it's better than that—it's timeless. -b

Half-mast, P.O. Box 8344, Minneapolis, MN 55408

Man in the Shadow "Pax Americana" 7": I want to like this record much more than I actually do. The lyrics are smart and poignant, exploring the terrors of trying to break free from your socialized role, and the fearsome, unbounded world that opens before you when you do. The music moves ambitiously between the poles of melodic/acoustic prettiness and more aggressive, screaming climaxes with chunky, distorted guitar riffs, but because the mix isn't heavy enough for the heavy parts or clear enough for the clean parts, it isn't able to deliver the way I'd like it to. The vocalist also could benefit from letting himself

get carried away more. But the overwhelming impression that his singing and this record as a whole deliver is of sincerity, though, with the multilingual lyrics and essays about making revolution step by patient step, and that's worth a lot to me. With some improvement they could do something like what Kriticka Situace did so well, I'm imagining. This record does give the impression of a band with lots of energy and potential starting out (I'm thinking of the Zegota demo, for example, which by itself wasn't half as good as this but provided a hint of what they would have to offer soon), and I hope to hear another one from them...

Postscript: Neck Beards

OK, looking back, I just realized that I concentrated on all the wrong things in the review. This is what I really should discuss: their drummer's neck beard. Their drummer was one of those rare people who is so centered and gentle that he radiates peace and safety to everyone in his presence. He also wore his hair in a way I'd never seen before: his cheeks were completely clean-shaven, but below the jaws he sported a big, bristly punk rock beard. I was telling Mark about this when we were driving together, and he speculated that the drummer's healthy disposition might have been connected somehow to the neck beard. The more we discussed this possibility, the more likely it seemed: both of us had always hated shaving, though having your cheeks bare can feel kind of neat—and we realized it was our necks that really caused us trouble in the shaving process. What if we stopped shaving them, and kept shaving our faces? Would we too become centered, calm, generous people? Find out next time you see me, with a neck beard halfway down my chest... -b

Miran Rusjan, Pot na Breg 8, 5250 Solkan, Slovenia

Manifesto Jukebox "7": Melodic, singing punk with big, ringing chords in a major key, coming off as light-hearted and irrepressible, but with an undertone of sadness when you listen deeper and read the lyrics (from the second song: "still got the fire, but nothing to burn—just the bitter beauty of an end"). The high-hat is mixed too high, and asserts itself as a treble hiss in places; but other than that their mix flatters them, helping them sound like the Smiths as a punk band in some spots. They keep up the energy and speed throughout, and sometimes get worked up enough to ditch the pretty stuff and sound pretty out of control. They could have played with Leatherface a few years back and it would have made for a good show. -b

HALLA/Jani, P.O. Box 139, 00131 Helsinki, Finland

Milemarker : Changing Caring Humans : 1997-1999 A Collection of Singles and Compilation Songs on CD: As noted in the title, this collection of music includes every single and compilation track released by the band from 1997 to 1999. To begin, instead of simply presenting this compact disc as a pile of non-LP songs, they present this collection as part of a greater, um, plan. I like a band with a plan, certainly not enough bands have even the remotest resemblance of a plan. Specifically, preceding the lyrics there is a manifesto/musing on the band by a presumed Francis Haarstraub. This certainly was intriguing, because first: it introduced political pretensions on the level of, say, Refused or Nation of Ulysses, and two: it is a marked contrast to the generally stark and vague lyrics that proliferate throughout this album. Which is certainly reassuring. Listening to Changing Caring Humans I felt I encountered a group of humans leading rather bleak and unhappy lives. Milemarker does well to document the alienation of our world, its despair and painful longings, paved earth, endless strip malls and the nether, failed levels of human interaction. However, the most despairing aspect of the album is that I only felt more alienated and greater anguish with each song—the same feeling I encounter reading bleak leftist newsletters. The black and white images gracing each lyric page reinforced this. While it is legitimate to assume music (or art) is there to serve as a document of experience I must also demand that music serve as a tool of transcendence. I wonder if it at least serves this purpose to the band? Or perhaps it's just sending them spinning faster into the abyss? This despair translates into fast guitar driven songs for the most part. Minor chords and cries and yells that sound as if the whole business of crying and yelling is hopelessly past and only a detached self-aware futile spew is appropriate anymore. There is also a jazzy number, some slower post-modern ballads and a handful of technopop-pish (keyboard) inspired numbers that hint at the "Frigid Forms Sell" LP that followed these songs. (Note: two or three earlier, slower, rougher versions of songs from that album appear here). I think the best of these 18 tracks is "Receiver" from the early days when they could only manage to sound like Griver and/or Hellbender. It contains a certain sincerity that the other tracks lack and which "Frigid Forms" abhors. The band has come quite some way since then. But for the better? I know the members of Milemarker must retain their romanticism in a delicate corner somewhere far hidden from the world, defended by an arsenal of ironical pop songs. I've seen it in their eyes and coded in these hopeless songs. I just hope that corner doesn't turn to stone before it's too late. Maybe it is best they left Chapel Hill and its demands of a hip contemporary version of a Jane Austen novel.

Milemarker, I dare you to be vulnerable, like a lover! We may betray you (like all those before), but what do you have to lose? -BB
Stickfigure, PO Box 55462 Atlanta, Ga, 10108 USA

Newborn "self-titled" CD: Newborn play passionate hardcore, at least that's my interpretation from this cd. Really good, sincere lyrics, accessible writings to accompany the lyrics, a self-released full-length, and oh yeah, there's just something that truly sounds and feels *fucking* passionate. How often does that *really* come across in a hc record? As for the musical style, Newborn have a somewhat melodic hc feel with singing vocals and then at times change to complete screaming over more intense drumming and guitars, which in my opinion is where they shine. Anyway, Newborn comes from Budapest, Hungary, but you can't write to them because no address was included in their cd. People also tell me they're incredible live. (taz)

I'm sure you can contact them through the addresses at the end of this issue—the ed.

Nostromo "argue" CD: There are so few open chords on this CD that when the guitars finally strike some midway through the second song, it's practically a revelation. Everything else is non-stop guitar chunk/double bass onslaught... one often describes bands like this one wants to honor by comparing them to machinery, but that analogy cuts both ways here: with their airtight recording and exact, uniform execution, Nostromo really do sound like a machine, as if a computer program had been written to churn out perfect (too perfect) mosh metal. Nothing ever goes wrong or is even a split second off, but the humanity is missing somehow. It's not entirely monotonous—the high jarring guitar alarm thing in the first song (reminiscent of something Converge did a few years back) is clever enough, but with no lyrics or variation in the tough roaring vocals, I just can't connect with this. —b

Snuff, P.O. Box 5117, CH 1211 Geneve 11, Switzerland

Nueva Erika "Momento de la Verdad" cassette: This is Vieja Escuela's sister band, the '90's version of the same thing, the vegan straight

From Ashes Rise "12": I'm sure these kids are sick of hearing comparisons to their former neighbors His Hero Is Gone, but unfortunately that's the best reference point for this particular genre—and they do have just about everything going for them that made His Hero so important to me: overloaded production that creates a dramatic atmosphere, complex use of dual guitar melodies, sure-handed application of traditional punk musical conventions, straightforward political lyrics, furious fucking delivery. Now let's talk about the differences: they're faster—they don't slow down as much or as frequently for the heavy sludge parts; their drummer uses double bass, and occasionally employs other sort of '80's thrash beats that have more funk than anything His Hero would have done; the vocals are higher pitched. But what really matters above all else, which makes rather than breaks this band, is this: they have their own songs, great songs. You can be the most skilled, well-recorded, politically aware band in the world, and without good songs, you can't do anything—but they've got them, and it makes for a great fucking record. I wouldn't ask for anything else. Top notch. —b
also like His Hero, there's no label address: write the band at 7038 Bonnavent Drive, Nashville, TN 37076

Ninedayswonder "The Scenery is in Disguise There" CD: Ugh! I really wanna be nice but I simply cannot when a CD causes me to vomit all over myself. It's the combination of really jangly, noodling, trebly, wimpy-ass indy rock guitars and moaning injured-dog-yelp vocals that sounds like a bad imitation of Fugazi that I just can't get into. I don't even know how to constructively criticize this because I just don't like anything musical about it. I like the record label because they inserted a photocopied piece of paper containing an awesome quote about revolution by Angela Davis, I like the sleek and simplistic layout, and I even kinda like some of the lyrics, but please do not make me actually listen to the music again. —n
Dim Mak / PO box 14041 / Santa Barbara, CA 93107, USA

edge revival band. Maybe I like V.E. more because we're far enough from the '80's to forget all the dumb shit that went on then... we're not far enough from the '90's, unfortunately, so when N.E. plays something reminiscent of Path of Resistance (and they do—they do) I'm unable to escape my bad associations with that bygone era in the U.S.A. when veganism was a mark of narrow-minded self-righteousness and elitism rather than compassionate openness. Point of No Return has shown that the same starting point can lead to new, right on places, and I'm sure N.E. can get there, too... but for the time being, this cassette is up-tempo, metallic, moshy, three-vocalist '90's hardcore with at least seventeen X's discernible in the band photos alone. —b

Firme y Alerta, address in V.E. review

One Fine Day "CD: This is interesting stuff... their hardcore reminds me a little of Botch, with the *real* craziness (not just seeming crazy, but really proceeding according to conventions of timing and chord progression that are unfamiliar to the ears), and it's punctuated with all sorts of foreign elements—notes which are shaken and tremble painfully like the warbling of alien birds, smoky nightclub jazzy improvisations, strange breaks between chaos and quiet melody, Black Sabbath playing in the background at the beginning. The singer is mixed a little under everything else, but when you stop to pay attention to him, it turns out he has a powerful screaming voice and is going at it without

ground under their feet yet. For their next record to be as compelling as this one is interesting, they have to make us see the wild horizons opening around them, to make us feel and intuitively understand everything whenever they strike a note. In the meantime, we can sit with this record, trying to puzzle out its strange power. —b

Green, Via San Francesco 60, Padova, Italy

Page 99 "Document #4" 6": The packaging contains no lyrics, and an essay from the band that isn't easy to read—it explains that in the months before this recording, loved ones of the band members committed suicide, and that they're trying here to capture their grief

executed well all-around (I'm thinking of a more personable Stack, or something), but I feel strange now knowing what it came from and simply reviewing it as music—that's the way the art market works, and it's pretty unpleasant. I will say that the samples (which I'm guessing might be from the old movie *Heathers*, about teenage suicide) are unnecessary and detract from the seriousness of the music for me. —b

Robodog, 12001 Aintree lane, Reston, VA 20191

Pensar o Morir "Hardcore Head Eternamente" cassette: Musically this seems to come from the tradition of New York hardcore, a lineage I

His Hero Is Gone "The Plot Sickens: Enslavement Redefined" 12: His Hero did the most honorable thing they could have: once they became really popular and all eyes were on them, they dropped off their label, which had also become big and successful, put out their final record themselves (with no logo on the back—a fuck off to punk feudalism, a proud assertion of d.i.y. values, a demonstration that no, bands that are more popular do *not* have to work with bigger labels "so all their fans can get their records"), with a no-frills rugged recording and on vinyl only (long live punk rock!), did a last U.S. tour with a Spanish band (E-150) to bridge the divides of hardcore imperialism, and, returning bloodied and emotionally wrecked to their godawful Southern hometown of Memphis, Tennessee, broke the fuck up amid various personal and interpersonal tragedies. Even the packaging for this record is exemplary, with the visionary aesthetic and spare utility that always characterized them: black and white cover (and fuck, it's chilling: a row of nails that, thanks to the rugged xerox-art technology, look at once like a row of smokestacks, and a barcode—saying everything about technology, commodification, and death at once, without employing a single word), gatefold with lyrics and a surreal dystopia landscape right out of our own backyards, text about the malady of our civilization's destructive values (as manifested by capitalism and "progress"), quotes and reading list (more criticism of modernity, technology, virtual reality...).

The most important thing about His Hero's music on this record for me, something I haven't heard addressed by others much, is the deep sorrow it expresses. This is some of the most anguished, bereaved, grief-stricken, deeply soulful music I've ever heard, and that they evoked this with traditional Swedish-style fast punk is truly amazing. It has the same profound, tragic spirit, the same hopeless but unsuppressable longing as the most haunting Flamenco music I've heard from Southern Spain, if you know how to listen into it right. When I saw Submission Hold this summer, I was moved almost to tears by what they were doing: rather than raging against the perpetrators and perpetrators of misery, they were forcing us all to feel the hurt, forcing us to be overcome by the tragedy... their rage, some could have brushed off, but the pain was so undeniable, so universal that I can't imagine any businessman murderer motherfucker who had heard that they that night could have escaped without suffering pangs of guilt at bringing so much ugliness into the world. Here, His Hero does the same thing, but without leaving behind their rage, their determination, that twisted, self-loathing love of life that remains in the heart of the beaten as the ragged remainder of idealism. This makes it possible for them to roar about the slaughter and waste of our era without seeming generic, emotionless, or mired in reactive, uncreative formula: they are insisting on claiming their emotions for their own, not letting this fucked up world desensitize them, bemoaning our fate because they fucking *know* it doesn't have to be this way, because it *is* a real tragedy. When, at the end of the first song, Todd cries out "Surrender! Surrender! Surrender! Surrender the passion from our lives..." it's a refusal to let the pain go, to become an automaton in a ruined world, to keep playing along—and thus the music becomes transformed into a demand, from within every heart: Never surrender! Better suffer, cry, be humiliated before their hateful eyes... but for heaven's sake, stay alive, survive, clutch your bloodied heart to your chest and bear it with you through this smashed world, as a seed to plant when the polluted soil becomes fertile again. The blastbeats squeeze tears out of my bleary eyes, the grimy bass lines caress my tight, sore muscles, the shrieking of my comrades reaffirms my convictions that we are right to throw ourselves out in the world like this to suffer and fail and triumph, and I am fucking alive. —b

write to Ebullition and see if they have a copy. Their address is at the conclusion of the Severed Head of State review.

His Hero Is Gone—live, summer of 1999, at their second to last show: Our band has a history of playing with bands we love only to see them break up immediately afterwards (Trial, Refused, Ire are some other examples...). This was a particularly bad night—it was two days after I received the news that Dan Young, our former guitarist, had died of a drug overdose on tour with the rockstar asshole band he joined after leaving us to make his newly-embraced nihilism clear to everyone. I had just split up (again) with my lover, our relationship was totally fucked up (in order to deal with the situation she had had to decide that I was ugly, awful, repug-

restraint—one song ends in a long, naked scream that makes my throat bleed just listening to it. I get the impression this band started from the mid-'90's mosh metal thing and just explored further and further away from the pack, until they found themselves in a totally exotic landscape... and now they're comfortable there, even if we're not, even if they haven't charted much farther than the

about that. The tragedy of music is that sometimes you can pour out all your suffering and desperation and shattered hope and it just sounds like a rockin' good time to listeners who have been conditioned to expect to hear rage and misery (simulated or real) on the records they buy. This is great music, high-tension, intense, energetic hardcore that doesn't sound dated to any particular era or genre,

haven't heard much challenging music from in a little while—but this is excellent. The recording is powerful (the bass is mixed more prominently than basses usually are, but it doesn't ruin anything), the music layered and often complex, full of transitions from fast parts to moshy rhythms to acoustic parts, even guitar leads sometimes. The gruff yelling vocalist (think post-Agnostic Front and Warzone) is

probably the main connection to the New York style, besides something about the snare drum sound. Come to think about it, my Brazilian friends told me that Argentina harbored a hardcore tradition parallel to but independent of the N.Y.C. one, and I suppose P.O.M. is coming out of that. The lyrics cover the mass murders of the Argentinean dictatorship, lost friendships... —b
C.C. No. 406, Correo Central, La Plata, CP (1900), Argentina

Planesmistakenforstars "Fucking Fight" 7": Damn, I don't usually care much for music in this style (post-"emocore" melodic stuff), but this really has the teeth to make it work. The

ciate with Milemarker, although more idealistic, much less deliberately cynical (to their credit!). I wish I had a full length record here (what would that be from these guys, twelve minutes long?) rather than just these two songs. —b
Dim Mak, address all around here

The Purpose "Art as a Weapon" 7": I think this is old-fashioned hardcore in the melodic style that I never really listened to—I'm thinking of the stuff that came after Dagnasty... simple, traditional hardcore riffs, melodic, melodramatic vocals that work up to a yell at some points—oh shit, I've got it! Token Entry, that's an example. Anyway, the lyrics are elo-

the last song is a good start, and it builds to some typically good lyrics: "but it's not your sound you're selling, it's your soul... it's the space you're filling. That's not the passion they're buying, it's just records." —b
Underestimated records, address somewhere else you should be able to find, now move on, nothing to see here...

React "Deus Ex Machina" 12": Me and my friends Pigpen and Chaos are hanging out in the smashed-up living room of a punk house in a Philadelphia ghetto, eating dumpstered cheese pizza (OK, I'm vegan, so I'm eating month-old bagels by soaking them in water and microwaving them, but the other two are

nant for wanting the things I wanted which were interfering with our romance), and she had to call me to tell me that she'd just heard he died, and did I know yet? And get this bullshit—she found out because the rest of the band, who had been eating in a fast food restaurant in Texas when he died (while his cocaine- and valium-addled heart stopped beating in the van outside, in 118 degrees of heat), had come back to find a new guitarist so they could finish their tour. So I was fucked up. The aforementioned lover was at the show, too, complicating things in the self-confidence department... Moe was also there, miserable and starving and half-crazy after living in his truck in abject poverty since our tour together had ended, not wanting to get a job but unsure how he was going to stay alive, getting more and more desperate.

And His Hero were in bad shape, too. After the show, I was waiting to hang out with my friend who plays guitar for them while he took a walk with another member... in the course of walking around Greensboro, they got lost, and in the extra thinking and talking time that gave them, they decided to break up. Tensions were already high when they finished warming up and began playing. I've seen very few bands play with the resolve and total focus they did—every chord, every pick slide was executed with the most merciless attention to detail, as if they were carrying out an operation in which a single misplaced note would mean catastrophe, as if they were guerilla warriors with their lives at stake, not just punk musicians. I've never seen a human being sweat as much as their singer Todd did that night—it was pouring off his face and hands in rivers, every time he moved—almost impossible to believe. I sat up above everyone else on the P.A. stack, bearded, weary, and throat-torn, looking down—and what they did for me, and for Moe and probably others, was so important: it was a promise, a reassurance from other conflicted, tortured souls, that we weren't crazy, that these emotions that compelled us to such wild extremes of action and refusal had a gutted glory of their own, something beyond the limits of anything in the quiet, resigned world from which we had severed ourselves.

For their final song, they played "Chain of Command," the last song on the first side of "Monuments to Thieves." During the break, when only the bass and drums were going, Todd took the microphone and smashed it against his forehead, so hard it was terrifying. I've seen plenty of singers get "carried away" (generally imitating each other in very scripted ways) and "emotional" and beat the microphone against their heads or chests, but this was different: like their music, it was brutal, determined, deliberate. He wasn't trying to get crazy, he was specifically trying to break his skin open—and with two swift blows, he opened a wide gash in his forehead, from which a new river flowed, a river of red. It poured down his face in a thick stripe like warpaint, and across his chest—the brightest color in the room, perhaps the most brilliant scarlet I have ever seen. Pushing the crushed microphone back onto the stand, he spit into it: *we keep on licking, they keep on kicking... keep making the pills—how long will we swallow? And, engaging his thunderous guitar for the final chords: How long will they feed? How long will we follow? How long can they lead?*

And it was clear to me what the blood was about, finally. In this world of symbols, of abstraction and representation, where we're supposed to march under standards of one kind or another, the scarlet stripe down his front, which issued directly from his very body, was a declaration: We can march under no banner. If we must have a flag, it can only be the flag of our own blood, which we must be ready to spill with our hearts and hands, for only that blood is as literal and real and complex as our confused hearts, as the world we live in and hope to seize. For once, blood-letting, singing and guitar-playing, anarcho-punk performance was not a representation of something else at all, but a presence: of him, a real person, present and shameless in all his biological reality, all the complexity and conflict of being a real person, something "unsanitary" and "uncivilized" and "unpleasant" to them, but now beautiful to us, divine and mortal at once. Blood is indisputable, undeniable—it is organic when everything else is plastic, abstract, silicon, concrete. We carry that poison, the time bomb of the natural world, inside us everywhere we go, even walking around their malls and office buildings. We do not exist without it, however clean and sterile they would like to make everything. Open yourself and let it bleed back into this world, a world "cleaned" and "purified" with the unthinkable deforestation, gentrification, holocausts of their genocidal reich, and wash it dirty again in the blood of our soiled consciences. Amen. It is the only way to bring this world back to life.

singer's voice is rough enough to have drama whether he is singing or screaming (I'm thinking of the vocals that make Leatherface more interesting than any other band in their genre), the music is pressing, intense, hurried... and, fuck, over before I get more than a taste. Two songs and they're both really short. The lyrics and packaging have that coded, poignant but self-aware character that I asso-

quently written and direct about the subject matter, and make me trust them—they're express some anti-imperialist ("We are the third world"), anti-egotist and rockstar-popularity-ist ("Player piano"), pro-living-life-to-the-fullest ("That smile"). It's all well done, solid, seems quite sincere... I just wish the music was a little more spectacular in some way. The experimental part near the end of

eating the pizza, despite the green mold). We listen to a mix tape of a bunch of nameless European crust bands, and then Chaos puts on his favorite new record, this one. The Discharge-bears, '80's-Antisect/Nausea punk drama, and gritty production all make us feel good about our dreadlocks and filthy Amebix patches and lack of beer money (OK, I don't drink, but whatever). We don't even mind

when the sample of the guy telemarketing for Jesus is a little too loud in relation to the music, or another song goes into another breakdown part followed by another punk guitar solo as we've heard a thousand times before, because this is our music, made by people like us with spiky hair and names like "Roach" and "Hoss." In the process of listening, we reaffirm our anti-corporate, pro-environmental, anti-sexist, anarchist values, as punks have been for a couple decades, and perhaps the token musical experimentation at the beginning of the second side (anarcho-folk with singing and acoustic instruments) reminds us that there is more to life than just wearing black and being against things. —b
Fired Up!, P.O. Box 8985, Minneapolis, MN 55408

Red Kedge "Through the Greatest Death..." cassette: New hardcore music from Singapore, with distinctively hoarse, shrieking and wailing vocals over music with a variety of textures (acoustic melodies, distorted chord progressions, high guitar leads, often in places you don't expect them) and transitions (fast, punk parts, slower, more complex parts). There's an atmosphere of lamentation through a lot of this, and that is captured in the lyrics as well: "I'm running, running out of this world, running out of breath..."—but they also maintain the glimmer of real hope that is necessary for this kind of music to be sad rather than just dreary. It really doesn't sound like anything else I can think of... seriously, if I had to come up with a musical comparison, old Vegan Reich would be the only thing I could think of (not because of the lyrics or attitude at all, seriously, I'm just trying to think of who else used this kind of combination of melodious leads and old-fashioned hardcore... they aren't even a good example... maybe Underdog? Fuck, you never even heard any of those bands, did you...). It could be more polished in the recording quality, although it's pretty good already; I imagine they'll have all the little details worked out next time, so I'm curious where this will go. —b
No Action Taken distribution, Mazmi Arshad, 2115-21, Jln Sungai Gombak, 53000 KL, Malaysia

Revenge "" 10": Something like Oi Polloi at their most metal moments ("Victim of a Gas Attack!") with harsher, gruffer vocals, a more rugged mix (featuring a snare drum that is significantly louder than the guitars and everything else), and lyrics that rage against the stupidity of the television-added masses and the biotechnological/corporate elite that rules them with police terror when all else fails—in alternating English and German. Now, when a reviewer reaches the point of having reviewed more than two hundred records in a given genre, there are two levels of quality to

which a record in his review box can aspire. The first is to be nice to listen to while it's on, and thanks to its coarse energy this record passes that test; but the second test is to be something that the reviewer will want to listen to over and over, even though he's heard similar ideas executed on a couple hundred other records (of at least three songs each—do the math, it's intimidating). Despite their passionate attempt, Revenge hasn't been able to do that for me here. That's the weight of history in conflict with the life force itself and it's not pretty—if nothing else, I can at least assure you that it's worse for us reviewers than it for you listeners, so if you've only listened to, say, twenty records in this genre of punk, it should work great for you. —b

An's Bein Pissen, Klein v. Wisenberg, Breisacherstrasse 24, 81667 Munchen, Germany

Revolte 10": Eight different label addresses on the back (a couple of them tape traders), great punk artwork that a modern Pushead might have drawn (tasteful silhouettes of burning skeletons with drums and guitars, others dressed as priests and policemen, handwritten lyrics and logos), everything in their native German—all these indications that this was a genuine, d.i.y. punk rock record (like the ones you might have heard about!) combined to persuade me to try to trick one of these 10's out of somebody in Germany: "oh, I'll review it, I promise!" Well, not only does it look beautiful next to my "Cleanse the Bacteria" record, it also sounds quite good—simple, sufficient recording, straightforward music that spans from late '80's hardcore riffs and breakdowns (that don't sound retro or dated here at all, just timeless) to more original: a moment of off-time chords, inspired buildups on the snare, one whimsical use of echo effects. Too bad I can't understand a single screamed word, uneducated North American idiot that I am. I wouldn't even know where to start to learn all the different languages of hardcore, if I were to try, though. Oh, wait, I found something I can understand (besides the skulls and guitars)—it's an equation: an anarchy sign, plus a heart, equals a smiley face. —b
the most recognizable label address is Bad Influence, Stefan Fuchs, Rennweg 1, 93049 Regensburg, Germany

Romeo is Bleeding "The Principle of Pain" CD: Plenty of variety and ideas here. The vocals, which alternate between a barely discernible mumble, a tough bark, and a ripped shriek which I like most of all, are lower in the overloaded mix than I'd like them to be. Wait, on the third song the vocalist is singing over the now melodic music (which still retains the same tough, really rugged, snare-drum-maybe-too-loud, thus actually retaining some energy... and my interest)—that song ends with the sexiest, throaty whisper, I'm surprised and pleased, and then immediately they

return to the hard-hitting European metal mosh. The riffs and songs are all well-constructed... this could be the starting point for a new generation of hardcore bands, perhaps, exploring a wider territory of musical possibilities. Techno parts at the beginning and end pay homage to the last bands to undertake this project... —b

Plastik Culture (with a machine gun over a star for the logo!), 13100 Aix-en-Provence, France

Rubbish Heap "" CD: This is an incredible record with what could be described as a tragic flaw, which I think explains the widely disparate reviews I've seen it receive already. It's vicious, abrasive, has pummeling rhythms, variety in tempo, unpredictable transitions and song construction, plenty of power and bitter emotion and raw fury expressed in the songs, hard-hitting mix, appropriately angry and alienated lyrics, with a political analysis to them as well... the controversial spot is the mix. The Rubbish Heapers went for a totally overloaded, distorted, unbearably ugly mix for this record, so that even the mix would communicate the bitterness, like listening to static on the radio at maximum volume. It's a powerful effect they've achieved, but it really is overwhelming, and it can make all the different parts in all the different songs sound similar and perhaps emotionally one-dimensional, because the listener's first response throughout is to the assault of the mix. I'm into it, personally—it's disconcerting, and I like that. But I have to listen hard, so the whole thing doesn't just over me and flow past like a sea of pure noise. This made the most sense blasted at four in the morning in the terminally slovenly room Jon used to live in, when we would slouch together in a bitter torpor of well-disguised idealism, waiting for the next explosion of inspiration to hit us. —b
Conspiracy, P.O. Box 269, 2000 Antwerpen 1, Belgium

Ruination "" 7": If I were to tell you that a band must have written, learned, and recorded all the songs on a 7" in one weekend, I would probably be insulting the band—but in this case, 1. I'm not insulting them, and 2. I'm not making it up. Ruination's whole project, they explained to me, is to do the whole writing/practicing/performing/recording thing with as little lost time as possible for each project—they have to, they all live hundreds of miles apart, spread between two different nations. Believe it or not, I think the approach works fine for them—the terror they must feel as they try to get the songs right for all time as they play them for the fifth time ever in the studio communicates itself to the listener as a desperate immediacy that usually is lacking from this kind of hardcore (yes, they're playing the gritty, rough straight-ahead stuff that Talk is Poison does so well and others do, well, OK).

They don't sound too loose, either, and although the recording itself could flatter them a tiny bit more (as the sleeve itself notes, the guitars seem to be absent from the mix, or at least unnecessarily reticent), that's not fundamentally important in their case. The lyrics range from the obvious old school stuff to more off-the-top-of-one's-head incoherent frustration, but that all works fine for them too, and they express all the ethics and attitudes that I love to see in bands. If this sounds like you'd like it, I'm sure you would—I do. —b
 try to contact them at the +/- records address

Russian School of Ballet “-” CD:
 Simultaneously lighthearted and furious... I think this is that “power violence” stuff I’ve heard so much about (though, to quote an old friend, “Most of these bands are neither powerful nor violent!”), from Brazil in this case.

but high-spirited use of the genre. Really nice, personable d.i.y packaging... hm, while the Portuguese lyrics are easy to read, the English translations are so poorly typed that I fear I’ve been the victim of some anti-imperialist sabotage. All the same, I can make out that the R.S.B. are snotty, anti-imperialist, suspicious-to-say-the-least of U.S. politics and culture, insulted by the brainwashing attempts of the media, and unimpressed by more-revolutionary-than-thou radicals types. The whole CD goes by quite fast. —b
L-Dopa, C.X. Postal 1860, C.E.P. 80011-970, Curitiba, P.R. Brazil

Sangraal “Wolves of Armageddon” 12”: Fuck, I’d forgotten how good this record was, until I listened to it after trying to do reviews of 500 other records. Well, unlike most of the bands out there, they’re not trying to imitate any-

a crowd riot that goes over the top. Sangraal don’t shy away from it, they plunge into it with animal fury, without pause or remorse, and it really makes for an unsettling experience even just listening to it—unless you’re ready to let yourself go, like the anonymous rioter who gets carried away and is no longer himself, smashing, striking, running and screaming. The lyrics are ridiculous metal fantasy (“terrible are the moons of Neptune, moons where fierce battles were fought... for three hundred years a great battle was fought between the spider people and I”), but the song titles have the needed poetry: “Plague Riders,” “Everlasting, World Without End,” “The Long-Haired Kings”... —b
Wicked Witch, P.O. Box 3835, 1001 AP Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Libertinagem, CDR and ‘zine: This is beyond a doubt one of the most important reviews in this ‘zine: first, because this is an amazing, incredible thing to come out of our community, and second of all because you probably won’t read about it anywhere else. The sheer idealistic ambitiousness of a project like this is itself inspiring, to those not easily intimidated—since this is the sort of thing that can easily come across as exclusive, elitist, etc. with the insider radical terminology and references. For those of us familiar with that little world, this is a wonderful thing—in it you can see the plagiarized words take on the new meanings that recontextualization offers in the most fortuitous cases, bringing dead clichés back to life as bombs and beating hearts. The men and woman that made up this group spent six months working feverishly to put together these fourteen songs and accompanying essays, organized a few remorselessly confrontational performances in their home country, then scattered the ashes of the past behind them and plunged immediately into other projects, a behavior that indicates the kind of values going on here: the centrality of the moment, of doing anything to get into the thick of what is happening, anything from the most terrifying of terrorist actions to the most “debauched” of sexual acts, the wildness of teenagers rampaging for the first time, smashing windows of the banks in newfound and brilliantly reasoned anarchist theory shared in whispers in the cafeteria at school before rushing home to have group intercourse in their vacationing parents’ beds... the poetry of transgression and transience, the passion that embraces life in its every form simply because it is more exciting than any kind of death, that sets fires for the joy of watching them burn and to hell with the consequences—the magical kingdom where nihilism ends at the foot of the tower of a hedonism that goes beyond itself to finally become a compassion and deep love for humanity and existence, in all its suffering and twisted triumph. The music is raw, daring, featuring the various voices of all the willful individuals involved (the woman’s voice reminds me of, say, Spitboy—her defiant, beautiful, uncompromising personality comes across even out of the CD player)... when they’re not working from their post-Fugazi punk approach, they’re exploring everything else—1984 samples, improvisations, an a capella song about theft. There’s soul here in a lot of the melodies and arrangements, and above all their enthusiasm and willingness to believe that whatever they feel like doing is right (a philosophical theory is worthless until it is demonstrated in musical practice) simply carries the day. The ‘zine itself is some of the most challenging, clearly- and cleverly-thought out material reviewed in this Inside Front, and it’s plenty thick with material in both Portuguese and English. This has been really important to me, helping me keep my romanticism and abandon, helping me lose my fear and above all the stupid, shortsighted notion that there is no one out there who can offer me more than I already know and feel. —b
Doublethink, Rua Nunes Vieira, 167, Belo Horizonte, MG 30350-120, Brazil

The duality of their approach is clear from the first seconds of the CD: it begins with a Russian dancing song, that quickly gains velocity, ending with a single, sung high note from a powerful baritone—the screamer comes in on the same note, excellent touch, and then they really get going. The mix is balanced in this order: really hoarse, screaming vocals (too loud), grainy bass guitar (louder than bass guitars usually get to be), thin, trebly guitar (quieter and weaker than it should have been), drums (sometimes I’m really not certain whether or not the drummer is playing). All that doesn’t really matter, though. If you can imagine it, some of the irrepressible spirit of early ‘80’s punk bands like Minor Threat comes across here, in their irreverent

body, or to impress anybody—just following their own crazy ideas whether or not they make sense to anyone else. Sangraal think they’re a black metal band, somehow (they’re desert black metal, just as the Norwegian bands are blizzard black metal...[?]), but they’re actually a filthy, messy, shit-wrecking punk band, always playing a little faster than they can handle, everything in a mess, the constant blastbeats and busy drum fills murky in the mix under the ragged guitars, the hissing, rasping vocals seething somewhere between hatred, disgust, disregard... violence is definitely in the air, scary, real violence, that disconnection between action and consequences, between human and human, that you feel in the instants of a brawl, a stabbing,

Scatha “Birth, Life, and Death” 12”: This comes out of the long tradition of British anarcho-punk that goes back to Antisect, but it’s significant because, first, it doesn’t sound like rehash, and, second, the ideas and values aren’t rehash. The lyrics, in fact, are some of the smartest I’ve seen in thirty record reviews; they begin from the standpoint of the pagan, tribal values that cultural imperialism has almost stamped out of their people (they’re Scottish Celts, I believe), singing some lines in Gaelic, and proceed to declare common cause with all other non-Western civilizations, going on to apply (what they consider to be) the perspectives and values of these various peoples to such modern problems as environmental destruction, fear of death, and homophobia

(they insist that in other cultures, those who refuse to stay within the limits of one gender were honored rather than vilified for this). The last song wisely rejects both the patriarchal image of god and power and the older matriarchal image which has gained currency again recently as a feminist reaction to it; Scatha sensibly assert that nature and everything that is holy have no gender, and that the conflict between God and Goddess is nothing more than egocentric human bullshit.

As for the music—it's pretty simple and straightforward, in the old punk tradition, but none of it has happened exactly this way before. They go for a recording that is clear rather than polished (probably the best kind), heavy guitars with chunky riffs but not very much metal in the mix (no solos!), deep roaring vocals with plenty of power. The songs tend to go forever, which after a while makes this a better record to have on in the background than to sit and listen carefully to. I could see these guys playing with the now disbanded By All Means, it would be a perfect match for a number of reasons. —b

Flat Earth, P.O. Box 169, Bradford, BD1 2UJ, U.K.

Season "7": At its best moments, this 7" is a torn-throated, bitterly beautiful lament, to be sung as acid rain falls upon you in the wilderness of industrial night. They're doing something quite similar to Fear is the Path to the Darkside, although their countrymen Headway also come to mind when I focus in on the wailing shrieks of their vocalist. Lyrics in French and English (perfect!), eloquently mourning the destruction of our environment and sense of self... beautiful packaging... plenty of music here for a 7"... great recording... thick emotional ambiance... with a little more individuality to set them apart, this band would definitely be among my favorites. —b

Stonehenge, Christophe Mora, 21 Rue des Broses, 78200 Magnanville, France

Severed Head of State 7": This brings to mind crowds of unshaven young women and men, wearing black rags and patches and spikes and political slogans, faces dirty from train hopping and squat repairing, waving their fists in the air, with bottles of beer or gasoline in their other hands—and, more impressively, it makes me excited about that kind of punk rock again, makes me celebrate it, fills me with the joy that I feel whenever the more superficial aspects of our musical traditions regain their power and freshness again. Lots of those Discharge bana nanana nanana riffs here, blast beats to spice things up, distorted roaring about the apocalypse of technocracy and apathy, and only one emotion expressed throughout all four songs (furious outrage), but there's a certain pleasure and even comfort I take in putting on a record like this, wanting

to wave my fist in the air too, hearing the resolve and conviction of two decades of d.i.y. political punk rockers expressed again in those trusty three chords. If this didn't have so much fucking energy, it couldn't do that—but it does, baby, it does. Great record. —b

Ebullition records—if you can't find this address somewhere, I'm surprised! Anyway, the band's address is 1012 Brodie St., Austin, TX 78704

Sharpeville "At the Late Hours" 12": It took me a few songs to realize that Sharpeville could qualify as "anarcho-punk" after all. In the first draft of this review I was describing them as "anarcho-punk from an alternate universe," because they're so original and unburdened by tradition in their application and pursuit of the anarcho-punk aesthetic that it actually *works* again. Yes, there are roaring vocals, but they don't remind me of anything else, exactly (a little like Neurosis' vocals, really); there are heavy guitars and drums and bass, but the mix is incredibly heavy, really

my blood... but we'll get what we deserve—thanks in advance!" I guess none of you kids listened to Axegrinder (a sort of updated anarcho-Amebix at the end of the '80's), but this goes next to that 12" in my record collection for mood and drama, and easily outclasses it for content. —b

Maximum Voice, Postfach 26, 04251 Leipzig, Germany

Shitlist "A Cold Slap of Reality" 7": More straightforward ranting and raging political punk from this label, this one with a few less '80's U.K. references in the music, and roaring vocals that are a little more constricted and staccato than most of the post-His Hero Is Gone crop. Hell, this could still be from the U.K. (I guess I'm thinking Cracked Cop Skulls or something); the lyrics are less general than they usually are in this genre—they seem to be personally directed, in most cases, at people the singer thinks are doing dumb things. The last song ("Pull the Plug") is my

Milemarker "Frigid Forms Sell" CD: Milemarker's determination to do something new has finally paid off in the form of their first really great record—a record that can stand outside the supposed continuum of "musical progress" (a capitalist myth if I ever heard one—not only do you need a new microwave and car every year, but the latest style of rock music, too) as a moving, emotional work in its own right. Given, they get there by recombining old elements in a new way—the spooky keyboard lines, tense rock riffs and emo melodies, yelling and singing vocalists... and like Refused before them, they turn to the inorganic world of techno music for leads on innovation in the live music they play. The first song begins with a purely techno piece: all bleeps and whirrs, the sound of robots talking amongst themselves. They cut it off in mid-bleep, to sing a song themselves, ambiguously posing as the robots-who-would-be-humans singing to the humans-become-robots (their cynical take on the audience-performer relationship). Their song, however, is suffused with a real tragic beauty—when the chorus rings out ("there's a product line... attached to every form of suicide") the last time, and the song ends with notes and chords of the most heartbreakingly smothered longing, I can feel tears well up in my eyes.

Considering the duality they've established in that chorus (death=consumerism, technology, etc.; life=...everything else?), you'd think they might spend the rest of the record exploring the alternative to that suicide, but it's not that simple. For the most part, the rest of the songs are as hopeless as the first one—the running theme is the chill of modern society ("frigid forms sell you warmth," "the ice age is coming," "cryogenic sleep," "the shipwreck survivors contemplate their icy tomb," from four different songs). There are two ways to look at this—either they're opting for the easy, predictable out of pessimism, hip cynicism, scenerist despair, which is as seductive as it is

pounding in a way I've never heard in the genre, and the amps have a different sound than anything I could trace back to Nausea; there are interludes and acoustic introductions to the songs, but nothing that's been done before; there are slow, dramatic parts like the early Amebix, but no imitation here. And the lyrics have no dogma or repetition in them, they're fucking awesome! It's the excellence of the lyrics that makes me really believe in these guys—they're poetic, thoroughly-thought out, just the mix of theory and threat and mourning: "the time somebody invented for rent is a legal term for theft; the world is a challenge for my love, to paint the blank with

favorite, by far, it has more raw energy and furious abandon than the others, and that helps to make it a real punk song, not just an exercise in genre-production and maintenance. —b

Fired Up! records, address above

Sickshine "Hissing Snake" CD: This starts out with a noise that sounds like a person is being slowly gagged early in the morning, for about thirteen seconds. Fuck, I don't know *what* that is. But soon it breaks into a Kilara-esque rolling heavy sludge distortion groove, but not as slow or powerful. Throughout the CD, Sickshine explores lots of different things:

slow sludge rock, fast metal riffs, noise, rap-core, scratching, singing, growling, sampling, a lot of parts that sound like Tupac Shakur, and soft lovely ballad guitar parts. Listening to the whole thing, most of this is really progressive and very interesting, and at times very weird. What at first seemed awkward now comes across as a passionate effort at communication. If you can't stand rap (this had a heavy, heavy dose of it), then don't dare listen to this. But if you can swallow it, then this is a very baffling attempt at the fusion of the countless musical (and non-musical) styles. Most of this is the singer(s) doing dynamic raps combined with screams and singing, while the other musicians do their thing. How the hell can I say this... there are some really great parts, and some other parts that just insult the potential of this band. I would guess that they had so much fucking fun making this CD. The more I listen to this, the more confused I get. I wish I had the lyrics to this, it would be understandable. The packaging

like this, because it's melodic and sappy emo-pop-punk stuff, reminiscent of Lifetime and Good Riddance, with gruffly-sung vocals a la Hot Water Music. I however, have a soft spot for this type of music, but only when it's very well done, which this record is. I get a very personable and sincere vibe from this, which is comforting in a way, as most of these types of bands seem to just be using the hardcore or independent music scenes as a stepping-stone to corporate rockstar-dom. And my opinion on bands playing forms of music that are not new, exciting and innovative is that as long as it is done very well, and thus stands out from the countless others doing the same thing, then it is worth it. So basically, I think this is a good record and a band that is doing what it's doing very well—plus they're from New Zealand, which for some reason I think is really cool. —n

Get Up & Go! / Marienstr. 2 / 76137 Karlsruhe, Germany

A cold wind blows past me, through me, like a wash of cymbals, and then the demonic melody begins again, approaching through the tunnel... —b

Coalition, P.O. Box 243, 6500 AE Nijmegen, Netherlands

Starfish Pool "Rituals for the Dying" 10: It's nice to hear something totally different coming out of the punk community: this is full-on electronic music. The first track begins very spare and distant, increasing slowly in rhythm and tension as new sounds are added one by one—by the heart of the song, a high-energy pulse has been constructed from the noise collage, and then the various threads are pulled out one by one, leaving a hum very different from the beginning of the song. That explains what happens, but it doesn't capture what it feels like to listen to this—something like receiving foreign messages, trying to decipher a pattern or meaning in them, feeling it inside but not being able to translate it into any

pathetic and boring, or else, Catharsis-like, they're trying not to offer any easy answers but rather to explore the breadth and depth of the problem before offering a glimmer of genuine hope at the end. [OK, admittedly, Catharsis wasn't the first to do this... the best example I can think of is Sartre in his finest book, *Nausea*.] The second to last song is the only one that suggests a solution (basically, subtle computer hacker workplace sabotage: "act like you belong until the final stage"). And while the last song is negative again, covering the way that Milemarker themselves are implicated in the culture/rebellion industry, that could just be a calculated reminder not to put your discontent back on the shelf when the CD is over.

So is that second to last track the white dove with the twig in its mouth, coming to our little Noah's Ark of humanity across the polar wasteland of a world flooded cold and clammy by four hundred years of the reign of global capitalism? I'm not sure—here's one of the problems: though this is a great record, the best parts are at the beginning, so by the last couple songs it's hard to tell if they're there on purpose or just as afterthoughts to fill out space. That song, musically one of the least exciting ones on the record, might just be less cynical due to an oversight.

And I'm sure Milemarker, in all their intellectual post-modern glory, would object to their record being read in terms of life- or death-affirming sentiments. "Believing in stuff is totally passé," they'd insist with an irony that didn't entirely undercut the statement—"we're just Making Art." So for a real insight into what's going on here, let's look at two of the songs that don't fit into the frigidity theme. The third and fourth tracks are what Milemarker calls "sex jams," although they pointedly aren't celebrations of sex at all: "we slide up, mechanically set," sings Dave in the first one, returning to the images of cold machinery—is that despite himself, or a deliberate attempt to make even sex seem unpleasant and ridiculous? I think what's going on at the bottom of all this is that, in the long-standing tradition of self-proclaimed tortured artists, Milemarker are expressing their affirmation of life by indulging their angst, ennui, and misgivings to an almost absurd degree. This isn't new in indie rock/punk circles at fucking all, but they're able to make it compelling again here for a few instants—the most gripping one being when, in the second "sex jam" (which works in metaphors of insect copulation), Al, who has been singing over and over "you ought to kick it to me, and then bite off my head," suddenly shrieks, maniacally, over a scream of similarly maniacal feedback: "that's the way the insects do it—EXOSKELETONS FILLED WITH FLUID!!!" and in that final phrase captures all the lascivious disgust with sex and embodiment itself that each of us has felt in the blackest moments of self-indulgence. —b

Lovitt, P.O. Box 248, Arlington, VA 22210

consists of a sandwich bag with a folded cover and a CD stuck in the middle. The cover is a piece of silk-screened fluorescent yellow cardstock, and features a snake on the front and some pretty shitty doodles on the back. Seriously, this looks like what I used to draw on my notebook when I was bored in class... in third grade. The inside is blank, and a lot of the writing on the back is indecipherable. This CD will be hit or miss with most. —WG
Swamp Suckas Get Dissed; 917 Olive St.; No. Little Rock, AR 72114.

Sommerset "More Songs" CD: I'm not sure how much a lot of the "typical" IF readers will

Stack "Selbst find ungsgruppe" 6: I am in a sewer pipe, underground, the ceiling just high enough for me to stand, trying to make my way through the blackness with a weak flashlight, scared out of my wits. The poor acoustics of the concrete explain the slightly muffled, bass-heavy sound, which emphasizes the terror of being trapped here in this small space with the air running out and the black water running over my feet, rather than detracting from the music in any way. The screaming is of a fellow-sufferer somewhere nearby, losing his mind in the darkness; the music speeds up with the beating of my heart, the stench of refuse, claustrophobia closing in.

familiar language. The b-side approaches in a similar way, but with a steadily beating bass thump at the bottom of it, a slightly more conventional touch—all the same, I don't think this is made for any kind of conventional dance club. —b

Conspiracy, P.O. Box 269, 2000 Antwerpen 1, Belgium

Stifled Cries "" 7: Gorgeous hand-made packaging, with silk-screened silver and black snake artwork (fulfilling the insistence of one of my comrades that d.i.y. projects must also have a d.i.y. aesthetic all their own, rather than imitating the glossy absurdity of mainstream

products). Musically this band explores the terrain that Neurosis, Acme, and Rorschach opened up almost a decade ago, which the more “avant garde” hardcore bands have been charting ever since. They use spiky, jumpy, impatient rhythms to maintain the energy, roaring vocals to deliver the pain, hold back on the metal flair in favor of a more rugged, raw-hearted atmosphere, and threaten that they will be capable of stranger things next time by playing with saxophones and static noise between songs. There’s drama in the screams and sudden transitions, and the creative packaging combined with the developing creativity of their music makes this record a little self-contained aesthetic environment, as 7”s should be. At one of the high points, the music evokes a procession marching down an ancient church corridor lit by candles, dragging a prisoner to an unspeakable fate. —b
Conspiracy, address nearby

Stratego s/t 12” EP: Wow, instead of being excited by sexy packaging and let down by mediocre music like practically every other review I’ve done here, this band followed through big time. This fuckin’ rocks hard, rock being the key word, because it is not hardcore or punk or metal. Imagine a cross between At The Drive In and The Get Up Kids, then throw in some subtle Refused vibes, and you might come something close to Stratego. The music is melodic and catchy as all hell, and manages to never get boring as it moves with lots of unpredictable energy from jumpy, slightly heavy grooves to subdued melody. The vocals are great too, ranging from a shout at the crazier parts to harmonizing crooning at the softer parts. Lyrics are intelligently poetic, dealing in an un-clichéd way with personal and relationship issues, and the layout is fresh and inventive, with a Morse code theme running throughout. I love the label for including an extra insert with an inspiring little tribute/explanation of Bruce Lee and revolution (no, really!). The high point of this record for me came in the first song, which illustrates compassion beautifully with the lyrics, “I take no comfort knowing that you’re no better off than me/I take no pleasure knowing this/I take no comfort seeing you struggling everyday/Just to reach things I take for granted.” Rock on, man. —n
Dim Mak (address in Ninedayswonder review)

Suicide Nation “A requiem for all that ever mattered” 12”: This comes on, and Matt asks: “are they from Europe”? No, they’re from Arizona, proceeding from the tradition of West coast destroyers that I trace back to Gehenna, and I really loved their 7” last issue (it had a raw, devastated sound, like early Systral)—but this sounds something more like a top-speed German metal/hardcore band influenced by (the black-metal-influenced)

Undying. I guess they’ve polished their metal up enough to “graduate” to the rank of full-fledged metal band. I personally feel like metal flourishes and theatrics come across as more real with a little punk roughness, and I miss the rugged quality of their last record, but for the genre (throat-hanging-out-the-mouth-in-strips vocals, lots of blast beats, double-picked melodic metal riffs, classical guitar interludes) this is perfectly executed. The songs are well-written, the musicianship and recording superb, the bloody/religious-referenced lyrics confidently constructed if not entirely original... Actually, fuck it, this is a great record (and the sincere writing about how to keep the punk community supportive inside and dangerous outside only helps). The only problem here is that so many other bands are doing this, that every time the ‘Nation plays a great riff or blastbeat I have to fight myself not to associate it with every metal riff and blastbeat recorded by bands of this genre in the past three years. An excellent example of why musical innovation, though not essential in any fundamental way, can help a band shake off the inertia of their times. My conclusion: if you *haven’t* been listening to much metal/hardcore in the last few years, this record will probably do a lot for you. —b
King of the Monsters, 8341 E. San Salvador, Scottsdale, AZ 85258 U.S.A., or: Scorched Earth Policy, P.O. Box 3214, 76018 Karlsruhe, Germany

Supersleuth “...and still it beats” 12”: I got a hand-screened pre-cover for this record, but I think it’s classier than any real cover could be, personally. Supersleuth take the crystallized, mummified legacy of “old school hardcore” and disassemble it, putting it back together in new ways, with drumrolls and transitions where they never were before, the riffs arranged differently. They concentrate on slower, melodic parts, rather than full-speed-ahead simplicity. The vocalist does a mix of old-school yelling and singing, and sometimes sounds like he’s struggling a bit, but the music is all about struggle, so it doesn’t seem out of place. There’s an Apocalypse Now sample before the third song that surprised me a little bit in this context. This music has a certain tension in it, maybe a little wistfulness, and a raw quality that makes it seem really sincere (all of which also comes across in the lyrics, too), so it gets the go-ahead from me. —b
Underestimated, P.O. Box 13274, Chicago, IL 60613

Talk is Poison “7”: This band has absolutely everything they need to play this long-lived style of straightforward speedy punk without being held back by history: a worked-up, carried-away vocalist, unpredictable songs, excellent playing, gritty mix, high guitar leads here and there (you know, Discharge), just the

right mix of pounding intros and breakdowns with top-velocity verse/chorus parts. I don’t think I learned or felt anything new from the lyrics, but I didn’t have any objections to any of them either. Great high-protein punk rock here, you can pick up those rarer vitamins and minerals from other records, if you’re still missing something after this. —b
Prank... address below

That’s All She Wrote “” CD: Well, here’s another experiment, for you adventurous types. I’d say this CD, plus the Libertinagem, Text, and Countdown to Putsch releases (and a John Zorn CD or two, if you insist), would make for a good starting point for the next forays into broadening the horizons of hardcore and music in general. This is basically a grindcore/power violence record with jazz and dada pretensions. The jazz comes out in the saxophone blowing during the quieter moments, before the blastbeats and bark-bark-growl vocals and spasmodic guitars hit again—as well as being present in the free jazz aesthetic of their less scripted songwriting moments. The dada comes into play in the nonsensical collage aesthetic of the packaging, lyrics, and texts, which are all hand-constructed, unsettling in their disorder but filled with material that could serve as the launching pad for any number of brilliant ideas in the patient listener: here science, child psychology, personal confessions and accounts, radical ideas, Beat cut-up-and-paste chaos all come together to create a non-linear, admirably non-didactic, ultimately fragmentary mess from which the listener/reader had better deduce her own conclusions. —b
45 Wilder Lane, Leominster, MA 01453

Thumbs Down s/t 7”: Oooooohhh...silver and blue ink...sexy .logo...clever use of thumbs down theme on 7” labels...record label’s logo is a diagram showing how to make a Molotov cocktail and throw it at a police station.... Oh wait, I almost forgot the music. Well, its standard late-90s “traditional” or “old school” hardcore...all the usual gang back-ups, some pretty standard mosh breakdowns, and some fairly run-of-the-mill lyrics making for a less than exciting listen for me. I can see a lot of kids liking this though, because it is really well played and executed—there are actually a few interesting little change-ups and hooks—and I can smell an energetic, posi live show from here...but it’s just not something I can get into having heard so many other bands also doing this stuff. Insert last sentence of Brethren review here. —n
Firestorm / Italiëlei 58/9 / 2018 Antwerpen, Belgium

Trephine “” CD: There are definitely common threads tying together the music of the various Detroit hardcore bands over the past few years.

Earthmover temporarily united a few different tendencies, and when it split into the old-fashioned fast hardcore of Bloodpact and the polished, chunky mosh of Walls of Jericho, you could see two of those tendencies crystallized. A third pole of the Detroit sound is represented here by Trephine's very metal approach. There are countless stops at which one guitar will lead off with a complicated metal melody before all the others join in, chromatic chords, chunky mosh parts and double picking galore, even a purely acoustic segment in the fourth song. The two vocalists have plenty of enthusiasm, but need to polish things up a tiny bit to distinguish themselves from the legions of other screams and groaners. The song titles are pretty good—"Pat Robertson in a Lake of Fire" is a sort of revenge fantasy used to illustrate the band's avowed atheism, and "Nor Everyone can be Jack Kerouac" expresses the desperation of watching one of your friends disintegrated by addiction. Watch out for spelling errors in the liner notes, by the way, my frendz. There's a fucking Gorilla Biscuits cover at the end, to undercut everything I've said about metal here, in which one of the singers suddenly sounds about ten years old. —b

+/- records, address all around

and photo collages, all done by the band. My only complaint is that it leads to an overall feel of being very disjointed, confused and random. —n

OHEV / 1500 NW 15 Ave. #4 / Boca Raton, FL 33486, USA

Two Day Theory "Modern slaves in a world of guns and profits rise fight" 7": 2D.T. has one of those vocalists who sometimes sounds out of breath, and that's representative of what's going on here in general: no polish or pretension, probably not a whole lot of practice either, but enthusiasm and honesty and serious intentions. Well, now that I listen closer, it's not just one guy, there are a couple people shouting in the background too. This record reminds me of Struggle, Downcast, that whole school of idealistic, accusation-wielding political hardcore from the beginning of the '90s—the first side ends with everybody angrily shouting "in the name of God—in the name of America" over and over. They mention the oft-quoted 500 years figure for the time during which Europeans have been oppressing other cultural/racial groups at one point, and they make it clear in their writing that they're out to figure out how to extricate themselves from the whole mess and start

you grow up, your heart... dies."), and they add some background melodic vocals at one point that add something tenser than those usually do. There are acoustic parts, and sudden transitions; the slow, wandering, centerless songs can get a little monotonous, but I think they're on to something. They're also not dumb (thank god), so the enigmatic lyrics (which range from a lament over our destruction of mother earth to the interpersonal struggles that complicate life) interest me rather boring me to tears. —b

Dead Alive, P.O. Box 97, Caldwell, NJ 07006 USA

Unison "Sunday Neurosis" cassette: This is top-notch dynamic hardcore from war-torn Eastern Europe, with well-constructed songs and plenty of variety (from all out hardcore speed and fury to jazzy acoustic improvisations, with mournful guitar leads—the best part—throughout), all executed with confidence. Eighteen songs, all lengthy, from two different recordings. The singer's voice is the only thing I could like better, his choked up yelling is emotive but lacks the total release I'd like to hear from him. The recording is perfect, clear as a bell, absolutely nothing to be desired... and the lyrics! They capture the

Point of No Return "Centelha" CD: I just received this today, the day I thought I was finished with these reviews, and it will be the newest (and the last, damn it!) record I review for this magazine. I wouldn't even touch it, burned out as I am right now, except that it's so fucking good, and since it's from Brazil all you Europeans and North Americans probably won't hear about it otherwise. This is the most important "vegan straight edge hardcore band" I can think of right now: they bring new life to the genre in every way. Their music has the bursting energy (and, yes, aggression) that this style needs to work—stylistically, they're occupy the same territory that Timebomb did during their metal years, mixing the post-Earth Crisis metal mosh with deathmetal devices, pushing the formula as far as it will go with top notch riffs and transitions, and recording quality, and playing. Three vocalists, all roaring all out, all with distinctive voices. Their songs are about real subjects, worthy of anger—when they scream "true 'til death!" they are referring to the guerrillas who robbed banks to fund the anticapitalist struggle in Brazil a few decades ago. Their perspective, from outside the ivory walls of first world hardcore, is also worth a thousand hardcore bands from Buffalo, for anyone in the U.S.A. who wouldn't get to see things from this side otherwise. Extensive explanations to go with the lyrics, all in Portuguese, but I'm sure if you don't speak that language they have translations available. All five stars for this one. —b

Liberation, Caixa Postal 4193, Sao Paulo, SP 01061-970, Brazil

Twenty-third Chapter "An Eden for the Machines" CD/LP: Well, first of all this album is a little old by now, by most people's standards for reviews, and the band has since broken up, but as I will explain that is a good thing in a way. 23-C play crusty and gritty as fuck political metallic hardcore/punk with touches of grindcore, and I love it. This stuff is angry, morbid (but intelligent too), and desperate as hell, something I listen to for some strange kind of masochistic comfort after a long stressful day being frustrated by school and work and the bullshit of modern society. The story of this band makes their recordings all the more tragic and representative of the emotions they convey—one of their original members committed suicide, and their eventual breakup is like the rancid, rotten icing on the cake of shit that life can sometimes be. The artwork on this album is also great; it's a whole bunch of comic book style drawings

working towards an egalitarian, unlimited world. —b

Tree of Woe, 18311 Arch Street, Little Rock, ARK. 72206

Underprivileged Nation "...For we are many" one-sided 12": Good marks for originality, which is pretty rare for records so far this year. The record begins with a long, slow journey through a spare, desolate landscape, the Bible verses from which the title comes being read in the background (don't be scared off—it's pretty clear they're not interested in Christianity here), before the spastic, minimalist hardcore punk chaos begins. The recording could be a little more powerful, but everything comes across as honest and unpretentious, and perhaps the recording is a part of that too, who knows. They snagged one of the only good samples I've heard in a while (a young woman, very serious, imparts: "when

tragedy of real life war and strife with sensitivity, poetry, tragedy, incisive insight—for example, "a priest stands in front of the mirror, and his reflection shows a businessman in uniform. And the salvation churchbells ring, but God doesn't hear the difference between the bells and the police sirens." Another song title inverts an old phrase about duty, to ask the real question: *But why wouldn't the State die for me?* —b

We're in this alone records, Srdjan Stankovic, Veljka Petrovica 12, 21000 Novi Sad, Yugoslavia

Unkind "Plant the Seed" 10": Fast, angry punk, coming from the heavier side of Finnish anti-authoritarian punk tradition. They have their own personality—there are slower parts, sometimes they have broad, open chords on top of the bana-nanana guitars, and the songs are written well. You can hear the vocalist

working hard to get the growls out; he doesn't have the strongest voice in the genre, but he makes up for it in effort. Plenty of packaging: nice cardboard cover, lyric booklet, poster. The lyrics rage simply against participating in the system of apathy and oppression, against the fur industry, against police brutality, pollution, consumerism, and for what they call "the one true law worth fighting for: the instinct to survive." —b

Fight, Hikivuorenkatu 17 D 36, 33710 Tampere, Finland

Vieja Escuela "La Mejor Eleccion" CD: Let me preface this by saying I've never really liked any "oldschool" hardcore—I liked some of that stuff when it was still "modern," and as soon as it became "retro" I started being bored, and then really bored, and then bored to fucking tears by it (and even then, it was only the mid-'90's...). There have been notable exceptions, including Final Exit (though I'm not sure if they count), Trial (maybe they don't count either?), hm, early Mainstrike (come on, you assholes, that counts!), I dunno what else... anyway, point being, often you have to go far from the birthplace of an older style to find people for whom it is fresh enough that they can play it with fresh enthusiasm and energy, and I have definitely found that in Vieja Escuela. They make this oldschool youth crew straight edge shit so awesome all over again, it's ridiculous! Yes sir, there's so much excitement in this music again that the whole genre makes sense to me again, gang backing vocals and pointed fingers and stage dives and all (OK, the athletic gear is still all wrong, but these guys aren't really into that either, so it's cool). When I saw them play, it was the same adrenaline-charged mayhem of furious youth crowd mosh madness that this music suggests, demands, awesome. The lyrics are in Spanish, but thanks to the simplicity of the straight edge hardcore tradition, I can still understand them (even though my Spanish is less than remedial)—roughly translated, some of the song titles are: "Brotherhood," "Without Cruelty," "Diversion or Degradation?" You can take it from there. The only unexpected thing I've found on the whole record is a strange little techno buildup on the song "Resist," but of course that gets my approval too. This one gets five stars as possibly the only youth crew record of the last five years that matters. —b

Firme y Alerta Discos (I'll give you illiterate youth crew nerds one guess what that translates to!), C.C. 1817 Correo Central (1000), Buenos Aires, Argentina

Voorhees "Fireproof" 7": Voorhees always specialized in no-bullshit, straight-to-the-point hardcore, and that's what they offer here. This could have come out any time in the last fifteen years, and been equally relevant

(for anyone who likes Negative Approach, that is!). A more recent comparison could be "Systems Overload" Integrity, with the rough, simple mid-to-up-tempo hardcore, and rough, roaring vocals. The bottom line for me is that I like Voorhees—their music has a certain power to it, they wear their ugly hearts on their sleeves, they're good folks—even if they sometimes pull some sketchy shit (like naming a song "more violence in hardcore," and not printing the lyrics...), and I don't actually put their records on much (OK, who am I fooling here, I've had neither a record player nor a place to even listen to music for a year and a half now, but it's not Voorhees that I miss most). When I was in England last, their singer played me a recording of one song, not on this record, that was incredible, though. I wonder where I could find that. —b

Chainsaw Safety, P.O. Box 260318 Bellerose, NY 11426-0318

Word Salad "Death Match 2000" CD: For some reason, I expected this to be more groove-oriented, like Damad, but it's entirely all-out punk/metal in the tradition that spans from Antisect to His Hero Is Gone, with proportions about two to one in favor of double-picking and blast beats over bana-nanana post-Discharge/Nausea riffs. I would call this grindcore, but it has an urgency that can't be faked, something that grindcore is not known for. The vocalist sounds like a furious frog sputtering in a hot frying pan, the quadruple-time drums sound like a train running out of control overhead, and in each one of the twenty songs there is at least one moment when I simply can't believe how fast and tight they are playing at once. In that respect, it reminds me of "Reign in Blood" Slayer, actually—that overwhelming feeling of adrenaline surging through the veins like a tsunami, driving all in its path before it. The record ends and I discover I haven't remembered to breathe since it came on. No, it never lets up on the accelerator enough to lose my attention, although it takes a strong stomach to want forty minutes of this stuff. This might be analogous to what Napalm Death was for some of us in the late '80's, I guess. As for lyrics... well, I'll reprint one song in its entirety here, as Inside Front is known for (obnoxiously) doing: "ageless, raceless, classless, sexless murder." Yep, that one's called "Indiscriminate Murder." Fun, but dumb. Some of the other lyrics are just a little tiny bit more profound, but what isn't? —b

Prank, address easy to come by

The Year of Our Lord "The Frozen Divide" CD: Something bizarre happened when I went to review this CD. I didn't realize that I had put the disc into my CD changer along with Mozart's "Eine Kleine Nachtmusik", so when the Mozart track started playing, I thought "Cool! They sampled Mozart!" After

about a minute I realized what had happened. It did take me a full minute, even with the Mozart CD case in full view. This proves that I have an IQ on the same level as a moth or kitchen sponge, and it is a wonder that I can discern which appendages are my fingers, let alone type these words. Regardless...this The Year of Our Lord is a goddamn excellent CD. Think apocalyptic black metal, and then think of it being played by Americans and not by Swedish corpse-painted sword wielding maniacs. I know, it is impossible to imagine. Your brain just exploded even trying to think of it. "But Greg," you argue in vain, "Americans can't play keyboards! The guy from Bon Jovi already tried it, and failed miserably." Oui, mon cheri, I agree with the second part of your statement, but must rebut the first half. This CD features a full-apocalyptic sound, and the keyboard type sounds on it are what add that element to the disc. The sound overall is symphonic with the keyboards, and I fully believe now that Bon Jovi as a band would have gone much further if that jerk off keyboard "player" had taken lessons from The Year of Our Lord. Basically, The Year of Our Lord could eat Bon Jovi for breakfast and spit out small chunks of stone washed jeans with a demonic laugh. The songs on this disc bring you one step closer to the apocalypse, and reassure you that this would be as ample a soundtrack as any for that event, whenever it should arrive. The closest parallel I can draw is of the At the Gates "Slaughter of the Soul" CD, but played with all of the members under possession by demons. I think this CD is a compilation of earlier previously released songs, so be sure to check with the label before forking over your cash. I am pretty sure that the songs here were re-recorded even if they were previously released, so it is still very worth your while even if you have heard the band already. Layout and lyrics are both excellent. The CD comes without a jewel box in a super heavy glossy cardstock folding cover. Looks great. Any band which uses the word "algorithmic" in each of two different songs will always catch my attention, but to add to that such phrases as "this frozen divide of sanguine skies" and "diastolic murder comes with every choking laugh" and I become a fan for life. Great job here. —JUG

Lifeforce Records; PO Box 04011 Leipzig, Germany; cartel@bigfoot.com; www.carteldistribution.com

Agathocles/Deadmocracy split 12": Agathocles recorded their side of this record on a four track in their practice space, and it sounds it: rough, overloaded grindcore, with the growly vocals characteristically too loud (and distorted, sometimes even sounding like they have a flanger effect on them)... they have the growling bass (when it plays by itself

and you can hear it), straightforward old-fashioned grind songs, and negative/political lyrics your would expect. It's all pretty monotonous to me, but I guess that's the aesthetic here. Deadmocracy are a hundred times more interesting from their first note—they're tight and serious about what they're doing (bringing Assuck to my mind), unlike their record-mates, and that combined with their energy and better songs makes it possible for them to rescue the anarcho-grind genre from the wholesale brush-off I'd given it after hearing the first side. They suffer from a mastering disaster that makes their side sound extremely bass-heavy and muffled, but a little fucking with the E.Q. on the stereo and everything's all set. I really like what they're doing here—it's not the first time a band has raised grind to an artform, but when I'm listening, it doesn't matter. They actually have a song that explic-

second song begins ominously again, with dirty guitar chunks that growl like an angry dog, and when they proceed into the song proper I decide that I like everything about them except their transitions. If they could get the parts of these songs to hold together tighter, this would be an awesome—they certainly can create a scary, tense atmosphere, their vocalist is ready to go, too, their recording is clear and yet gritty at once, their riffs and arrangements are awesome. The Submerge side comes in with plenty of threatening drama, too, and builds up, suddenly counting off on the high hat and getting going fiercely. They too have a great, ugly recording and plenty of intensity. Their first song is an assault on the Christian system of guilt that has manifested itself physically in the form of prisons. This is near the top of its class in the world of split 7"s this issue. —b

like here are the lyrics: they're way too vague and "artistic" to be anything but a bunch of silly jargon to those who didn't write them...although I can faintly detect some intelligent socio-political observations beneath all the confusion, which is promising, if not frustrating. But I can say that BUS put on a great live show, during which they sometimes explain what the hell they're screaming about in between songs. —n
Snuff Records / PO box 5117 / CH-1214, Geneva 11, Switzerland

Cable Car Theory/I, Robot split 7": When C.C.T. are at their best here, they're playing a tense, constantly changing melodic hardcore with throaty screaming and occasional sung notes over it, plus jumpy, busy drumming, that expresses desperation and drive at once. The first comes in fucking rocking, and keeps

Sysral "Black Smoker" CD: The thing that struck me when I first heard this is that these guys had the audacity to release a CD that plays at the wrong fucking speed. You can hear, not just from the sludgy mess of the guitars but also from the drums, which are totally flat and strange sounding, that they recorded it at normal speed, then slowed the master tape down for the transfer to CD. What the fuck! I guess they thought that would make this sound more "heavy, duuuude," but it just muffles everything. Musically, this is the kind of post-deathmetal rock'n'roll that is trendy right now—Entombed does it well, these guys not so well. The vocals don't fit very well with the music, especially when you read the lyrics along with them—they seem to have been added as an afterthought. As you might have guessed by now, this totally breaks my heart, to hear a CD like this from a band that recorded one of my all-time favorite albums a few years back. Their whole thing now is that they're rockers, they're headed straight for the top (some lyrics: "I knew that somewhere along there would be girls, the crown would be handed to me"), they don't care about anything, that they just want to rock—well, whatever, coming from a band that did so much influential and amazing innovating before, this just doesn't rock, it sounds like all the songs were written in one day (and a pretty uninspired day, at that). I guess if this was a demo from a new band I'd say it had some potential, since a little of their dramatic, dark atmosphere is still there, but that's all that remains. The lyrics are obnoxious in their childish nihilism ("Reduce words to a state of mind—I don't need to apologize for just having a damn good time" is as eloquent as they get, the rest is about rocking 'til they die and so on)...you know, a band doesn't have to be political to be cool, of course (in fact what was so touching about Sysral's 10" was that it wasn't committed politically—they were openly struggling with the doubts we all have, but don't admit [especially not the "political" ones among us]), and it was powerful in its honesty), but what's going on here that fucks them up is that, having turned their back on anything "political" or even topical, they feel so defensive towards those who remain "political" that all they can do is react against them with this tripe and drivel. Pathetic. Do I sound like I'm getting carried away? Check this out: the lyrics to the second to last song, "Worldmaster," are simply a list of which nations won the World Cup in football championships over the last thirty four years. This, from the band whose last record ended with the shrieked, pained words "another life just ended—who cares?" Who cares, indeed. I guess Sysral have found a way to solve the problem of how to deal with the tragedy that so affected them before: make yourself so dumb, you forget about it. For the rest of us, dealing with that tragedy will be a little harder now, without them. —b
Edison records, a subdivision of the Very distribution conglomerate empire

itly tells Shelter to take their Krishna "consciousness" out of the hardcore scene (this was recorded just after Shelter cashed in with a Latin American tour), another one called "Why work?" ...that should give you a basic idea where they're coming from. The lyrics to this record come in Portuguese and English—right on! —b

Out of Step, Fernando Nascimento, R. XV de Agosto 525, Santos, Sao Paulo 11082-320 Brazil

Ananda/Submerge "the dead bird e.p." split 7": Ananda begin with a guitar harmonic arrangement that is simultaneously hauntingly beautiful in melody and ugly in the fearsome growl of the bass and guitar chunks, then lose some of that power with a transition that doesn't flow well to a faster part. Their

Shogun, Phil Keiffer, 39 rue du Mont d'Arene, 51100 Reims, France

Born Under Saturn/Shora split 7": Two songs by each of these very similar, very kick ass bands, on a ridiculously thick and heavy slab of gray Swiss vinyl makes for an awesome 7". Each band plays that spastic, super chaotic and heavy grindish type hardcore with crazy screamed vocals, but Shora wins with me for their sludgy, even heavier (perhaps down-tuned?) take on this style. Both recordings are top notch, and the layout is really weird and interesting computer-manipulated photography. I love how two bands from different continents (BUS are from USA, Shora from Switzerland) can get together and share music and resources on a release, it illustrates an important concept. The only thing I didn't

going, just increasing the energy, until... they go into a more melodic part, and from there just back off on the energy, it's too bad. The sample at the beginning seems sort of unrelated to the music, by the way, guys. I, Robot are going all out when they kick in from the acoustic intro, great shot-out shrieking vocals, strange hypnotic rhythms, jerky transitions, enough confidence in their wild delivery to carry me wherever they go. It's not the most classic, original music ever, but it has its own personality, it's fucking solid. They too, add quieter, melodic singing parts like C.C.T. does every once and a while (and as in the former case, these are sometimes the weakest moments). —b

Immigrant Sun, P.O. Box 150711, Brooklyn, NY 11215

Cable Car Theory/Realign split 7": C.C.T. concentrates more on the melodic parts here, but they still have the tense, constantly-shifting style that characterizes them, and they throw in some little blastbeat parts for more energy and unpredictability. Maybe the mastering or something is a little different here, because I think I liked their other mix/recording (on the other split 7") more, but this is clear and strong enough. The third song is a bit of a farce, it never really gets going, then ends in them shaking a tambourine and singing sardonically. I think it was supposed to be an attack on women like Courtney Love for not being good role models, judging from the lyrics (which never get sung, most of them)—in contrast, they extol the Lilith Fair rock tour, as "one of the best-selling events in rock history." That's *herstory*, guys—or is it? Can we point to the marketing of our feminism as an advance, or is it just more commodification of the progress we've made? And is it really cool to blame women like Courtney, who are doing what people in the Occupied Territory have always done (play along and try to survive), for the way the sexist media uses their images to sell unhealthy roles? Anyway... Realign plays a similar take on the melodic hardcore tradition, but less jumpy, fewer transitions (there is a double bass part at one point, that's unusual), and the vocalist speaks when he's not screaming, instead of singing. Their second song has a couple breaks with some good guitar melody arrangements, that was the high point of their side for me. —b

Voice of Life, P.O. Box 1137, 0470 Leisnig, Germany

Cameron/Bastard in Love split 7": Here Cameron goes back and forth between a heavy, modern European metal/hardcore attack, and more experimental breaks (a la Refused, perhaps); then, to bring in the second song, they cut to a piano and a few effects-laden guitar chords, before going back to the heavy metal (they even employ Judas Priest harmonies on the guitars) interspersed with nontraditional breaks. They're looking for a way out of the closed formula of the hardcore world that bore them, but on this recording they're not sure which lead to take and follow. That doesn't prevent the music from being compelling (mostly when they're playing the metal, which has already been through the testing-and-development process), and nor do the occasionally bombastic vocals. The lyrics and explanations are smart and politically conscious, dealing with economic imperialism. Bastard in Love have a more raw, straightforward recording and punk rock approach, making for a strange combination on this split 7". They can do what they're doing quite well, and I prefer this to the pop punk stuff that tends to address the same

emotions (self-doubt, lost relationships, etc.) in a much glossier, more phony way. —b
Moo Cow, P.O. Box 616 Madison, WI 53701

Cave In/Children split 7": Cave In appears here with a song from "Until Your Heart Stops" remixed as a techno song, with drum and guitar loops, distorted and flanged vocals, deep club bass, all reminiscent of the '80's techno scene (I think of the good Ministry years, Front 242, the contemporaries of Skinny Puppy). It's a fascinating experiment, though it's over quite quickly, as is their side of the 7". Children come in rocking, like an European metal/hardcore AC/DC, and then kick into gear to play some really powerful screaming hardcore that doesn't sound like any of the 2000 other bands in the genre. After a couple minutes, unexpectedly, they too throw in some crazy electronic noises, and

German bands usually have with a bass that is sometimes overloaded), they actually have unique songwriting going for them. I'm interested in what they're doing. I wish there was enough of their music here to get a better feel for it. Their side ends with a long stretch of feedback and sound decay, as it becomes increasingly clear that the sample in the background (in Italian) is something like a fascist addressing a cheering mob. Costa's Cakehouse surprised me by coming in with a lot of screaming and grind, then cutting to an energetic acoustic part with a Santana solo over the top, before going back to the busy hardcore punk. There's a tension in a lot of what they do, when the music is understated and it feels like something is about to explode. When they do explode, it could be a little harder (and if it was, this would be truly excellent)—for example, their vocalist has what

Text "CD: I got this CD in the mail from a friend just as we were finishing the reviews. Hold on, let me begin again. I am in love with a young man called Jon. When we are together, we feed ravenously off each other's courage and creativity. We can transform any environment into one of wild liberation and drama, danger, epic romance, just by vaulting into it and struggling to outdo each other. We dare each other to get crazier and crazier with our self-indulgent flourishes and flights of fancy. When I'm with him, everything feels weightless, like I could leap up and land in any world, any time. This CD arrived, and as both of us have been inspired by the work of some of the people involved in this band before, we threw it on the player in the house we'd occupied for the task of answering mail together and planning world domination. And it was the perfect soundtrack: the sounds of young people springing arrogantly out of the confines of genre, speeding across a landscape of genres, zooming from one to the next, kicking up soil behind them to obscure the boundaries and mix the nutrients of one genre with the others, with the same disregard as a gang of teenagers trespassing for its own sake on a Saturday night (but with something else, too, a monomaniacal attention to detail and proficiency, handling everything with an egomaniacal mastery...)—and thus capturing the essence of a certain kind of freedom that lurks in music like this: the realization (which can only be expressed by demonstration) that the rules taught to you (and hammered home through years and years of listening to bands that "play" by them, until you can't imagine anything coming after the third chorus but the moshy breakdown) are illusory, that the musicians can do ANYTHING at all at any moment. And once you realize that the rules of music are illusions, it becomes clear that ALL rules must

shift gears into a tense but understated dance music bass line, before proceeding into a third movement of what is swiftly becoming a really amazing song. By the end of one listen, I'm convinced: they fucking rock, in the best sense of the term. Everything they do in this song sounds new and original and self-assured, the energy level never drops out of the red (even though they go on a lot longer than Cave In), this shit makes me want to thrash around and study their chord progressions and, most of all, see them do this live. Right on! —b
Mosh Bart, Lepillet Loic, 28 rue du Puit Mauger, 35000 Rennes, France

Costa's Cakehouse/Heartside split 7": Heartside are playing metal/hardcore like many bands in Europe right now, but they don't sound like anyone else, really... it's not just the recording (a little rougher than those

sounds like a strong voice, but I think if he pushed it a bit more... —b
Get Up and Go, Nanouk de Meijere, Marienstr. 2, 76137 Karlsruhe, Germany

Dead Thirteen/Down Foundation split 7": Dead Thirteen start with such a deep, ugly, sludgy riff, with such deep growling vocals, that I thought I must have the record on the wrong speed—but no, it's right... fuck, I'm having a gut reaction to this that says it's awesome, even though it's just simple chunk-chunk-grrrr metal/hardcore. I guess this is just so over the top about itself that it's impossible not to be convinced. Even the demo-style production is perfect for me—rough, snare and bass drums that really punch, thick layer of grime and filth to give atmosphere. If I went to see them and a bunch of morons were windmilling to the dance parts, I would be a

lot less enthused, and the religious imagery of the blood-and-gore-and-revenge lyrics does nothing for me, but the simple pleasure of listening to them thunder and bellow is just fine. Down Foundation, surprisingly, sound like an early '90's straight edge band, with the '80's youth crew fast parts and youthful yelling vocals (and backups!) and an occasional heavier part for an intro or mosh part. Their lyrics are much clearer, but that's just thanks to the genre, I guess—they don't actually cover any new ground (friendship, which is always relevant to young men making hardcore I suppose, and seizing the present). —b
Slave Union, 58 Grace Street, Waterford, NY 12188

Daemon's Faded Passion/Avarice split 7": D.J.P. have a sort of strange mix (the snare sounds like an oil drum, the guitars are a little

two parts '90's hardcore mosh parts, one part '90's black metal technique (if you're Gomorrha, adjust the proportions to 1-1-2, respectively). Their vocalist doesn't have the personality of the D.J.P. guy, so they aren't able to stack up quite as well (was that a German hardcore pun? Oh my goodness!). —b
Alveran, P.O. Box 10 01 52, 44701 Bochum, Germany

Deaththreat/Talk is Poison split 7": Deaththreat here sound like a pissed-off, no-frills, mid-'80's-punk-band, post-Black-Flag. Some details should fill you in, if that's not clear enough already: yelling vocals that hurry to keep up with the rest of the music, a bass sound that isn't yet distorted in the grindcore tradition, echo on the last word of the last song, which is "slavery." Talk is Poison aren't much different stylistically, but they have an

pace just barely too fast for my heart or mind to keep up with, so I am always just behind them, overwhelmed at what they are doing. At the end they hit one tiny, split second pause, hammer it all home again, and cut out, without a second of their side of the record wasted. The combination of Envy's red-wound-sound-painting with T.M.K.'s explicitly political anti-police brutality consciousness-raising is awesome, exactly the combination of soul and ammunition that I come to punk for. The musical association of the two makes more superficial sense than anything else, since while both are playing jumpy emo/hardcore the one does it with the grace of shredded longing and the other with an impatient, irrepressible verve, but this is a great little record. Lyrics in both English and Japanese for both bands—the bilingual trend I'm noticing is right fucking on. —b

simply be illusions, even the so-called laws of physics. Jon and I gloried in this, shouted about it, planned yet wilder schemes to smash through the wall of reality into new cosmoses, pretentious and extravagant and divine.

Or, I could come at this review from yet another direction: when a band breaks up, it splits into its constituent elements, which had perhaps formed a unique whole. When Refused split up, singer Dennis took the political rhetoric, the Make-Up moves, the psychotic notion that fashion could be tied somehow to revolution, and formed the International Noise Conspiracy... while other Refused people, the ones who had been more interested in strictly musical/artistic radicalism, went on to put this band together. In both cases, you can see the elements that were combined to comprise the strange and wonderful monster that was Refused, crystallized in their pure form with all their qualities and particular drawbacks apparent. In the 'Noise Conspiracy, you can see what happens when you rub shoulders too much with the "popular" approach to making inflammatory music (i.e. you can get trapped in the trappings of being a leader of the people, with the intellectual elitism and focus on image)... meanwhile, in Text, you see the drawbacks of avant garde artistic pretensions—they can be alienating, isolating, making art seem like an elitist, individualist (totally beyond translation) project as well. And yet—in splitting up like this, the musicians are able to pursue their conflicting visions to their logical conclusions, an undertaking of great interest for me at least (and maybe to you, since you read this 'zine!). There are some great pieces of music on this CD: the first song is an a capella requiem, screamed out (and infinitely superior in vision and delivery to the a capella on the Libertinagem recording, the only analogous project I can think of reviewed this issue), everywhere there are brilliant musical innovations in form and juxtapositions (everything from jazz improvisation to laid back club/techno atmospheres to moments in which gospel choirs or punk distortion kicks in just to pull off a transition)... the general idea, I think is to free up space for others to explore, not to definitively chart any space of innovation. A large part of the CD is given over to what appears to be a Burroughs-style cutup of a Bataille text, read over a constantly evolving sound and style collage. Their best moments, not surprisingly, are the ones when they pause long enough to perfect something—like the end of the fifth song, a folk piece recorded on a four track, when David sings the ultimate anarchist exhortation: "Think this is my voice? This is not my voice. I just wanted to tell all the girls and boys to keep on keeping on—not that you won't die alone... but to fight for something is to make it your own." —b

Demonbox, Box 1043, 172 21 Sundbyberg, Sweden

low), but their vocalist is going all out with the shrieking, and that makes their German metal/hardcore matter. They're not afraid to cut the organization make fucking wrecked noise for half a minute, which works to their advantage, and they come back in from the noise with a light jazz jam, underlining their disregard for the demands of the formula. Good for them. They don't have riffs and transitions that are unique enough to set them entirely apart here, but their energy comes across, for sure. Avarice come in with an Anthrax-style riff and a high hat that should have been lower in the mix, and then go into the guitar chunk/roaring part that makes up the meat of this genre, pulling off the transition with a moment of metal double-picking that sets the standard for their standard application of the metal/hardcore formula in Germany: one part '80's metal introductions,

extra energy somehow (not that Deaththreat lacked it), and emphasize it with the occasional high guitar flourish and constant snare drum fill. Their side makes me want to leap around, mosh, crash into other dancing kids, the chains on the arms of my leather jacket swinging around. Their vocalist sounds fucking furious, and their drummer never takes a break or plays any slower than he possibly can. Yeah, this is good stuff. —b

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

Envy/This Machine Kills split 7": Envy can fucking deliver the goods—they scream and contort themselves and twist their hearts up like rags to squeeze out all the emotion they can, they juxtapose chords that would be beautiful by themselves with gunshot drums and by the end have built up the speed to a

H.G. Fact, 401 Hongo-M, 2-36-2 Yayoi-Cho, Nakano-Ku, Tokyo 164-0013 Japan

Flores del Sol/Whisper split CD: First, it needs saying that this CD has absolutely lovely packaging. The only contemporary comparison I can think of for Flores del Sol is Submission Hold—both play a slower sparer descendent of punk that emphasizes the melody and tension and sadness over the distortion and release and anger. The woman who sings for this band has a voice of a very different temper, though, a more classical singer style, with which she explores the lines in different ways. She works up to a scream every once in a while, but only when the lyrics and music demand it. Their final song builds to an impassioned conclusion, and it is Whisper's turn. Now, here I get a chance to consider my attitudes about sex and gender—

for their singer is doing just about the same thing as the singer of Flores del Sol, but he is a boy, and I don't like it as much. I think it's not so much my deep-seated sexism, though, as it is the fact that he's just not as confident with his voice, so it comes out much less full. He does more screaming than she did, and he sounds more at home there. The music is similar, too, relying very little on distortion and speed, working more with the notes inside their chord progressions... I think this is "emo" music, for sure, if there is indeed such a thing. As with their recordmates, their final song is my favorite, as it starts very simply and builds energy and emotion without overreaching itself. —b

Sniffing, C.C. 3288, C.P. 1000, Correo Central, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Gomorrha/Hellchild split 7": Gomorrha strays from the pack of German metal/hard-

being ominous rather than aggressive. Oh my god, Hellchild just employed a high lead guitar, just in case there was any metal frontier they'd left uncrossed (I guess the high wail is the only thing missing on this record). Sadly, the lyrics of both bands leave me unmoved—that's the problem across the board in the world of metal/hardcore these days, I think: metal used to give us melodrama, which we made into real drama by adding it to punk, but now lots of our punk music has become mere flourish and empty rocking, like metal once was. Come on, kids, make this shit *real* again, so it can be dangerous once more. I listen to all this would-be scary, "evil" music, and I'm not scared at all. —b

Bastardized, Stefan Eutenbach, P.O. Box 200521, 56005 Koblenz, Germany

Hocus/Cheerleaders of the Apocalypse split 7": Once Hocus gets going, and I can pick the

Imitation Pushead artwork on the sleeve that looks fucking vintage—and knowing how much less it probably cost these poor bastards, I like it a lot more. The artist even signed his name with the copyright symbol in the same place Pushead would have! —b
Scorched Earth Policy, address nearby

Holding On/The Real Enemy split 7": The Real Enemy play rough, basic "oldschool" hardcore, but here's the catch—they're not dumb. They have a song about infiltration and Union-busting (classic line: "that back you stab might be your own!"), another against homophobia, and the last one, "Better than youth crew," is about growing older in hardcore. Holding On don't change the atmosphere—they come in with the same rough recording and traditional hardcore beats and rough yelling and traditional themes... the first word out of the singer's

Trial "Are These Our Lives?" CD: When I was young, I attended a public hearing in Raleigh, North Carolina, where the issue of chip mills in the American southeast was discussed. I was there with a grassroots environmentalist collective and we were trying to make people understand that chip mills are horrible for the land, and that they are only used to develop disposable paper products, which are just as easily made from recycled materials. That public hearing was the death of my belief in democracy; it proved to me that my voice would not be heard, that the corporations will always get their way, and that I was a fool for even trying. That night I wished I had a bomb to destroy that fucking building and all its bullshit hearings. That night I wanted to jump out of my fucking skin and scream at the top of my lungs, it was as if I could feel the Earth dying beneath my feet, and there was nothing I could do. I felt like a wretched member of a vile race, and like it was too late. On the car ride home I listened to a tape I had made of an early Trial seven inch and it was the first time this music made sense to me.

That week was one of the most fucked up periods in my life last year. I just lost my job, which is not a disaster, but as all of us might know, this society created conditions for us, when we feel the one to be blamed. They fucking made me feel an outcast, worthless person, who is not good enough to fit in their standards. They made me feel a person, who can't show up any "good results", which can easily put me in some position I was never really claiming for. This feeling of alienation haunted me through a couple of days, which also made me losing my focus on things I thought are important. I fucking wanted to hide even from my loved ones, thinking that losing a shitty job will make me a less valuable person. Later that week I had some obligations as being a hardcore/punk promoter in my hometown, Budapest. Having things to do in the hardcore/punk scene used to be my only salvation in those days. Luckily, I promoted that show for Trial, which is a band I always liked on records, and I was desperately waiting to see live. Seeing them perform totally blew my fucking mind, and I could finally start focusing on important things again. That cold november night, seeing a band play, made me breathe again.

Trial is fast, desperate music. And this LP, their last, is the most complete expression of everything Trial has meant to us. The guitars have sharp teeth. The drumming is maniacal and without compromise. The singer's voice is on the brink of destruction but the words must come out, quiet is no longer enough; you can hear him struggling against his fate, fighting to carve his own destiny in a blank world. This is what it sounds like to want something, and to give yourself for it, completely. On this record is the silence of lovers on the verge of touching and the crash of a molotov cocktail against the helmet of a riot cop in Prague. Emotional, passionate hardcore.

There might be different stories happening to us, but there will always be common ground. And that is the fact, that people might live on different sides of this globe, but there is not enough distance to erase the discontent and the feeling of alienation, what we feel in our hearts. Trial was the perfect example to break down all the boundaries, we humans did build for ourselves. Through their studio recordings and live performances they touched starving hearts. Their words were like gaso-

core bands by playing at ridiculous velocities, setting a new land speed record for blastbeats at the beginning of every new song, and doing it well too. The dual vocals stick mostly to the emotionless grindcore growl and groan that can get so tiresome, but they're not out of place with the music, and the recording is as shiny and crisp as it needs to be for this. I like them best when they're playing at maximum speed, metal breakdowns be damned. Hellchild is a good match for them with their near-constant double bass and prehistoric beast vocal rumble. At their very best moments, they can create that threatening evil atmosphere that Slayer could when they were

parts out of their German metal/hardcore that I like, I'm into it: driving energy in places, some pretty (if heard-before) melodies hidden under thick layers of distortion and screaming. Then C.O.A. come in, and I realize that I've just been being nice to Hocus—this is better, much more vicious vocals, much more energy and abandon, and that's what it really takes to make this metal shit real. Their first song ends with the most agonized screaming I've heard in twelve records. I don't like their lyrics as much as Hocus's, though—C.O.A. lean on the blood/suffering/revenge thing too much, while Hocus are more open and idealistic... both have songs about "lies," of course.

mouth is, in fact, "Go!" My favorite song of theirs, of course, is the fifteen-second one about dance floor justice for those who fuck with others at shows. They attack racist thugs in the last song (lyrics by Felix Von Havoc), and that seems to be just too easy, in my opinion—racism is everywhere around and inside us, and it makes things seem to simple to concentrate just on the "racist" enemies. Better to address the issue as it affects our own attitudes and interactions—and sure, fight the Nazis when they show up, but speak about other things when you have the chance, rather than patting yourself on the back for that. Anyway, both bands seem to be right on, but I like the

Real Enemy better, because it's clearer from their lyrics what they specifically believe in (vagueness was a constant feature of those '80's hardcore bands, which allowed them to seem cool without really believing or doing anything at all). I won't ever listen to this, but I'd probably go to see them play, just to chat, hang out, maybe dance a bit. —b
One Percent Records, P.O. Box 41048, Minneapolis, MN 55414

Minute Manifesto/Shank split 7": Shank play political grind with a real work ethic: get in with one riff, switch to blast beat and get the point across, the job done, and then the fuck out of there, the better to prepare for the next song. They're not afraid to play a slow pounding breakdown part enough times to get the point across but you'll never hear them do anything superfluous. Their singers (both high screamer and low growler) both sound

snotty/growly, and the pace a bit slower. —b
Smack in the Mouth, Eight-O-Three, Flip Basement, 70-72 Queen Street, Glasgow, G13EM, U.K.

Remus and the Romulus Nation/Pezz "Benefit for the Tennessee Coalition to Abolish State Killing" 7": This is an excellently packaged and right on little record—it comes with a separate booklet for each band, a booklet about the injustice of the death penalty in the U.S.A., a postcard to the Tennessee governor demanding an end to the death penalty, and a legal document you can fill out demanding that if you are murdered the murderer will not be executed. R&RN feature a singer who always sounds a little off key (except for the rare moments he gets carried away and starts screaming), so that was a little hard for me to deal with... musically, their murky-recorded poppish melodic punk

listen to it comfortably. —b
Soul is Cheap, Zach Payne, 164 St. Agnes #3, Memphis, TN 38112

Stack/Narsaak split 7": Stack is the real thing here, their metal is applied to punk intentions in just the right way to make it matter, and the music is scary and insistent. Plus, they have a singer who can jump forty feet in the air, in the old '80's punk tradition. Check out the awesome lyrics to their first song ("Knock knock, anybody home?"): "Hi, I'm Mr. Restricted—representing this world's stupidity, to choose for polarization as a view of life is one of my ways to protect myself against the acceptance of a pluralistic reality"—a point driven home by their hilarious take on the old straight edge slogan: "Face Realities," it says, across the bottom of their lyric sheet. Narsaak creates a similarly dark ambience; their first song is simple, hypnotic, repetitive, and while

line added to the fire, which all of us should spark if we are willing to have more than what this world has to offer, if we are willing to embrace all the joy, knowledge and adventure ever existed on Earth.

"We are the tortured and insane, disillusioned and mundane, unknown and unnamed, desperate and enslaved. And we want something more." —WW with help from Zoli... now let's hear some more on this record, from our longwind-ed editor:

I don't think the epic nature of the conditions under which this masterpiece was recorded can be exaggerated—that's a critical part of the story of why this is such a triumph. The band was wracked by internal conflicts, both personal and over the direction they should go commercially. After a tour on which singer Greg's voice was entirely destroyed (he could barely speak for months afterward, and the doctors said he had almost become permanently mute), and they discovered that the label they had left CrimethInc. for (hoping to pacify the more "commercial success"-oriented band members) wasn't going to do anything with their record at all (it turned out CrimethInc., for all its anti-commercial and disorganized ways, sold as many as or more records than any of the other labels they worked with), all the members of the band quit except for Greg and Tim. Despite their conflicts, both were determined to fulfill the destiny of the band (this record!) at any cost, and both spent a year working on writing it, a real act of faith considering that Greg's voice was ruined and Tim having no bassist, drummer or second guitarist. To hold the band together, they had agreed on Equal Vision as a compromise between their very different visions of what the band should do, despite the frustration this struggle caused each of them (not to say that remaining in a miserable project is always noble or worthy, but in this case I imagine you'll agree it was worth it for all of us); and during this year they also had to keep the very business-minded label persuaded that things were going to work out, despite their own doubts. (One thing you can say for them working with Equal Vision: they were able to get enough money from the label to pay for a major-label-quality recording, and for the string section that plays on the powerfully dramatic interludes.) At the last minute, the drummer of Greg's friends' band flew out across the country to learn and record the songs in one week, and Greg's voice held out just long enough in the studio for them to record the entire record. This achievement gave them the momentum to gather new members and complete a tour of the U.S.A. and Europe... they played their final show with us (Catharsis) in Germany, on November 30 (the day that the W.T.O. protests in their home town of Seattle shook the world), after their passports, tickets, and band money had all been stolen from their van in Rome. After that the strain was just too much for them, and they broke up once and for all, but I consider myself so blessed that they were able to make this record for me to listen to before their demise. —b

only available on Equal Vision records, so steal this mercilessly. The band won't lose any money because "E.V.R." is still collecting money to cover their "debts." Their fucking marketing director once told me in cold blood that the target audience for their products is "typical moron hardcore kids," so it's clear what we're dealing with here.

scary as fuck here, and despite the aforementioned work ethic they're often able to create that atmosphere of doom and futuristic devastation that makes this kind of music thrilling before their songs are over. In contrast to that atmosphere and the fury and abandonment from which they create it, their lyrics and essays are smart and self-conscious, often ironic, usually political (from a generally anarchist, if pessimistic, standpoint), and sometimes capricious or strange. Those last qualities come out more in Minute Manifesto's music, which is also fast and furious, but features some ridiculous samples, funny acoustic parts, etc. The vocals are also more

reminds me of Pink Collar Jobs, which is a good thing, and they're sincere and right on as all fuck (locally relevant, globally thought-out lyrics... and, their refers to the two brother who founded Rome, one of whom killed the other and thus got to have it named after him). Pezz is also right on, playing in a similar style (with those vocals I can't handle), similarly right on—they have a song about supporting a friend going through the difficult situation of having an abortion... now that's a real subject to address, one few do, that touches almost all of us some time... Anyway, I endorse this record wholeheartedly, everything about it, and it's too bad I can't actually

their second one starts at a faster tempo (with the bass-snare, bass-bass-snare punk beat), it maintains the same feeling with abrasive guitar noise and gravelly vocals. —b
Per Koro, Fehrfeld 26, D-28203 Bremen, Germany

Teenage Warning/Inflatable Dares split 7": Provided technical proficiency isn't your chief standard, Teenage Warning have some fucking awesome moments. The playing is messy, sometimes the drummer gets off beat, but there's real energy and excitement in this, it's clear that polished playing and all that bullshit are not nearly as important as getting crazy

and getting the point across. At the most intense moments, one singer is singing her heart out (with a youthful, totally open and honest voice, zero pretensions), while another screams as hard as she can, and there's a mix of tragedy, outrage, compassion, and the simple joy of free expression newly discovered all in the air at once. The Inflatable Dates have a slightly more polished recording and playing, and feature one garbled, shrieky singer and another mumbly one, strange combination. Their lyrics are dumb enough to be totally irrelevant to the listener (or reviewer—I feel like I'm doing them a favor by not writing about them). Fuck, their last song is really "Bombshell" by Operation Ivy, in disguise as an original. I prefer T.W., for sure. —b
6 S. Kent Road, Gaylordsville, CT06755

Timebomb/Redemption split CD:

Timebomb play three of their songs off an old record, "Hymns for a Decaying Empire," the record that got me so excited about them in the first place. At this point I'm guessing they've played these songs a million times apiece, so the result is that these new, much more polished versions are totally tight (and have new guitar leads, etc.), but also lack a tiny bit of the urgency of the original, rough recordings. I'm guessing these guys wanted an alternative to the rough older recordings of their favorite old songs, needed three songs so they could do a split with their friends' band, and wanted a new recording project to break their new singer in. Redemption hadn't followed their ideas through as far when they recorded this as when they recorded the song that appears on the CD with this Inside Front (which I think is awesome). It's still the same ideas—double-picked metal guitars and double-bass, screaming and growling from the male vocalist and a mix of more beautiful and even more screamy crazy stuff from Valentina poetic lyrics about the search for self—but Valentina appears less, the music isn't quite as constant in its energy. It has some great parts (the whole second half of their first song is incredible, beautiful and haunting and with real energy when it all kicks in), though. In fact, it seems that I love the second half of each song, which is a fair bit, since all three of their songs are pretty long.

Timebomb, incidentally, has radically changed their whole musical style, since this recording, in an attempt to subvert the expectations of the hardcore community, which I think is fascinating. I don't have any of new recordings of theirs yet that they would feel comfortable with me reviewing, so instead I'd like to reprint their new manifesto here:

Movin' on, growin' up... these things are always seen as negative in the hardcore punk community. But let's face it, we all grow up, which doesn't mean you have to betray everything you believe in... We've been playing together for

eight years now and decided to change radically, no matter what people said, fuck 'em all! This is the most important aspect of our often shitty lives, it's our outlet and changing is our way of finding interest in what we are doing. Growing up we've been able to experience the joy of creation, the joy of art (our three chord fucking art) not as a product to be sold, nor as an alibi for another bourgeois elite. Now we can do whatever we want to, we got rid of that heavy, hard-structured body we had built around ourselves, and we can move in every direction without plans—it's a wild, beautiful sensation, like running naked on the seaside or the beauty of the destruction of a society that destroys beauty. The sound of protest, smashed windows, the beauty in struggle, the poetry in a fight.

Many labels have been attached to us through the years. We were always expected to do something, to act in a certain way, to say certain things 'cause of the image people had of us. That's the hardcore scene is reduced to sometimes: a useless set of rules and clichés. Not changing our name is a choice to prove that one can do what he wants, we are free to follow our desires—that's where the strength of a truly independent scene lies. (review by -b)

War.ds, Alessandro Andreoni, Via E. Medi 14, 00149, Roma, Italy

Whisper /Eterna Inocencia split 7":

Wow...this is the first issue where I liked everything I got to review! [editor's note: no... this is the first issue in which Greg has refused to review anything he didn't really like!] This is another great record, and it comes from Argentina. Now, I apologize up front for being a speaker of English only, so I can't translate many of the lyrics and other words on this record, but I can tell that it is very politically oriented. There is a song on the Eterna Inocencia side called "To the Barricades" which has the following lyrics: "To the barricades! Argh!!!!!" which I surmise is either a rallying cry to storm said barricades, or perhaps a cry of pain after the storm of the barricades begins and the rallier has fallen into a ditch "Argh....fuck...help me out of here so I can continue to storm the barricades!" I assume the former. The music on the Whisper side is like a cross of Zegota and Fugazi [the editor, who is painfully aware that he is not making himself any friends at this point, would like to add another note: that makes as much sense as saying something is like a cross between Catharsis and the Amebix—what the fuck!] in that it is melodic, and sung, yet powerful and intense at the same time. The Eterna Inocencia side is similar in terms of it being melodic, but the vocals are even more pronounced in the mix giving it the impression of being even more melodic. The music here is more straight forward punk/hc, but it is still great because of the feel the vocals give. The record comes in a brown paper bag look-

ing thing...totally cool...and the vinyl on this copy is a creamy white and super thick...I would definitely carry this thing with me as a weapon while storming the barricades! It feels like it weighs a pound. The address is given as CC 213 (1412) Bs As Argentina, so you will have to take that one to your local post office and have them help you figure it out, but I would recommend it. I would love to have the lyrics translated, because if the cut and paste layout is any indicator, I bet there is some real poetry going on here. Great job. —JUG

CC 213 (1412), Buenos Aires, Argentina

"Asian Punk Lives #2" Tape Compilation:

This is punk rock from Japan, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia. 11 bands and 26 songs comprise 60 minutes of the rawest of raw old-fashioned punk fuckin rock. Some of the recordings are great, some are not so good, but I think it's safe to say that this style of punk sounds best with a low-grade recording. Hence, this tape makes me feel good. Mostly 3-chord pissed off speed jams bearing a likeness to Los Crudos, with most of the songs about issues such as environmental degradation, technological disaster, injustice, neonazis being losers, deceptive governments, and of course, love. The bands are: from Japan—Absent, Out of Touch, Réfuse, and Social Crime; Aggressive Dog Attack from the Philippines; Balcony, Deadly Ground, Inner Warfare, and Turtles, Jr. from Indonesia; Silent Majority and Shocked from Malaysia. Some of the bands sing in English, but a good portion of the tape is in Japanese or other languages (but it's still worth it to hear someone speaking before a song pissed off screaming even though I don't understand; I almost do). The tape comes with a half-page size booklet including a page for each band to express themselves (lyrics, art, etc.), contact info for each band, and a page for general scene news. On the front cover is a short, impressive discourse on *why humanity is fucking up*, and an explanation of materialism and authority. On the back is permission (suggestion) to tape this for my friends; I know plenty who will dig this... —WG

Sprout Records clo Tsuyoshi Konno; 1-10-27; 1-bancho; Aoba-ku; Sendai-city; Miyagi; 980-0811, Japan.

"De Madrid al Hardcore" Volume 1 compilation CD:

This CD is a compilation of heavy hardcore bands from Spain. Bands included are: Mal Chance, Like Peter At Home, Kausa De Alarma; Versus, Inside Me, Proud'Z, Unchained, and Lagrimas Y Rabia. Of course, since it is a compilation, sound quality varies dramatically, as does song quality. Overall, most of the tracks have a (dare I say it) early 90's NYHC feel to them with gruff big guy sounding dudes on vocals

and chunky guitars. Could it be that the four hundred and thirty six tours which 25 Ta Life have done in Europe have impacted or influenced the musicians there? Probably. I know that I was speaking in "Da's" and "Ta's" for weeks after their first record came out. This CD, while it could be a little more diverse in terms of the styles represented, definitely gives a good image of the type of music being played currently in the Madrid hardcore scene. Standout tracks for me were the last song (by Lagrimas Y Rabia) which was reminiscent of Bad Religion with a little more distortion on the guitars and the Like Peter at Home track. Like Peter at Home's song was especially heavy and hard hitting with interesting vocals alternating between deep and gruff and deep and sung, and a cool set of guitar riffs. I wish I spoke Spanish though to understand the lyrics. Wait though! I almost forgot!!! The

www.altavista.com text translation section!

"Decade of Dissidence: The worst of the 1 in 12 Club Volume 14/15" CD compilation: This is a collection of songs of widely disparate musical styles, recording qualities, and subject matters, mostly from the U.K. but occasionally from, say, Japan. The connecting theme is that all these bands have played at the 1 in 12 Club in Bradford, England. Seriously, there are noise collage bands here putting bagpipes over industrial samples, old British punkers covering Motorhead, women playing strange dirties about sex, guys exploring the acoustic landscapes of emo jazz, old men reciting poetry, Japanese guys who want to be Conflict, Cress who want to be Crass, an articulate group of French people called Happy Anger, the usual British hardcore bands (Voorhees and Hard to Swallow and Stalingrad and Sawn Off and John Holmes) screaming and rocking. The Hard to Swallow song, their theme song, is probably my favorite on this by a good couple kilometers.

ugly and jumbled, with a shoddy photocopy quality. I know all this is supposed to be DIY and "punk rock" but this release is unnecessary and disappointing in the first place when all the music appears elsewhere and two of the bands aren't that good. I guess I should be fair and describe the bands, so here goes: GZ play brutal as fuck metalcore with sick imagery and throat shredding screams, and DMW play furious, chaotic and raw metalcore with quite possibly the most brutally sick, desperate screaming to ever come from a human throat. The two NY bands on the other side play pretty unmemorable and generic mid-tempo metalcore with the usual screams/growls. To sum up, let's try not to waste money and resources putting out unnecessary releases, and if you're interested in either of the two CT bands, just get their individual 7"s (or albums). —n
Slave Union Records / 58 Grace St. / Waterford NY 12188, USA

Undying "The Whispered Lies of Angels" CD: I've already been criticized for reviewing records on this label before, so I'm in for it now, but there's no way around it: this is one of the records that has kept me caring about and feeling the potential of hardcore music this year. Everything is perfect here: the composition, the playing, the intentions (besides their misguided choice of record label, a choice excusable for an inexperienced band choosing an overseas label), the vocals, the lyrics, even the recording... It plays like a classical symphony from the beginning to the end, the possibilities of all the individual instruments multiplying exponentially as they are combined, so at any given moment there is more happening in the relationships between the two guitars, the bass, and the drums (which shift constantly between five different gears, ranging from blastbeats to vast fields of double bass punctuated by impossibly sparse snare beats, so the listener is thrust into the irresistible rhythm afresh at the beginning of each successive verse) than a single person could keep up with at once, leaving me perpetually overwhelmed by the genius of the writing. The riffs and transitions themselves are never lazy or easy, always exploring any possibility to its farthest and wildest reaches, but never seeming forced—this is one of those records that seems as if it has always existed, as if each of the songs here was carved into the cosmos from the beginning of time. And they command so many different emotions at once—at one moment the guitars are playing the saddest requiem, the drums pounding with adrenaline, and the vocalist screaming with such rage, and then at the next everything switches places again and I am at once crying for the worlds that vanished under the treads of the bulldozers, shaking as my heart pounds with fear and excitement in my chest, and clenching my fists in the scowling certainty of the unflinching insurrectionist. In case all this is too clear about my feelings and not clear enough about the music, let me give you some reference points: I love the music for the same reason I love the second Children of Bodom CD (incidentally the very best metal album I have ever heard in my life!), and the vocals are a mix between the hoarse, hissing scream of Radwan in Ire and the straight-to-the-heart speaking of Greg on the last Trial record. In my review of their last CD, I suggested that they needed to expand their subject matter lyrically, and they have come through with flying colors there. Let's cut straight to the last song (before the hidden gothic rock cover, which sounds just fine in their hands as well)—a lament, but raging with the threat of the one with nothing left to lose: "if this is what your life will take from me, if this is what your world will make of me—then let it live with the consequences." The blood of my ancestors, pumped into my veins, assumed to be safe, runs cold on me, the world trembles imperceptibly beneath my feet, and I know again and without shame or fear what I am doing with my life, and why. —b
Good Life recordings...

I will type in the lyrics to one of the songs and translate it to get the full impact. We will use Versus, whose last CD I really enjoyed and reviewed in the last Inside Front if I am remembering correctly. Their lyrics on this track according to altavista say, "They came to the world between hunger, misery and hopelessness. Their own families left them. Alone and single on the streets looking between sweepings. They shelter in pain between alcohol and poison." Even if it is not exact, I think I get the right idea. —JUG

Kilometrocerro Records; apartado de correos 8578; 28080 Madrid; Spain; xloyalx@hotmail.com for more info.

The real reason for this record to exist is that it's a benefit to support the people in Kosova, who are trying to put their world back together after all the wars, witchhunts, and oppression. —b

1 in 12 records, 21-23 Albion Street, Bradford, BD1 2LY, England

"Four Corners" compilation 7": Two great bands victimized by a pretty pointless release makes for an unhappy reviewer. This comp does no justice to CT metal heavyweights Groundzero and Die My Will by including a song from each that is previously released, and pairing them with two other bands that are rather mediocre (Sever and Dying Game Theory). To make matters worse, the layout is

"Hardcore Reality: Colombia en Tu Cara" compilation CD: This is a compilation of Colombian hardcore bands, eight of them, twenty three songs altogether. Hardcore is relatively new in Colombia (so to have eight bands with recordings is pretty impressive), and presently all the bands are working on their own version of the kind of music that Breakdown played in New York in the late '80's: simple guitar riffs, fast and slow parts, gruff yelling vocals, a general mosh aesthetic. The first song on the CD is excellent for this genre—it ends with gang shouting, which evokes a crowd riot, adding the necessary adrenaline and intimidating atmosphere. There's also a part in it in which an extra four beats are added at the end of every verse, just

as Sick of it All did in their second version of "Stand Alone." More than one song ends with someone shouting "puto!" in the background, which I guess is the equivalent of "beeeeach!" here. The recordings vary from rough to, well, a little less, rough, but all are sufficient not to hold the bands back, especially for the style of music being played here. Everything is in Spanish, except for the brief introduction at the end of the lyric booklet. I just hope these kids all know that, unlike them, the bands from the New York hardcore scene that inspires them were known for their ignorance, their disinterest in world affairs of any kind, their fear to show compassion or personality... —b

Diego Paredes, 8372 NW 64th St. #1595, Miami, FL 33166

"Not without a fight... Noise/Text War" compilation double CD: While everyone else was trying to figure out who the next really popular hardcore band would be, Adam (chief organizer of this record label) was out trying to hunt down the most interesting, under-appreciated bands. There's a long tradition of this in the more underground extremes of punk rock, and it was these collectors of esoteric punk knowledge that first started to bridge the gaps between the punk communities of different nations (think of the Peace/War compilation, for example). In the old days, a compilation like this probably would have had G.I.S.M., Agathocles, and the Cripple Bastards on it... today, it has bands like Dahmer (fucking awesome, murderous grind, and the live recording only helps), the Japanese Final Exit (who play some of the stranger, rougher experimental crust/noise that exists today), and uh, Agathocles and Cripple Bastards! There's a mix of noise bands and punk/hardcore bands, more songs by the latter but more song length from the former to balance it out, and a few bridging the gap with crossover stuff... other bands include Strong Intention, Bastard Noise, Katastrofialue, and about ten thousand more (this is a packed double CD, it's enough sound to wander through for a long, long time), as well as a spoken word piece from Mark Bruback. The booklet is thick with writing from other groups/individuals active within the punk community, including Daryl Vocat (who writes about coming out), Jen Angel (who writes about advertising in the punk community), Adrienne Droogas (on self defense), Fly (the artist from New York, with a very poetic piece on protests, etc.), Chris Boarts, Mike Antipathy, our very own C.W.C., and many others. Basically, though this is framed as a simple compilation, it really is a testament of dozens of different individuals on a level with the best hardcore 'zines, and more interesting than most for the wide variety of mediums employed. —b

Fist Fight, P.O. Box 364, Hagerstown, MD 364

"Over the Walls of Nationalism and War" compilation 7": This record features seven bands from the war-torn area of ex-Yugoslavia, as a gesture of dialogue between people from the different struggling factions of the population there, and a declaration of unity against the divisions of nationalism and war. As such, for us Westerners, this is something much more real than we're used to, a punk record with real things at stake, not just a declaration of allegiance to some image or another. Everything here is translated into English, too, so it's possible for an uneducated U.S. punk like me to read the lyrics and explanations... I would counsel against getting this 7" just to buy a souvenir of the exotic world where anti-war songs are actually real statements, but I would encourage everyone to get this record as a way to hear a perspective about the situation in former Yugoslavia that doesn't just come from fucking network TV. I remember that during the U.S. bombing, a kid from this area sent me a photograph of the damage to civilian housing. U.S. bombs had caused down his street, something I never would have learned about otherwise—that's something the punk network can be really valuable for, getting your own news. The bands on here play gritty, straightforward, distorted hardcore, with the exception of the last one, Uberzeitung, who present a disconcerting noise project with someone screaming over the top: *you don't have to kill the people—you just have to kill the bastard inside you.* —b
Dusan Vejnovic, 12, V.U.B. 34, 25000 Sombor, Serbia/Yugoslavia

"Payoll Squat Benefit" compilation 7": This is a benefit for a squat in Brazil, in Curitiba (I was there but didn't see it—hope it hasn't already been evicted now?). The packaging is quite classy, cardboard closed by an industrial clip, very d.i.y. and personable. The 7" itself features an international array of bands (Falter, Diavolo Rosso, Spinebender, Wut-Entbrannt, Revolte, Seuchenherd, and...) all playing rough, tough, fast, aggressive punk, each with enough energy (sometimes a moment of originality) to distinguish itself. The Brazilian band (Difekto), from the squat itself, have an understandably rougher recording than the others, but it flatters them too. They remind me of Against, the old U.S. Discharge-style band I love so much. This is a good rough punk record, for a good cause. That's the deal. —b

Bad Influence, Stefan Fuchs, Rennweg 1, 93049 Regensburg, Germany

"Pickle Patch" CD compilation: This is the sort of excellent little project that could only come out of the hardcore scene. Not just a twenty two track collection of songs played at an apartment that had house shows for a few years, but also a bunch of essays from every-

one who loved those shows—showing how much excitement can develop from just a few kids taking themselves and their fun evenings seriously. The sound quality of the (all live) recordings is just fine, better than it is on lots of my favorite old punk records that were recorded in studios. Probably the most priceless moment is the break between the verse and the chorus in Atom and his Package's live rendition of "Punk Rock Academy" when you can hear the audience laughing along with his humor. Close behind that is Behead the Prophet No Lord Shall Live introducing their song "They Shall Not Pass": "this one's for the homophobes in the R.C.P." Right on! And after that, in third place, we have Former Members of Alfonsin spelling it all hilariously out about how dumb the absurd "unity" rhetoric of the commercialized side of the straight edge scene is. The minutes of band-crowd banter at the beginning of Submission Hold's set helps to remind the listener how wonderful it can be to be in one of those comfortable, safe, supportive environments that can be created at punk shows. Lest any of you embittered motherfuckers feel left out and isolated by all the positivity on this compilation, I'll go on record and admit that I am personally responsible for the only negative, unpleasant show that ever took place at the Pickle Patch—when Catharsis played there, we were in a bad mood, and deliberately pissed everyone off, which no one could understand at the time. And here I am singing the praises of everything they did besides that night. Goes to show how multifaceted punk is in each of us and in the whole community, I guess. —b
Dim Mak, address within your reach if you just flip a few pages

"Visionville hardcore: reaching out" cassette compilation: This is a compilation of Malaysian hardcore bands, and for a scene that has only existed about five years (according to the liner notes, at least... and that's also about the length of time since Inside Front got its first letters from Malaysia, but that doesn't really prove anything) the recordings and songs here are really incredible. Seriously, the recordings are better than many U.S. bands get for their releases. I haven't been able to get all the bands straight yet (two songs each from Chronic Mass, Another Side, Disaster Funhouse, Projekt AK, N.E.T.), but there's a mix of metal (lead guitars with echo on them, screaming vocals) with more traditional hardcore approaches here (yelling vocals, more speedy rhythms)... perhaps think an updated, more metal version of the "New York Hardcore: The Way It Is" compilation, if any of you remember that at all. Maybe not. Lots of guitar solos, but (dirty secret here!) I'm a sucker for those. One band, Projekt AK, are doing a sort of funk/hardcore thing with the spotlight on hip hop vocals, but it sounds less

stupid and insincere than this style does when done by Western bands. I'm really interested to hear what will come from the Malaysian hardcore community next, now that it's clear the bands there are sure enough of themselves to do interesting things. —b

As It Is, Mohd. Azmi, P.O. Box 50808, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

DEMOS

1125 "Plonie Mi Serce" demo: I love this tape! It was sent to me by my friend Kasia in Poland after I asked her to let me know about good Polish bands (I love Poland and want to go back there someday - anyone have names or addresses of people to stay with over there?). This tape has it all, and I can only describe it this way: imagine if five guys decided to form a blast beat punk band with political/personal lyrics and

guage, then feel free to send me a stamped envelope and I will copy the translations for you. You will need them for sure. A fun thing for non-Polish-speaking people to do with this tape is the following: put the tape on and try to read along with the lyrics anyway. Think of that as a special bonus. One thing I thought about while reviewing this tape (and I listened to it four times all the way through right off the bat!) is that most people in the US will probably never hear it simply because of the USA-centric nature of punk and hardcore. Many of us recognize that great bands from overseas rarely get heard as much as American bands. So, to counteract that, try this tape out. The email address in the tape is no longer working but I did find a distro in Poland who carry 1125 releases and other Polish bands as well. Check out

<http://www.shingrecords.com> for more info, or try their label, whose address follows here. —JUG

Pasazer Records; P.O. Box 42; 39-201 Debica 3; POLAND

cliché old school rehashing, but even after the pleasant surprise, this is awesome in its own right. A great start for a promising band, and DIY points abound for the home taping job with scratched off labels. —n

Uprising Tapes / PO box 1903 / 581 18 Linköping, Sweden

Discarga demo: Fast beats, pick slides, faster beats, snare drum rolls, blast beats, guitar starts playing another three chord riff, back to fast beats, yelling vocals all the way through, with backing vocals—just fine recording and production, and the sense of immediacy to make this matter. Well, that's the first five songs, which are also on the "Play Fast or Die" CD my Brazilian friends released but didn't send us in time for review. The last three are similar musically, but are more muffled production-wise and feature the deep-growl-and-high-yowl traditional grindcore vocals. Those are their older songs, and the music is just as good, though the vocals lack a bit. Classy,

Bloodpact/Varsity split 12": One of the bands on this record is fucking great. The other one sucks so much that they're also great, which is what you'd better do if you're going to suck—so, in a roundabout way, this is an all-around great record, though that's not to say you should listen to more than one side of it (the Varsity side is more for reading the lyrics to your friends and laughing... sorry guys, I'd hoped to stop being so cruel in these reviews, but...). Bloodpact is rough as fuck, their recording isn't too polished or well-balanced, their drummer isn't too good, but all that comes across when I listen to them is the desperate energy of the band. And, hey, check this out, they have something going for them that very few bands have these days: good, solid, well-written songs! Yes, that's right, the blast beats and fast hardcore riffs and breakdowns all add up to really good music, all the progressions serve to build intensity and excitement the whole way through. The vocal delivery is fucking awesome, all out and over the top... at one point the music stops so instrument can lead into another part of the song, and Andy keeps screaming, spitting out about fifteen more syllables, hoarser and hoarser, until he finally runs out of breath and has to pause to gasp before going into the next part. The first song ("The Rain Comes"), about the terror of the dropout from the middle class facing economic and social annihilation, has all the rush of those moments of middle class dropout fear (with which you yourself may be familiar), dashing forward to plunge into the darkness as Andy shrieks "down, the roof caves in and everything is taken out with it—there's no mass of hands to catch the black sheep when you fall—" and the guitar chords and frenetic, frantic drums are there capturing the melancholy of such moments of doubt, too. The lyrics are all awesome, so very smart and well-thought-out (titles include "have you ever met any actual members of the working class?" and "you should have been eaten by wolves"), they have a depth and subtlety and self-awareness that is missing from almost every other political hardcore band, even the best ones. Now Varsity, on the other hand... imagine I'm reading these lyrics to you in a facetious voice: "been down on us for far too long, we're the positive youth fucking singing this song—with an x'd up fist and an x'd up heart, we're the positive youth fucking playing our part"—and the music makes good on that threat. Well, it's not the worst thing ever, honestly, but after Bloodpact... I'll stand by my allegation (which Matt quoted in his review of this record for *Slave* magazine) that Varsity sounds like someone's high school class assignment to form an old school band, totally derivative and shoddy to boot. Boot is the right verb for this side of the record. Maybe somebody should bootleg the whole record as a one-sided LP. —b

+/- records, address nearby

wrote a 17 song tape while listening to old school NYHC and early So-Cal straight edge the entire time. Fuck...it rules! It has the speed and intensity of punk rock throughout every song, with the rage of early NYHC (Side By Side / Alone in a Crowd), the energy of the So-Cal bands and finally the production of the newer generation of heavy bands. It sounds great. The result of all these influences is a tape that breaks through my expectations continuously by drawing on all of the above influences while not relying on any one for too long. Highly recommended! The layout is a seven-fold glossy insert printed on heavy cardstock with full lyrics. The lyrics are in Polish, but the good news is that Kasia translated them into English for me, so if you a moron like me and only speak one lan-

Dead End s/t demo tape 1999: This truly is "old school" at its best! Seven songs of fast, energetic and lively music in that older style of hardcore, with energetic yelled/screamed vocals, and gang backups in all the right places. Not since Trial has "old school" sounded so new, vibrant, important, and of course, posi. All of the lyrics address important topics such as consumerism, non-conformity, social mores, and personal growth in such an intelligent and uplifting, yet down-to-earth way. The photocopied inserts make a great political statement in a fun way with three silhouetted traffic-sign type figures doing the "see no evil, speak no evil, hear no evil" motions. I think one of the reasons I'm so impressed by this is that I was expecting yet another boring and

original d.i.y. cardboard packaging. —b
Douglas, R. Carequese 1787, Centro, Santo Andre - CEP 09090401, Sao Paulo Brazil

Entreat demo: This demo has moments of sad beauty; at other times, when the vocalist is moaning rather than doing the yell/growl/mumble he seems to have perfected, it seems a little weak, unconfident... and then still other times, it just sounds like common '90's hardcore to me, with the metal guitar sound, acoustic parts, mid-pace, decent recording and writing but nothing spectacular. Then I read the lyrics, and they take me back to the sad beauty—they are suffused with poetry, longing, tragedy, and they're written with the skill it takes to capture such

things. When I return from the lyric sheet to the music, it has the sad beauty again too, for all its clumsy moments. Tighten everything up, guys, and record again. It's clear you're capable of something powerfully moving and emotional. —b

Valter Cijan, Gradnikove b. 49, 5000 Nova Gorica, Slovenija

Evoke "We Stole Four Minutes From Your Life" demo: As far as I can tell, this project was put together just for my own listening pleasure as the Inside Front guy reviewing this. It's not mass-produced, the whole insert is written out by hand, no songs were written (the kids just got together and expressed themselves immediately, in an unplanned improvisation), the whole thing is just a one-

cations, the thematic statement and whether it's regressive or not (etc. etc. etc. etc.!)—but when young Belgian hardcore kids do it on a whim, it feels so free and fresh and real, fucking awesome. Don't order this—make your own, and give it to a friend for her birthday or something. Or send it to HeartattaCk, demanding that they interview you. —b
Push the Limit, Kevin Alen, A. Vermeylenstr. 3, 3920 Lommel, Belgium

The Great Clearing Off CDR demo: This is a triumph of d.i.y. in every sense: a CD in a lovely eco-friendly case, with a twenty-four page booklet of fine-print lyrics and explanations culminating in a reading list and a brilliant schematic drawing of the life of the questioning young man by a band member, all for

to revolutionize the 7" format next! —b
290 Chestnut Street, Hammononton, NHJ 08037

In The Red "Demo": The recording on this is shit, but in my book that's ok for a demo. I'm guessing it was recorded live in a garage or similar atmosphere, and it's ok because we all don't have the same resources to produce a good recording. Here are five dynamic songs hinting at Born Against with fiery guitars, a full bass sound (probably the best sounding instrument, surprisingly), good drums, and great vocals that I like. The tempo changes quite a bit without the music getting shaky, making me picture an In The Red performance as a beautiful blur of skin, hair, and smooth fucking fury. The packaging is interesting: a homemade metal tape case with stenciled spray-paint, and stuffed

The Kid Karate "A Fist Full of Noise" demo: This kicks in with a sample (somebody with a Jersey accent threatening someone over phone) that is so tense and discomfiting that those feelings spill over into the music—which at first sounds like an angry, muffled giant locked in a closet, lumbering around trying to get out... but once I'm accustomed to the aesthetic (muffled, non-human voc-hows and growls, gritty bassy guitar and bass chaos, drums that are somewhere in the background if you listen really hard), I'm into it, all right. This is a band that truly Does Not Give A Fuck, in the best sense of the phrase—all the details prove it: all-out crazy fucking hardcore (it's good, too, man, I swear!), ludicrous samples and song-titles (for example "All the rock bands do it so why can't we tune our guitars for half an hour?"), don't-care-if-they-kill-us-for-it lyrics and as-if-it-wasn't-clear-enough-in-the-lyrics-let's-make-sure-they-really-do-try-to-kill-us explanations (attacking straight edge fashion: "we are nothing but you are less do yourself a big favor and draw a big fat x on your forehead we will do our best aiming" and soap operas: "crispy chips gallons of poisonous coke and simply lay back and swallow the fake reality..." and even people who like Louisville punk bands: "we don't care about your journalist career for yoda your puritan college education or road navigation, 'cause where were you when we were still moshing our asses off... maybe you should move to Kentucky and live in Scott Richter's ass" ...and then in the explanation to that last song: "I bet there are still pseudo-intellectuals walking around thinking Dennis/Refused holding his guitar equals throwing Molotov cocktails on the White House"), heroically dumb label name ("A Butt the Size of Texas"), even a photo of the singer and Ed/Good Life (whom they also assault in the booklet) wrestling over a bill. This is totally unique, inspired, all out (even a fucking Beatles cover, Helter Skelter), awesome, stupid, insane—I recommend it to every-

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

off project with a projected audience of about three—right on! The volume on the tape is so low it's hard to make it out, which is too bad, but the music isn't actually as pointless as you'd think—the vocalists are screaming so hard you're scared for their safety, and the band does some interesting chaotic things. Of course the recording isn't great (this was done on a boom box, remember), and there are no lyrics, but seriously, I'm thrilled to have received this. It's numbered for collector nerds ("1 of... 1") and at the end of the liner notes there's a plea for me to send it on to another 'zine for review once I'm done with it. This is the kind of thing that, when people from bands like Text or Countdown to Putsch do it, all the 'zine journalists make a big pretentious deal about the artistic innovations and impli-

between \$1 and \$3 (sliding scale!) at the show we played with them earlier this week. You can't expect the music to be totally polished, since this is in fact a demo, but it doesn't disappoint, either—though the guitars have a sort of thin, strange sound, the riffs often stray from the expected punk chords, and thought the vocals aren't totally confident they come off as very much for real. There's plenty of the discomfort and excitement of a fresh band here, touching and moving as it can be. All the things they're thinking about (passionate, anarchist/punk rock ethics, confronting all the assembled stupidities of our times) are fucking right on, they make them more clear than any other band releasing a demo since, say, Gocce nel Mare, and there's nothing left to ask for here—except to see what they'll do

inside is an insert along with the tape. The insert includes lyrics that could be interpreted in countless ways and are hard for me to understand, hence the songs have less meaning than their possible potential. Having songs that mean different things to different people is great (and inevitable), for many reasons, but sometimes the original message within is obscured or scattered. Explanations for us lightweights are sometimes a worthy gesture (what are you folks about?). Oh, and this demo is \$2 ppd. —WG
In The Red; PO Box 11046; PDX, OR, 97211; 503.528.0340.

The In:Security Camera demo: Strange combination of samples from the old punk movie Another State of Mind with a live recording... the vocalist sometimes sounds like Jello Biafra when

he speaks, but he spends more time shrieking and screeching and grunting, he's outta fuckin' control. The music follows his lead, cacophonous, spasmodic, jerking and smashing like a machine breaking down. Squealing feedback just adds to it all. From the lyrics, I deduce that these guys probably believe in some of the same basic things I do, but find more pleasure in ranting insanely: "Never too late to keep an eye on the bullshit! Still want you to go play in traffic!!" or, in a particularly articulate moment, "If you feel like shit, you're not alone—forced routine, endless drone, arghaharahhh!" Alright, the deal is, they need to polish up (yes they do!), but the energy is all here, in excess, ready to be used, and they could be capable of great things in the same sense that the Kid Karate are. —b
Justin, 1222 N. University, Peoria, IL 61606

old hardcore formats). The lyrics lie somewhere between Nietzsche, Dante, and early Carcass. My only complaint—sometimes the recording is a little fuzzy, with so much going on at once. The solution? This should be on CD, obviously. —b

Eric Boog, Oderstrasse 7, D-41363 Hochneukirch, Germany

Tet Offensive "The Revolution Begins Now"
demo: Maybe it's just the associations of the band name, but I'm reminded of the atmosphere of gathering danger and darkness that made the Dead Kennedys "Holiday in Cambodia" one of their best songs. The singer has one of those growly voices that usually sound fake, but in his case he sounds crazy and reckless enough for it to be persuasive.

and more jazzy breaks, and it's hard to really tell what's going on, but it's not bad stuff, there's some energy there. At Bay is a little better recorded, still messy though, with distorted yelling vocals, fast and simple hardcore punk music, and if not lyrics... two little explanations. The first is about Globalization (the World Trade Organization, the I.M.F., the World Bank), and the second about being willing to go all out, no holding back. —b
2480 Winding Road, Hatboro, PA 129040

one. The extensive packaging and printing was all stolen, too, as the booklet asserts. Punk rock fucking lives, man—and in Belgium, no less. If I could see these guys play with Negate it would be the show of my life. —b
A But the Size of Texas, Carlos Steegen, Molenstraat 57, B-3730 Hoevel, Belgium

Lariat "Manifesto..." Demo: I pick this up out of the review box, and all I see is a blank tape marked "Lariat, Manifesto" on it, and I'm about to ask if there are any lyrics when I am handed the beautiful, lengthy, utterly diy booklet that accompanies it. I love when that happens. Especially when the contents offer such great words from people that give a shit about the state of this world, and who are trying to make a change utilizing their passion and skill. The booklet offers 42 pages divided up into 5 chapters, half-page size; I like the way they did this. The first chapter is a "declaration of war," in which anonymous members of the band talk about the issues that they care about. They cover numerous topics concerning our capitalist society, focusing on how people are forced to work their lives away for someone else and have nothing to show for it; and being sick of the hardcore scene acting like a shallow and meaningless fucking fashion show, a mere step down from the culture it claims to counter. These things have all been discussed many times before, but the personal accounts here made me keep reading, and gasp at the simple and profound way things were put. Chapter 2 is dedicated to lyrics and song explanations, the latter of which unearth the emotion behind the meaning of the songs. Again, these passages seem to sum up a lot of things that I feel strongly about: "being a political band means internalizing your causes and living every day as an example of what you think is right." Chapter 3 shares a few pages of decent pictures of Lariat performing included "for those of you who are just here for the nifty pictures." Chapter 4 is space for the members of the band to express whatever they wish individually, and chapter 5 is space for band info and a list of books to read for further information on the ideas discussed therein. Ok, to the music. At the time of this recording, Lariat had been together for 3 months, and holy shit I can't believe it. They play tight and furiously well-written music full of changes, sometimes slow and suddenly taking off into the unknown with powerful blazing swiftness. The guitars are thick and are hugged by the bass; the drums are all over the place (in the right places, I might add), and the screamed vocals are right there in your face, but not dominating like a lot of bands out there. The five songs are recorded and mixed well, and there are a few tactfully placed samples, my favorite of which is at the end of the second song (with lyrics from an IWW publishing). Fuck, after listening, really listening to Lariat, I can't take every minute of my life and have my way with it. This seems to be what they are mainly trying to convey as a solution (something rarely seen around here) to the widespread complacency that they see everywhere. Everyone should give these guys a listen, and I know that this is a long review, but hey, material like this must become known, and these folks deserve this space. (Note: see the Lariat CD review as well.) —W/G
Lariat; PO Box 443; Round Lake, NY 12151

Nirdezneb demo: This is a combination of electronic and live music, with lots of samples for aural texture and vocal effects—definitely the sort of project we need to see more of in our community to keep challenging ourselves and doing new, dangerous things with our art. It begins with an impossible blastbeat, like a locomotive at a thousand kilometers an hour (they are German, you know), or a video of factory machinery played at fast forward speed, then goes into some Slayer-harmony parts that sound truly evil and terrifying. It took me a couple minutes to get into this (or did it take them a couple minutes to get going?), but once I was into it, I was persuaded—this is awesome, and there's so very much potential to do new things here (and consequently give new ideas to those working in the

The lyrics are not dumb at all, they betray some right on class consciousness and deal with such important subjects as the way the education system is designed to grind out cultural differences among students. The first song is the best, by far—it has a spooky old-fashioned metal drama that works perfectly in the punk context, and helps them to create a classic, memorable song unique unto itself. And for a four track recording, this is surprisingly powerful, though the guitars are typically too low. —b
P.O. Box 7DDD, Jersey City, NJ 07307

R5/At Bay split cassette: No lyrics for the R5 side, which is recorded live (and with some compression problems!)... they divide their time between fast, screaming hardcore stuff

CrimethInc. Special Report



The singer of an unnamed band poses at Gilman street for publicity photot to show how punk and hardcore his band is . . . (more info on page 137)

MAGAZINES

Agua #3: This Brazilian 'zine (in Portuguese) made me feel so good! It has pieces by different people (and in different handwritings, sometimes) scattered throughout so that it feels more like a conversation than like a group of columnists whose personalities and opinions are already pre-approved by those putting the 'zine together. Major themes include always questioning and struggling against our human tendency to simplify and prejudice; how to create new ways for us to interact; and a basic and uncomplicated, but still invigorating, feminism. It occurs to me that these themes overlap pretty frequently and are sometimes even indistinguishable one from another, and that it is perhaps unnecessary, for example, for me to emphasize the feminism, when it springs directly, and naturally, from questioning and struggling against patriarchal values (a simplified system of human interactions if there ever was one) already in place, and attempting to construct new social and political patterns: except that the 'zine itself is definitely from a female perspective, with some writing on beauty standards, gender roles, and feeling confident and strong as a woman, even though it often seems like women are supposed to feel that their gender is a major disability, and are trained to live as if they were fundamentally handicapped. The 'zine also features a very interesting interview with a Liberation Theology priest (a Latin American tributary of Catholicism, none too popular with the Pope, that split off in the 1970s, positing Jesus as the "Liberator" of the poor and oppressed, interpreting Christian thinking from a working-class (and frequently Marxist) point of view). Although his brand of Christianity is much more palatable to me than most, with its emphasis on social justice, and solutions for issues that are all too frequently only moral ones for the Church (like abortion) that address causes rooted in social and economic circumstance, not just in the sins of the individual, he still can't manage to persuade me that there is any reason to rely on divine forces to guide human life. Nevertheless, the interview itself is thought-provoking and thorough. In addition there is a pair of descriptions of visits to a women's prison; a vaguely complaining essay about the State of Emo (mainly lamenting the stagnation that eventually plagues any genre), which concludes pretty weakly that for the author, "emo" music is anything that evokes an emotional response, including anything from Spitboy to the Get Up Kids(!); and some poetry and more personal writing. That's not all, of course, but I will resist the sudden impulse to give a table of contents. My favorite thing in a 'zine full of great stuff is a beautiful description of how to exorcise the phantom of a love relationship that has ended in disaster and pain. I guess I should warn you that this 'zine is in Portuguese before you all rush out and

buy it, but maybe you should, anyway.—@
Agua, alc Carol, rua Simão Alvarez 745/111, São Paulo SP cep 05417 000, Brazil

As It Stands #2: Introductory 'zine with a variety of articles and a generally political theme. The subjects include body image and the beauty industry, an exposition of the negative things P.E.T.A. has done, what the editor finds appealing about gangster rap, a Reclaim the City! event in Sweden that ended in police brutality and an outraged response from mainstream society, all the bad things about smoking (and—how to quit). There's also an excellent Trial interview (I think it was hard to do one that wasn't!), a piece written by a young man whose brother was slain in a car accident, and an interview with an animal rights activist (which is not dry by any means), a review of Daniel Quinn's *Ishmael*, and various other smaller pieces.—b
Mark Osmond, 8364 Washburn, MI 48438

Book of Letters #12: This is where it's at, fucking hilarious! A collection of provocative/stupid/absurd letters to various corporations, and their responses (when they do respond). Example—he writes to Coca-Cola about the return of "Coke Classic" after the public uproar, asking whether they will bring the old Coke with cocaine in it back (as the *real* "Coke Classic") if drug laws ever change. They don't respond. He writes to Dunkin Donuts about the distinction between "garden vegetables" and factory farmed vegetables (in some product they manufacture) and gets a hilarious confession back from the CEO, who admits flippantly to factory farming. I'm a little saddened he didn't get more coupons for his efforts (he only gets a couple dollars worth of free potato chips), but I've known others to get up to hundreds of dollars of free products from writing angry or beseeching letters to manufacturers.—b
P.O. Box 890, Allston, MA 02134

Catalyst #1: This looks at first like a typical first issue cut-and-paste (and-sometimes-illegible) 'zine with personal perspectives on love, fragmentary reprints of eco-positive living, little essays on why feminism is right on, lists of things to be happy about and vegan restaurants the author enjoys, reviews of political/personal 'zines and one record (fancy that, it's Submission Hold)... but there are little, unexpected gems hidden inside too: a reprint from a Tchkung! ad on how to make a molotov cocktail, information on what to say when the F.B.I. shows up, a little manifesto written upon returning from a lockdown in N.Y.C. about refusing to let life be less than a war for joy. Yes.—b
Catalyst, P.O. Box 381855, Cambridge, MA 02238

Deformación Cultural #2/#3: Para hablar francamente, éste no es un 'zine muy interesante. Hay columnas (mejores en el tercer número—en parte porque hay menos tratando el tema de la gente excesivamente políticamente correcta), entrevistas, y mediocres comentarios de discos. En el #2, también hay una ficción corta. En el #3, solamente una de las entrevistas fue hecha cara a cara; la entrevista con Indecision viajó por correo electrónico, y la con Distancia la preguntaron mientras charlando en el Internet. Las dos ilustran muy bien las limitaciones de esos métodos de hacer una entrevista. Queda casi imposible expresarse precisamente o aclarar las ideas. Las columnas son sobre temas como el conformismo, el fascismo, el capitalismo, el nacionalismo... y el straight edge. Nada nuevo aquí. Los que lo hacen parecen ser sinceros e inteligentes—y jóvenes. Quizás necesitan pensar un poco más cuál es su enfoque, y cómo puedan hacer que Deformación Cultural se distinga de todos los otros...—@

Deformación Cultural, Casilla Postal 1424 (c1000wao), Buenos Aires, Argentina

Deformation Cultural #4: This just arrived on the final day of the third and final attempt to finish these reviews once and for all, with a demand that it be reviewed, so it wins the prize as the absolute last Inside Front review ever. Unfortunately, we're going out with a whimper, for my Spanish is atrocious. Let's just say there are lengthy interviews with Decameron (from Buenos Aires) and Catharsis, an interview with Sol Perpetuo (also from Argentina—from the interview I pick up that they don't like One Life Crew, and that they apparently play a cover of Project X's "Dance Floor Justice"), two pages of fine print 'zine and record reviews (including a rave review of a Point of No Return tape, and a review of a Victory release that begins "Seeeeeeeee melodic sucker pride!!!!"), a full twenty MRR-style columns, and a couple letters to the editor. I wish it was easier for me to read this, for my impression is that I would get a good feel for what's going on in the Argentinian hardcore community here—this is no messy little 'zine, it's thorough and well-crafted. For those of you who speak Spanish and want to keep up with Latin American punk and hardcore, this would be a good first step.—b

Still the same address as above...

Evil #2: Many many interviews. Some reviews. Sort of the opposite of Inside Front these days. The band interviews rarely ask anything really challenging, but most of the bands interviewed (At the Drive-In, Orchid, Don Caballero—fuck, you don't really want me to list all 15 of them; do you?) are intelligent and well-spoken enough to carry the interviews. The Rubbish Heap interview stands out from the rest: instead of asking, for

example, When did Rubbish Heap form and who was in the band?, a question sure to inspire a boring list of line-up changes, the interviewer asks, When did Rubbish Heap form, and what were your intentions and the context that led to its formation? Also very interesting are the interview with performance artist Jean-Louis Costes, and an essay on filmmaker/writer/musician F.J. Ossang. As for the reviews, the review of The Paper #2 begins, "What can I say about The Paper? The first diet zine?," enough to put me on their team for the rest of my reading. The quirkiest feature has got to be the gallery of pig drawings, most of them absolutely revolting. Maybe next issue they'll have a collection of drawings of butterflies: perhaps that will cut down on the gratuitous gore. It is lengthy, and it is in very small type, but it's not a bad 'zine. You might even like it. I just wish I had a better idea of who the writers are and where they're coming from. In French.—@

Evil, PO Box 5117, CH-1211 Geneva 11, Switzerland

F.B.I. #3: For a third issue, this is incredible, especially considering how far it's come already. It took Inside Front about nine issues to cover the same distance. It begins perfectly with a two page exposition of their goals and the myths they hope to dispel, which is as lucid and intelligent as anyone could ask for. A list of demands follows, in the CrimethInc. tradition of propaganda, and then a series of essays: the value of 'zines, the media coverage of the W.T.O. protests, healthy vegan diets and fasting, conspiracy theories about A.I.D.S., some discussion of learning of how to share the earth and build community, some news from Australia, and more fragmentary little pieces. There aren't many reviews, but they're all written in the thorough way that I like to see them done. No band interviews... come on, bands, get your shit together and get *interesting* if you want 'zinesters talking to you. It's illustrated throughout with photo collages and challenging captions. The essays vary a little in quality and interest, but altogether this is good in the same way Hodgepodge is, and I expect the next issue to be essential. It ends with editor Nick's recounting of the possibilities he sees in the new wave of activism, and as in the introduction the writing is as direct and persuasive as the very best I've seen.—b

15 West Dayton Hill Road, Wallingford, CT 06492

Fuck You Bearden!: Named for the asshole judge who put author Rob Thaxton in prison for seven years after he hit a police officer with a rock during Eugene's June 18th Reclaim the Streets event. Rob introduces himself with commendable honesty here, and goes on to write about daily life in prison and the events

leading up to his imprisonment. The bulk of the 'zine around those elements consists of some of the anarchist analysis (his perspectives on what the present weaknesses of capitalism and hierarchy are, and what a successful revolution must entail...), rhetoric (...that piece is called "now that's Revolting!"), and history (the Illegalists of early 20th Century France). The end has a few 'zine reviews, even including *Anarchy, A Journal of Desire Armed*—presently the mother of all insider anarchist journals, I'd say. If you like that magazine, and/or *Willful Disobedience*, this will also speak to you. Even if you don't, or don't know about those 'zines, you might want to show solidarity with a fellow human being locked down, by reading what he has to say.—b
Robert Thaxton Support Group c/o A.A.A., P.O. Box 11221 Eugene, OR 97440

Get In Touch #7: This is a good quality hardcore 'zine (in that long-standing tradition) from the Philippines. It's well-crafted in all aspects, including columns by such notable personages as Henrik Lindquist (once sang for Outlast—he writes powerfully about the divine moments of inspiration one experiences upon first encountering punk, and how

every aspect... I remember thinking when I received this that there was one little objection to Christian self-contradiction missing (I've done a lot of historical study of early Christianity, I'm fascinated by the subject), but now I can't remember for the life of me what it could have been. Author Robin Banks doesn't hold back anywhere, even going so far as to accuse Jesus of poor botany ("...in so-and-so verses, he says the mustard seed is the smallest seed in the world. It's not."). The only drawback of this pamphlet is that its use-value is limited: for hardened Christians or atheists, responses will be totally predictable ("yup" ...or "you're going to Hell!!!"), and for those trying to figure out where they stand, it lays all the facts on the table without being gentle enough to win the trust of any potential recovering Christians. We need more little books like this from our community, for sure: how about the hardcore/punk guide to police, to gardening, to yoga...—b

Robin Banks, P.O. Box 4964, Louisville, KY 40204-0964

Hazlo Tú Mismo #8: Este 'zine argentino contiene algunos comentarios de discos bastante breves, pero lo bueno de esos es que la

Do or Die #8: For anyone interested in politics, anarchism, ecology, activism, or radical news from the world over, this is absolutely the number one source. Three hundred forty some pages, fine print, covering issues, actions, and reactions from all over the world, in amazing depth. I'm not going to try to describe this, it's just too much... everything from the pros and cons of tunneling as a direct action tactic to women who became pirates to Earth First! groups in Israel and indigenous anarchist/environmentalist uprisings in southeast Asia. Unless you're at a place in your life where anything that doesn't have to do with how you will be living your life in the next five minutes or less seems dry, you really should at least sit down with someone's copy of this for a little while.—b

6 Tilbury Place, Brighton, East Sussex, BN2 2GY, United Kingdom

to recreate them) and Yann Boislevé (who did the International Straight Edge Bulletin 'zine), among others, interviews with Bridge records (with which Henrik is involved—this one's briefer than the others), OnexMore (Belgian hardcore band), J.R. Ewing (Norway), and xFeudx (smart Filipino straight edge/pro-choice band—this was the one that was newest for me to read about), thorough hardcore scene reports from across the globe, and a whole lot of d.i.y. record and 'zine reviews.—b

Dangie and Butch, Regala/1260-D, Quiricada St. Sta. Cruz, Manila 1003, Philippines

The Hardcore/Punk Guide to Christianity: This pretty much puts the issue on the table, in the best way (thoroughly, mercilessly, with an uncompromising eye for detail), so those who are wishy-washy about it will be forced to face the contradictions in their beliefs... and maybe to come to more sensible positions. It's well written, attractively laid out, solid in

mayoría de los discos son o latinoamericanos o de otro parte del mundo que no son los EE.UU., lo cual significa que, aunque los comentarios en sí no son muy útiles con referencia a los discos descritos, ayudan para indicar qué pasa en el resto del mundo hardcore. Una entrevista con Bread and Circuits (traducida de un 'zine estadounidense) es muy interesante, y también una con los franceses Flagrants Deli, quienes utilizan unas preguntas sencillas para explorar los detalles de sus pensamientos sobre la política francesa contemporánea, la mejor banda anarcopunk de todos los tiempos (¿es que hay alguna duda?), y "un poco de tus ideas en este momento," una pregunta que recibe una explicación de una página hablando de la superpoblación, el mundo virtual, la ecología, la epidemiología, y el poder de la contracultura de iniciar cambios sociales. Hay entrevistas también con Mofa, JFA (los de HTM admiten que no es la mejor que hayan hecho), Promise Ring, y Todd de Old Glory Records. Lo que he notado más de

la escena argentina (por leer unos 'zines aquí en los EE.UU.) son las divisiones entre las distintas facetas de la comunidad, y esas se ven en este 'zine, también. Sale una prueba del nivel de la Punkitud que uno demuestra (con una intención irónica, estoy segura, pero sin embargo esas clasificaciones (200-300 puntos: "Escuchastes Nofx, sabes que es Epitaph, pero ni puta de ida quienes eran Black Flag" [todos *sic*]... ¿esto porque no tengo zapatillas Vans old school, ni uso la billetera encadenada?) me hacen muy incómoda. Hay una presentación de cómo hacer un disco, de la masterización a la distribución a las cuestiones legales de impuestos, etc. No tengo ni idea cuán útil sea, pero mi poca comprensión de la grabación, etc., no me ha enseñado, como dice el autor, que "masterizar sirve para meter efectos...o sirve para levantar el volumen, nada más." *Caveat emptor*. Las columnas incluyen una receta para lasagna y una comparación de los lugares que venden falafel [en Buenos Aires?], el feminismo, "la melancolía urbana," un concierto de Offspring, y el punk de los ochenta. Es la sección más personal del 'zine, y la menos coherente. Con frecuencia me parecen las columnas descuidadosamente escritas o un poco desorganizadas. Sin embargo, lo que me molesta más de Hazlo Tú Mismo (aquí habla la persona perfeccionista que me invade cuando leo cualquier texto) es que utilizan los acentos caprichosamente. Lo peor es que no los niegan a usar por completo, sino que los usan, a veces, por razones indiscernibles. En general, interesante.—@ *Hazlo Tú Mismo*, CC 213 suc 12 (B), CP 1412 Buenos Aires, Argentina

Hodgepodge #6: This is a good companion piece to Rumpshaker, if you're looking for an excellent hardcore music/life/politics journalism 'zine... it even has some of the same characteristics: dumb name, high quality writing, intelligence, (maybe a little less) personality, glossy perfectionist layout and presentation—and something Rumpshaker doesn't have: in-depth political/economic analysis. The columns are as spotty as columns generally are (I mean, seriously, with the exception of '80's M.R.R., columns sections suck—get a bunch of supposedly "good writers" together, have them each write some random, self-indulgent fragment on no particular subject, what do you expect)... Scott Beibin's typically extravagant piece on punk rock film-making and Eric Boehme's classic Boehme exposition of the class dynamics of the service industry are the highlights, while the low point is a poorly written, tediously ignorant and immature (and vaguely sexist) column by a kid who tells us about how the Initial Records Krazy Fest fuckin' rocked, dude. The columns are just a little atavistic fragment at the beginning of the 'zine, however: the bulk of it is made up of informative essays (a much-needed exploration of genetic engineering fleshed out by an

interview with an activist about biotechnology, pieces on the Multilateral Agreement on Investment and the World Trade Organization complemented by a report from the streets of Seattle the week we shut the W.T.O. meeting down, a piece about our ecologically destructive civilization followed by an interview in which Daniel Quinn turns out to be a little less radical than I'd like him to be... and an awesome piece about toxin levels in tampons) and competent band interviews (Rainer Maria, the Dismemberment Plan, Catharsis), with book, 'zine, and record reviews (all decent) at the end. Really, this is a lot more like Slave than Rumpshaker, in terms of the educational/informational side of things, but it would complement both 'zines perfectly, none would be complete without the others for good reading. —b *Mike Schade*, 983 Little Neck Avenue, N. Bellmore, NY 11710

I Hate the World #5: Much like Inside Front, this 'zine evolved dramatically along with the editor's own discovery of himself, partly aided by the experience of doing the 'zine... also like Inside Front, he's ending the 'zine now, to keep himself fresh and fluid for new challenges. The strongest point of I.H.W. is the way Andreas' personality comes across in it, which makes reading this feel like a personal interaction: the conversation wanders from sexuality to childhood experiences and fears to the way the school system in Sweden creates and reinforces economic hierarchy. Andreas comes across as extremely sensitive, intelligent, and insecure, all at once, as he reexamines whether friends should be afraid to kiss, explains why he feels uncomfortable about his body, recounts (somewhat mysteriously) stories from his own life, leaving out crucial contextual details sometimes. I do want to take issue with some things he says about rape—he seems to consider it a result of men not curbing their sexual desire, whereas I think rape has little to do with sexual desire... yes, our desires have been connected to the power dynamics of our struggle for domination over each other, so lust is often indistinguishable from the urge to do violence, but rape is something that happens not as a result of untrammelled sexual desire but rather as an act of pure violence dressed only in the trappings of sex. One is not capable of rape because of one's sexuality as a man so much because of the violent conditioning of this society. Anyway, you can spend quite a bit of time mentally going back and forth about various issues addressed in this 'zine, that's probably its chief practical virtue. —b *Andreas Hagberg*, Fjardingsmannavägen 15, 643 32 Vingaker, Sweden

Imagine #1: This is really excellent—it's an anarchist 'zine that makes anarchist thinking feel accessible and relevant to everyone. It's totally lucid, top notch writing, covering a

variety of subjects in a great deal of depth. The cover has a Leo Tolstoy quote (his contribution to anarchism was drastically underreported, since the literary establishment wanted to make use of him), the inside cover a Refused lyric, to give you an idea of the cultural span of the author—and the quotes continue throughout. Let's go through the contents: a letters section (including intelligent debate about anarchists voting, and how violence and anti-social actions would be dealt with in a non-authoritarian society), matching "Reader's Digest" news sections with sickening reprints straight from the mouth of the Associated Press, who you think would keep quieter about this stuff ("Life in these United States" covers the abuse and misfortunes of average civilians, "Humor in Uniform" concentrates on police brutality), a hilarious Cometbus reprint about romance with a radical, reprints on police violence by Mumia Abu-Jamal and Fred Woodworth (editor of *the Match!*), absurd news from the murderous meat/dairy industry, a couple vegan cooking tips, a well-balanced consideration of Noam Chomsky ("anarchist, or traitor?" asks the writer, who concludes that the answer is "neither.")... It ends with a superb reviews section, which covers everything from current similar 'zines to a novel by Ursula LeGuin, another famous author little known for her anarchism. Anyway, for the Inside Front reader seeking a good anarchist periodical, I'd have to recommend this even before *A Journal of Desire Armed* or the other better known ones: it's more inclusive, more well-balanced, more personable. —b *P.O. Box 8145, Reno, NV 89507*

Interwencja #1: What makes it most difficult to review this zine, actually, is not that it's in Polish, but, instead, that I keep trying to guess what it might be saying, based on little that has anything to do with Eastern European languages. What I have gathered from my experiment in language immersion, as much as it is possible while sitting on my sofa in North Carolina, is first of all that it's going to be a struggle for me to learn Polish, and second of all a fragmentary list of Interwencja's contents, if you aren't persuaded by its cute name alone... It includes a Catharsis interview, an essay on Chechnya, one on the Chiapas Media Project, a show review (25 Ta Life with Counterweight and Schizma), and some pretty long record reviews. I take their length to be an indication of quality, in that the writer seems to be putting some care into his writing. Several of the reviews are of records that came out a while back, probably a reflection of the availability of most hardcore records in Poland. There's more in here that I can't identify but if any of this sounds interesting, consider dropping Marcin a line. The only bit of English in here makes it clear that he'd love to be in touch...—@ *Marcin Kopczynski*, Chabrowa 12a/15, 44-200 Rybnik 15, Poland

Kill For Love #1 (full size, photocopied, 52 pp.): This is really fucking good for a first issue, it seems the editor and cohorts either have had experience with this in the past or have done a lot of observing of other good zines before doing their own. I guess you could describe KFL as a typical political hardcore fanzine, complete with band interviews, sexy band action photos, columns, ads, and record reviews. The bands interviewed are all awesome (Catharsis, Shai Hulud, Redemption, Extinction, Mainstrike), and the questions were well thought out, which made for some interesting conversations, the most intriguing of which I thought was with Catharsis. The reviews are informative and overall, very positive and helpful. There is one column in here dealing with homosexuality within the hardcore scene that absolutely floored me with its intense urgency, emotion and sincerity, and I think it was the single most important and attention-deserving thing

ly be one of the very best, because it's already excellent. —n
Simone Marini / via R Battistini 32 / 00151, Roma, Italy

Mayhap #7: This was written just after the W.T.O. meeting was shut down by the Seattle protests, and the back cover reads "Seattle '99 All the Time." It begins with an excellent participant's account, and proceeds to address the question of where coercion and conflict come from in the first place—it's compelling and serious writing, if conversational in tone. A reading list follows, then a piece about how to delegitimize authority, hitchhiking stories, more front-porch-style analysis of how to make all this political/interpersonal stuff work... it's a great mix, and makes for a great read. If you're not overwhelmed already with 'zines talking about protests, youth gone wild on adventures and anarchist dreams, people being arrested and beaten and sentenced to

tough guy hardcore). There is a four way interview with Greg Bennick (Trial), Dave (Retrogression), Ian (Equal Vision records businessman, with whom I've had one particularly bad experience), and myself... I think Greg, Dave and I all balance each other out really well, giving different perspectives on the same basic approach, while Ian just says the kind of ridiculous stuff that any cold-blooded entrepreneur in radical company would feel pressured to (he claims anarchy won't work, takes the same standard in favor of the "independent" music industry that Victory records did a few years back, etc.). But anyway—this is quite a good read, and my only complaint is it isn't longer. More content would fill out the ideas and approach. —b

P.O. Box 4248, Springfield, MA 01101

On the Bank of the Tumid River #2: Hardcore journalism 'zine akin to Hodgepodge or Slave, but with more of a split

Evasion #1: I have begun like many others, left for the highway on foot with this zine under my arm, a sleeping bag in my backpack, seeking adventure. It was early March and threatening rain, my first time hitchhiking. I was alone, it was cold, I felt afraid and hesitant. A million voices in my head seemed to give reason after reason why it was a bad idea to be standing by the highway at 7:00 AM in rural Virginia; but I wanted to taste life, even if I wasn't sure why. I sat down there, on the asphalt, and read the first pages of Evasion. That's when I really felt it, that this zine was the answer to a question I had not even figured out how to articulate. Four hours later, after I had arrived in Washington, DC days ahead of schedule, I would take Evasion out of my bag and read it, sitting on a bench near the exit of the Omnimax Theater in the Museum of Natural History. And moments later I would sneak my way in. Sitting in the back of the theater, with my 3-D glasses in hand, I watched the others, the sheep, the *paying customers* file in from below and it occurred to me that I hadn't even checked to see how much the tickets cost. By then it didn't matter to me, I was living in a world free of charge.

Evasion is a full page, xeroxed zine. It has a cut-and-paste style layout and is almost completely hand-written. It contains stories about hitchhiking, train hopping, shoplifting, dumpster-diving, scamming, sleeping on rooftops and in closed libraries, and sneaking into hardcore shows. "Chris" (as he calls himself) is a mysterious vagabond traveler, who writes about a world of freedom that exists just beneath the surface of capitalist glitter, a world where much more is possible than you think. It is a world I want desperately to believe in, and a world that I believe exists, but only for those who are prepared to find it.

This zine is not for entertainment, it is a tool for opening the mind, for learning how to see the path of free adventure. When there are dark moments (and there will be), answers can be found inside this, the new bible for wandering hearts, a new tale, a new myth, rewriting history in every moment. Find a copy of this zine. Tuck it under your jacket as you fall asleep gazing at the stars from the roof of a Burger King in Rawlins, Wyoming, read it in the still silence of the Library of Congress after your mace has been confiscated at the entrance, show it to a lover by freight in some wild outskirts of a National Park in southern California, and share it with a hobo in your boxcar as you speed across Iowa, together. Run these scams, but be savvy and don't get caught! Open up your world and live! Live your life! After all, this is the only chance you'll get. —WW
Evasion has no address. For a copy, try writing to CrimethInc. Send a dollar or two for postage.

that I've seen in a zine in a while. Visually, this is also an excellent start, with crisp, clean page layouts and fairly large font sizes (a relief to punk eyes used to tiny print). On the other hand, I think there needs to be more original artwork combined with less emphasis on band photos, which as we all know, can lead to scene hierarchy and rockstar-ism. I think my only other criticisms are for them to not put ads in the middle of any of the writings, interviews, etc, as it is distracting and breaks up the flow of reading unnecessarily, and to keep pushing the boundaries of creativity and innovation in writing style, content, and graphic design (perhaps less band interviews, or interviews with people not in bands or even involved in hardcore). If this zine keeps itself out of the ruts and traps of indy publications and self-referential youth-culture, it will sure-

years in prison, what the next step to a world without authority could be, then you should get one of these to read... sure, there's talk about "dismantling the Power Machine" at one point when the editor gets carried away, but for the most part (the very most part) the writing is down to earth and real. —b
P.O. Box 5841, Eugene, OR 97405

Message From the Homeland #5: Consider this a relative of F.B.I. 'zine. It deals with the basic issues of being human in an inhumane world (there's a particularly touching column early on about Dave's encounter with a homeless man, which drives this point home), the struggle against capitalism and racism, from a sort of New England hardcore kid perspective (witness the atavistic music reviews at the end, which are well written but reveal a taste for

personality. It starts out with a columns section which is something of an improvement on the usual awful columns section; it has a theme (immortality), and is wisely understated as a section (unlike many columns sections in 'zines, which announce themselves with great fanfare—only to be wandering and dull). There's a rock-journalist-style interview with Godbelow (the not-tough guy tough guys?), an interview with Cave In that was what I expected it to be, then interviews with the Hope Conspiracy, Agoraphobic Nosebleed, Kill the Slavemaster (sadly illegible), Elliott, MC Wildcat... The high points for me are Ted Kaczynski's parable (not the best short story ever, but seriously, the guy has the record to back up his ideas with), a very technical piece on Cryogenics and Nanotechnology, and the account of the April

16 protest in Washington, D.C., which was quite well done... you may have already read your fill of those activist's reports by now, though, I fear. The layouts are occasionally difficult to read (when the tiny white letters are drowning in a sea of black ink, going under for the last time), and the pages of ads bug me (although we can hardly blame the 'zinesters for that necessity—can we?). At the end are some reviews of decent depth, which I wanted to like... but it was hard for me when I read one band being negatively compared to "an ugly girl with a crush on you." Come on, what the fuck—that shit is totally un-called for. Strange combination here of smart political stuff and generic hardcore market coverage... I expect it to go one way or the other in the future, probably towards the former. —b
17 Sparkhall Avenue, Toronto, ON, M4K 1G4 Canada

Personality Liberation Front #3: This is one of the very last things to be reviewed, so you can imagine my head's not too clear right now... but this is a good 'zine, so it has to get mentioned, at least. It's something like an Australian Synthesis: half size, thick with fine print, lots of discussion of gender roles, how to break out of them, and how to break out of the trap of only talking about those issues, also some writing on other subjects (which companies to boycott over union-busting, how to be open about one's emotions, etc.), interviews with Arm's Reach and Knuckledust, quality reviews of 'zines and records, even some fun stuff—a photo gallery of mullet haircuts in the punk rock world. —b
P.O. Box 3023, South Brisbane BC, Qld 4101, Australia

Raincity #3: Newsprint 'zine covering goings-on in Malaysia, which has a large and active hardcore scene. There's an interview with Carburetor Dung, one of the longest-lived bands in the scene, and another with Toxin 99%, as well as record reviews, columns and scene reports of what is going on in various regions, and plenty more writing about local and general issues affecting the hardcore community. It gave me a window into a totally different, distant part of the hardcore world. —b
Zahid, 137, Lorong 19, Taman Sri Kota 2, 34000 Taiping, Perak, West Malaysia

Red Devil #11: This is a big 'zine with a lot of content, all sort of disconnected and lacking cohesion, but more interesting than many because it comes from a perspective still generally unheard in the international hardcore scene. The contents include a letters section, columns (which range from philosophical argumentation to... a discussion about how Clinton needs to act responsible, so as to affirm the power of the U.S. as the world's single remaining superpower, and thus to bring

"order to the world"—what the fuck? pro-imperialist sympathies in a Singapore 'zine?), an extensive interview with Sean (former front-man of Vegan Reich), who is now in his latest incarnation as a Muslim (this interview was interesting, since Islam is an "exotic" thing here in Sean's country, but more common in editor Abdul's), interviews with Stalingrad and Radical Noise (the latter being a hardcore band from Turkey!), information (reprinted?) on the plight of East Timor, a number of pages of reviews, and various smaller fragments and opinions and emo sharing. I do get a really good vibe from the editor, he seems totally sincere and positive, and that matters a lot. —b

Abdul Khalid, Blk. 321 #04-287, Sembawang Close, Singapore 750321

Reskator #2: Written, at length, in Czech. The only comment I can make about the Czech language used here is that it doesn't seem to be infected with hardcore disease, in

them, columns are a tired and pathetic genre, I get the feeling that Reskator could do some good writing that's not band-related. There are a bunch of record reviews in here, too, but the only thing that stood out (and how could it help it?) was the Die My Will review that ends, MOSH IT UP!!!—@

Reskator, c/o Tomas Mladek, V krovínach 16/1540, Praha 4 – Braník, 147 00, Czech Republic

Revolt #10: More Eugene anarchism, by some of the same people doing other publications from that hotbed of wild desire-pursuing and (even more so) rhetoric slinging, some of which are even reviewed elsewhere in this issue of Inside Front. Some articles (like the Illegalism piece from Rob's *Fuck You Bearden!*) are reprinted here, and yes there are reprints from other sources... it seems like everybody in these circles is reading the same things, throwing the same formerly-inflammatory rhetoric and terminology back and

Synthesis #5: What a delightful 'zine this is! Witty, intelligent, informative, foaming slightly at the mouth at times... The 'zine runs the gamut, from a vegan cake recipe to an interview with eco-activist Saxon Wood to commentary on the Vort'n Vis festival and discussions of human nature. Synthesis is very political, specifically and aggressively feminist. Sometimes, perhaps, it comes off as being a little short-sighted or incoherent: that animal rights, for example, is the trendy cause du jour (or decade) in the hardcore community, completely eclipsing the women's rights issues that affect actual members of the scene (or are *all* the active, tough punk women we know just girlfriends?), does not really cancel out the bunnies' plight, as Laura (the editor) so vigorously implies (even though it is rhetorical). (Her criticisms of veganism as a social marker and of adherence to it as a final solution for all the world's ills are spot-on, and even incomplete—it's the attitude that bothers me.) And how anyone can claim to "have faith in humanity's potentials" and that "sympathy and concern are deep and widespread human traits," but say elsewhere (in a slightly different context of course, but this is my review here!, and she was speaking about people as a whole...) that "95% of those people will be crap" baffles me. I don't distrust Laura at all—she comes off as being extremely solid and positive throughout the 'zine—but it is exactly for that reason that I can find her leaps to criticize and dismiss confounding. Apart from that and her

which every other word is in English, like an ad in Spanish I saw once that advertised "17 mosh hits!" The editors have put together a 'zine with a letters section (long letters with apparently thorough responses; the themes seem to be Downcast and vegetarianism, perhaps in response to a previous issue?), several interviews (an impressively long one with Lumen, and others with Culture, Kevorkian, and Gnu), and reviews. It looks like it's all really well-done. Sometimes it seems like the 'zine is mostly an excuse to publish an immense number of band photos, as there are scads of them everywhere—especially, of course, in the two page spread on the Vort'n Vis Festival, of everyone from Fugazi to Pray Silent to Saturn's Flea Collar [*sic?*]). But I get the feeling that if I could read what it all says, I might be very impressed. There is nothing resembling a column or article, however, and while it is true that as most 'zines execute

forth, obsessing over the same primitivist examples of non-civilized life and its virtues while scanning the internet for the latest news of cellphone-coordinated street protests. I can say this "with authority" (uh oh!), because I am in these circles myself, in the lower circles of insider anarchist hell, not actually unhappy about it but definitely ready to demand a little more innovation and freshness from my comrades. Come on, attacking the poor anarcho-syndicalists again?! How about bringing up a new topic of discussion/catalyst for action that could make the old debates irrelevant, as new vistas of practical possibility open before us, and the rhetoric is realized in experience, or discarded... Back to this 'zine and the others done by its authors (the *Black Clad Messenger*, for example)—if you haven't had much of this stuff in your life yet, you should give it a chance... you're probably better

equipped than the rest of us to come at it with the necessary fresh perspective with which the remaining revolutionary potential of the contents could be discerned. —b
Anarchist Action Collective, P.O. Box 11331, Eugene, OR 97440

Rumpshaker #5: One hundred eighty eight pages, bound like a fancy academic journal. Very impressive, and I have to say that for hardcore "music journalism" beyond the monthly updates of magazines like HeartattaCk, this is the best thing going. An absolutely crucial part of that is that Rumpshaker (in addition to its heroically stupid name) has real personality of its own, that shines through all the time... that's the difference between a 'zine that makes you feel like you're reading it to kill time, and a 'zine that can stand on its own as a work, like a good record or a book. Instead of just interviewing Disembodied, editor Eric (who is responsible for most of the stuff in here, in the long-standing tradition of workaholic 'zine writers) tran-

Deadguy show years ago to try to have a dialogue about it (the guy is polite, but sadly brainless in his thuggish commitment to "that's just how the world is, dude"), it's even Atom who is responsible for giving Eric the misinformed perspective on the occupation of Palestine. In addition to all this, there's a little piece on sources of inspiration with responses from various hardcore kids and 'zinesters, a contest giving away free stuff (I lost!), a hilarious humor piece at the end... this is awesome, really. However jaded you are with 'zines, this one will have something to offer you—provided you like to read at all. —b

Eric Weiss, 72-38 65 Place, Glendale, NY 11385

Sampled Silence #1: This is a gorgeous little pocket 'zine that mixes impenetrable poetry and political theory with romanticism in the same way that made the Situationists and Refused so exciting, which others (the Eugene anarchists) have been totally unable to duplicate. I think I need to say nothing more about this than to

a box containing 60 French hardcore kids), is full of great stuff. The CD is a little schizophrenic, with bouncy pop punk songs interspersed with aggressive growly hardcore numbers. As for the 'zine itself, it is interesting and well-written. The letters to the editors are answered by Dorian with exhaustive detail (he responds to everything from criticisms that they accepted Goodlife ads for an earlier issue—if only it were actually possible to definitively settle the debate over what constitutes a fundamental compromise of the DIY ethic!—to a reader's worry that he is a Satanist, and all of his answers are at least twice as long as the original letters if not a good 20 or so times...). There are twelve(!) interviews in here, and while some are very general and not terribly compelling (Awkward Thought, Neck), and that fucking word association thing never ever works, many of them are wonderful. Of course, one can always count on Brian D. to go on and on, especially if one asks Catharsis questions like, "What alterna-

preoccupation with the uncanny accuracy of her predictions for the hardcore scene (which she mentions at least 3 times!), I have no complaints at all about a thoughtful, well-written, pro-everything (and provocative, too, and I'm not talking about Latin grammar...), energetic 'zine. (Except, oh, yeah, in the Dominatrix interview (yay!—and otherwise, it's excellent), Brob from Tilt! actually fucking asks if our [his?] perception of Brazilians as being exotic and oversexed is accurate, as if it were a serious question that deserved consideration!) The Vort'n Vis piece, unlike the spreads of band photos that I've seen in several other 'zines this time around, is actually fascinating: it is a comparison of that festival with the More Than Music festival in Columbus, Ohio, comparing them on points like childcare, workshops, organizers, stalls, and music (guess who loses out). Also interesting are the surveys she mails out to some penpals asking their opinions on a few issues. My only frustration was that to the question, "Is it hard to be a vegetarian/vegan where you live?" (the respondents were from far-flung places like Brazil, Slovenia, and Malaysia), a couple responded, "Yes, it is so hard to find tofu, as if carrots weren't vegan. Not that I think vegans (or vegetarians) should be forced to subsist only on carrots, but I think there are probably greater obstacles to vegetarianism/veganism than the ease with which one can find Tofurky slices for one's sandwiches. Why should vegetarian or vegan food have to be a weird substitute for non-vege food? Also, there's a list and brief description of the ten most important news stories with the most inadequate coverage by the mainstream media in 1998, articles on genetically modified foods and gentrification, and a hilarious interview with God. But most prominent in Synthesis is the feminism, which reveals itself constantly in every element of the 'zine, not just in the piece on body image or the Dominatrix interview. Laura writes very eloquently about why all the boys out there should embrace feminism, calling not for equality for women, but for liberation for both sexes from the limitations of all kinds that have been placed on us by inherited gender roles. If you don't read this 'zine, you are a fool. Just some friendly advice from—@

Synthesis, c/o Laura, 14 Batavia Mews, London, SE14 6EA, UK

scribes a tarot card reading of the band... in addition to the more standard (still top notch) band interviews (Los Crudos, Indecision, Good Clean Fun, an exploration of why Kid Dynamite broke up, and Ire, who admirably stick to their guns about the oppression of Palestinians even when the interviewer ignorantly suggests this is anti-Semitic), there are interviews with photographers in the general circles of punk rock (an artistic format which receives little acclaim in our community), an organizer of Farm Sanctuary, and a series of mother/punk child interviews (featuring Ian MacKaye, Ray Cappo, and Caithlin from Rainer Maria and their uniformly nice mothers). The ongoing presence of Atom (of the 'Package fame) adds more personality and continuity: he's present in the 7" reviews, giving sardonic opinions, there's an interview and tour report (Eric came with him), a piece in which they approach a guy who beat Atom up at a

reprint this passage: *We like money, because we can embezzle it. We like shops, because we can shoplift. We like banks, because we can rob them. We like cars, because we can steal them. We like planes, because we can hijack them. We like cops, because we can run from them. We like governments, because we can overthrow them. We like time, because we can be late. We like rules, because we can break them.* Without any logic or deduction, that captures a whole book (or more) of theory in a fun little manifesto, offering a modern demonstration of Nietzsche's amor fati in the process. —b

c/o Eight-o-three records, flip basement, 70/72 Queen Street, Glasgow, g1 3en, Scotland

Satori #5/6 (?): This French 'zine (that also means in French, in this case), which comes with a CD compilation of 15 French bands (or at least of their songs: unless I'm not special or something, I don't think you can expect to get

tives are there to working?," or ones that begin, "Subject: stealing." But there are also great interviews with Rude, Veg'Asso (a vegetarian activist group), Brent, Watch It Fall, and PH1. I am a sucker for original questions, and anyone who asks a band how they wear their hair, and what relation they think hairdos have to music; or whether they consider themselves professional musicians; or whether they think heroin addicts are victims of social and economic problems or of a fucked up system, or something else..., gets at least a few points in my book. There are also some articles: a description of the Mad Max movies, a chronology of Black Flag's career, and an essay on Mod fashion's continued presence today, if not in specific clothing styles, at least as an approach to the world. Add to that assorted reviews, a scene report from Croatia (which includes a history lesson and commentary on the scene in lieu of a list of bands), and a lot of

personality, and you're holding a damn good 'zine. —@

Satori, c/o Dorian & Cedric, 32 rue Portalis, 13100 Aix-en-Provence, France

Silent #3: Uh, nobody's gonna be thrilled about this, but the simplest word I can use to describe this 'zine is "emo": it has a pretty, handmade cover, lots of personal wonderings and wanderings and journal entries inside, handdrawn artwork and collages, romance worries written out for the world to see... There's also a reprint of a Noam Chomsky piece on the bombing of Kosovo, an interview with Chalkline (uh, they're kind of "emo" too, aren't they...) and another with Stretch Armstrong, and... well, that's mostly it... —b

Rik Peeters, Duivelsbroek 5, 2400 Mol, Belgium

Truce #1: This is a hardcore kid 'zine, in that long-standing tradition, and as such has the various strengths and weaknesses of the genre. This is much larger and more involved than any little poorly xeroxed 'zine—a fucking lot of work went into this, clearly, and it's awesome to see non-scenester hardcore kids taking advantage of the opportunities this community offers by putting in the work to do a high quality, useful 'zine like this. Drawbacks? Well, the usual moralizing and lack of clear thinking you come across in the straight edge/consumer hardcore world, but to the editors' credit they're not really guilty of this... it comes out of the mouths of others, like the moron from U.S. band Shockwave they interview (maybe moron is a strong word, but his three interests seem to be bragging about how tough his band is, collecting toys, and taking a stand against "evil" things like "free love")—who, incidentally, seem to have a record out on Good Life, surprise surprise. Other (mostly better) interviews include Belgium's Facedown (whose ideas are quite well-thought out, and the interview goes into appropriate depth), Heaven Shall Burn, Ensign (this is mostly a tour diary from a slightly spoiled band on tour, disappointed when only seventy people come to see them!), Spirit 84 (rather than a traditional interview, this is the editors showing the band video clips and asking for responses... one of them is from a pornographic movie, and it's pretty unpleasant to be reminded of that shit in a hardcore context...), and Upheaval. There are hilarious sections (a fake collector's corner filled with parodies, a made-up advice column, etc.) that emphasize the personality of the editors (a crucial ingredient for a good 'zine), and their reviews and column writing are also intelligent. The verdict is that this is already good for its genre, and could be something better if it continues to exist. —b

Jan Albert Veenema, van Munnickhuizenstraat 9, 8701 BP Bolsward, Holland

Ugly Duckling #4: This is a spirited, youthful 'zine, interesting and idealistic. Personal and personable. Energetic and energizing. Thoughts in these pages go from the need for more communication in the hardcore community to the editor's solution to the caffeine/straight edge problem. There are long but easy to read, and frequently fascinating, interviews with Lifecycle and Jeroen, who was in Clouded. The only way to describe the rest of this 'zine is to say that it's like being pulled into the editor's head for 40 pages. You can listen in on arguments with pro-life kids, late-night anxieties, rants on various topics, lists of ways to be more ecologically responsible, lists of things the editor finds important ("What I hate in 'zines," "My most precious possessions"). Read over the editor's shoulder as she flips through Time magazine. Listen to a bedtime story. Hell, you can even hitch a ride to the Vort 'n Vis festival. The Ugly Duckling is brash and coltish, but it can also be very insightful. And it's that unpredictable mix that makes it so endearing. —@

Lieve Goemaere, Zwaanhofweg 3, 8900 Ieper, Belgium

The Visible Woman #1: This 'zine is even more awesome for what it represents than what it is. It's the first foray into the 'zine world that I've seen from someone coming from the perspective of middle aged womanhood/motherhood, and it's fucking awesome to read about that perspective in a format I'm so familiar with. This is one of the most important 'zines reviewed here, since it offers insight into a world alien to most of us, and also since (we can only hope!) it may herald the coming of a new era of d.i.y., in which people of all walks of life will make and read and learn from 'zines. Think of the community that could result from that... As for contents: there's some discussion of menopause, the author's relationship to her body, a list ("ten things I know about your mother that you don't") which I consider an instant classic, a story of her interactions with one of her younger friends (and the conclusions she draws), a little essay about how touch is disappearing between people in a simultaneously hypersexualized and prudish culture. —b

406 N. Mendenhall Street, Greensboro, NC 27401

Wild Children: This is absolutely beautiful in its wildly passionate youthful abandon and idealism. That's a lot of praise, but it just makes me feel so good to read stories of young people who break the fuck out and go live as they see fit, articulating how and why along the way. Stories of strange dreams, photos of cat comrades, reading lists (including *Pippi Longstocking*, by Astrid Lindgren, and *HeartattaCk*, "by all of us"—right on!), tales of trouble with police and mothers, informative asides on the effects of radiation from nuclear bomb tests on U.S. armymen, travel adventures, poetic ranting about what life is all about—all written evocatively and eloquently

(except for the cat photo, I guess... well, even in that case, I loved the caption). Yeah, this is good. —b

Scott, 545 Calle del Norte, Camarillo, CA 93010

Willful Disobedience (Volume 2, #3): This newsletter/'zine mixes news reporting and analysis with radically anarchist theory. It covers world events such as the trial of the anarchist comrades in Italy with essays pitting "liberated desire" and Nietzsche references against "the logic of submission." As sometimes happens in this genre, the theoretical stuff is actually more impassioned than the practical information, but I think the overall purpose here is to give the individual more tools to work with for her own projects of liberation, rather than to get her to write letters to her Congressman about the situation in Italy. Personally, I eat this stuff up, as an admitted member of the anarchist community (and thus a person who isn't easily intimidated by what others might see as elitist language, "extremism," etc.)—but as always the real question for the future is how the ideas here can be translated out of this ghetto and into the lives of others outside the anarchist "inner circle." In the meantime, such little publications as this will keep us connected, informed still thinking and debating... —b

Venomous Butterfly, 41 Sutter Street, Suite 1661, San Francisco, CA 94104

Willy-Nilly in Your Kitchen: Recipes! We here at KrimethInc. Kitchens (or is that Kirschens?) were delighted to receive a cookzine for review! The first time we heard from this man, he was in Lithuania, and a lot of his recipes seem inspired by a sort of peasant food aesthetic, market-based in a different way from most things these days (the farmer's market, not the global one...). Somehow we neglected to review one of these in our last issue, but it has turned out all right in the end, as it was full of winter recipes, and the weather is growing cold again right now. Sounds like the perfect time for Hearty Pine Grain Stew (featuring, yes, pine needles) or a Root Vegetable Compote. The only major objection I had is that he offers a recipe for chili without tomatoes, which seemed to me unconscionable, as tomatoes are the essence of existence and to leave them out of a recipe in which they might happily reside seemed to me an unnecessary evil—until Brian pointed out that that would leave more tomatoes for other recipes. The recipes are simple and straightforward, from the ingredient lists (no lemongrass or arugula here) to the cooking instructions. Most of the recipes are vegan or easily made vegan. We tried several and were pleased with all of them. The Lithuanian Groundnut Chowder was delicious, and the Sumptuous Cous Cous Salad divine. Lots of soup recipes, which has been an adventure for a crew that has sometimes subsisted entirely on bagels and rice for weeks at a time. A couple of the recipes can be a little bland, but that just gives

you the opportunity to use your spice rack. We weren't big on the Pine Needle Tea, though. Perhaps the winters aren't hoary enough here to be made more comfortable by a mug of bitter pine resins.

P.S. We tried the chili recipe, and it was good, after all. Even without tomatoes. —@

If you know what's good for you, you'll write to Jack Clang, 26 Lefferts Pl. #6, Brooklyn, NY 11238

No Longer Blind/United Fury split fanzine: An earnest effort by sincere kids. United Fury is the less polished of the two, containing a couple of band interviews (Standard and Day of Contempt) a personal column on rape and power, one on Amnesty International (of which the writer is a member), some record reviews (in one of which the reviewer actually offers to tape a 7" for people who can't find it, which I think is awesome), a couple of vegan recipes and a fairly straightforward column about socioeconomics and idealism. No Longer Blind concentrates on fellow fanzines in this issue, with interviews with MRR, Slug & Lettuce, Reflections, and United Front, and a couple of essays (done as papers for school!) on what and why a fanzine is. Kind of hilarious, but interesting, to read all the basic 'zine ideology again, but this time with parenthetical documentation! ("Zines, in direct opposition (and usually consciously), are self produced, non-profit publications for cultures that resist the mainstream (Duncombe 1997 pp 111-113).") Then there are shorter essays on various topics that tend to fall under the vast umbrella of hardcore ethics. Violence and straight edge (via the SLC media frenzy), the right of punk bands to have no talent and lots of fun, a call to, well, not arms, but at least action by the nay-sayers and cynics of the hardcore community, and hardcore ideology. There's also one entitled "punk-onomics," which, although its ideas are not so ridiculous (trying to put on shows at venues where there is less overhead (as in, for the security guards and bartenders...), and perhaps even charging a little bit more, might generate more money for bands and help them pay for their gas, at the very least), uses such unbelievable facts to support itself on that I can see it sway dangerously in light breezes. A \$5 (US\$) show 20 years ago, he says, is the equivalent of \$30 today. So we are actually giving much less support; financially, to bands now, even though there is a strong community that is supposed to make these things easier. First of all, I am being asked to believe that there has been 600% inflation in a time known for its steadily falling inflation. And more impossibly, since our governments are capable of anything, especially if given 20 years to do it in, I am being asked to believe that alienated, working class punks in the late 70s and early 80s were paying the equivalent of a millennial \$30 of their paychecks, if they had them, to see bands play in dives and holes. I think the only band I'd have to pay \$30 to see today would be the fucking

Eagles, not Dissemble in my friend's basement. While the inflation point is an interesting one, the numbers given are just implausible. The most interesting thing about these 'zines, for me, is that although they are Australian, the dialect is the same as any American 'zine's. This makes me wonder: do the words evoke concepts that differ in any way at all? Are Australian kids talking

about the same things as American kids? Is DIY different for them, or racism, or the Sex Pistols? Even marginally? Or have we really created a worldwide community that speaks exactly the same language? And would that be a strength, or a weakness?—@

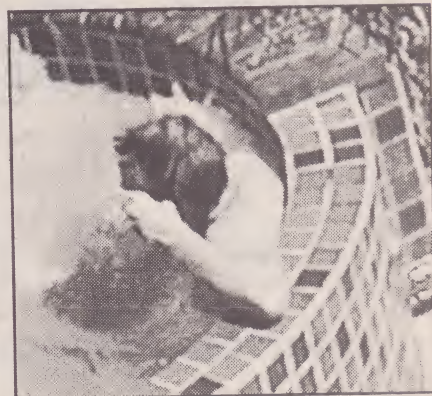
No Longer Blind, 74 Gladstone Ave., Wollongong, NSW, 2500 Australia

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CrimethInc. Special Report



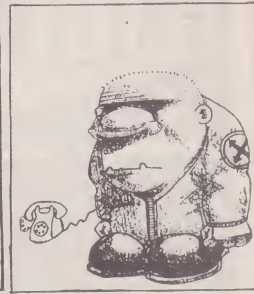
... and in reality these undercover photos show just how "punk and hardcore" the band really is, relaxing around the pool...



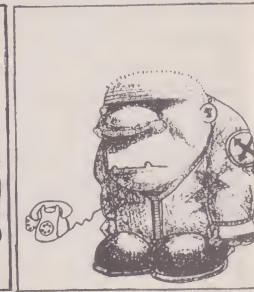
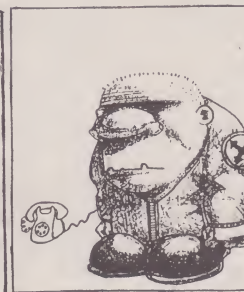
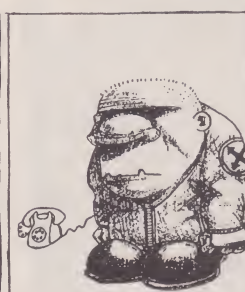
... but be careful because they still know enough to roughen up unwanted paparazzi.

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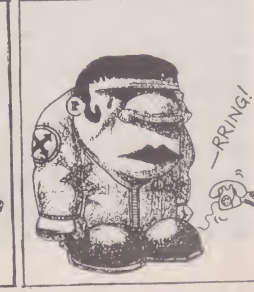
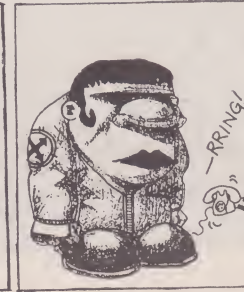
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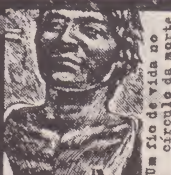
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September 12, 2000

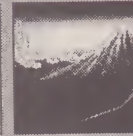


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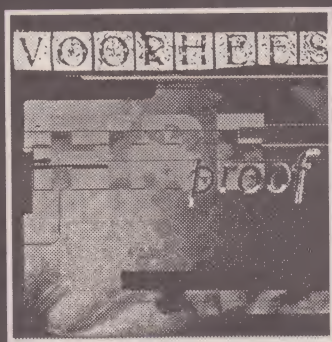
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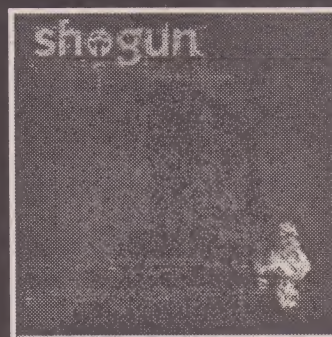
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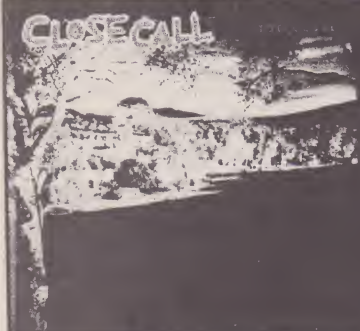
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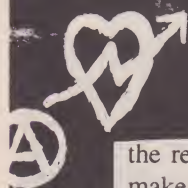
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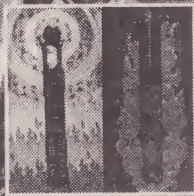
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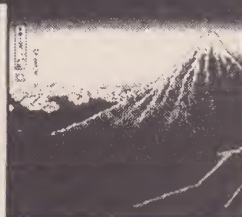
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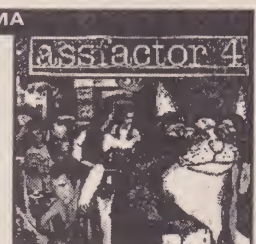
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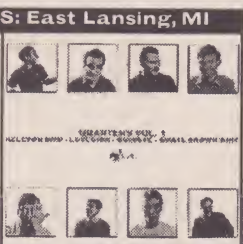
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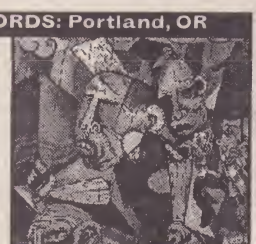
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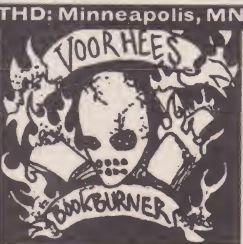
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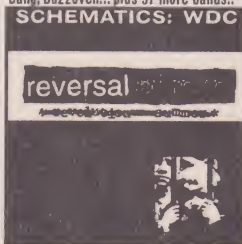
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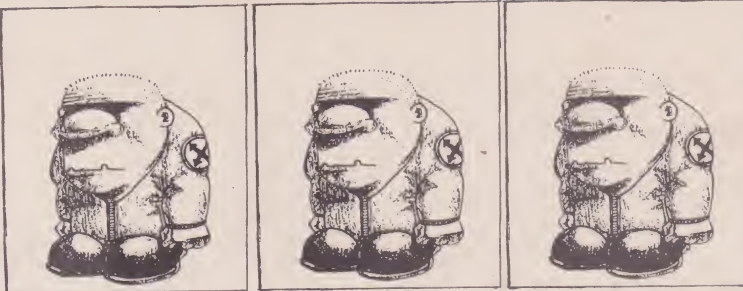
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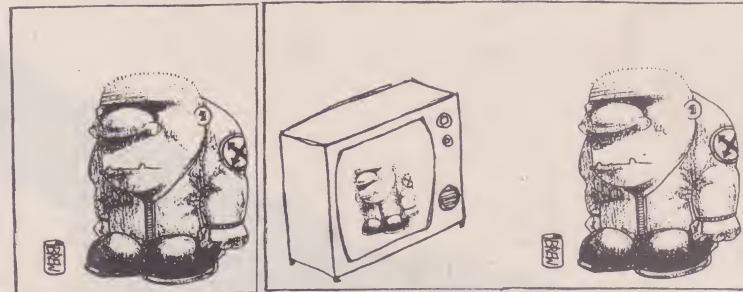
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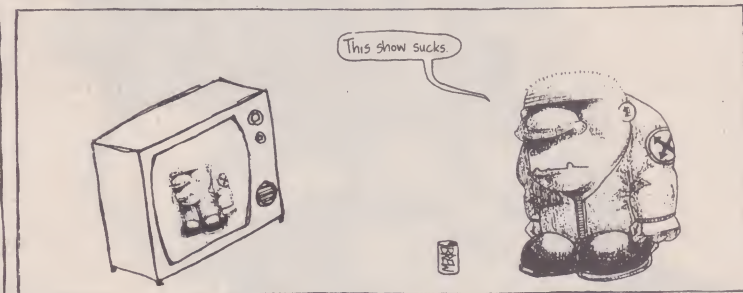
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BLUES"
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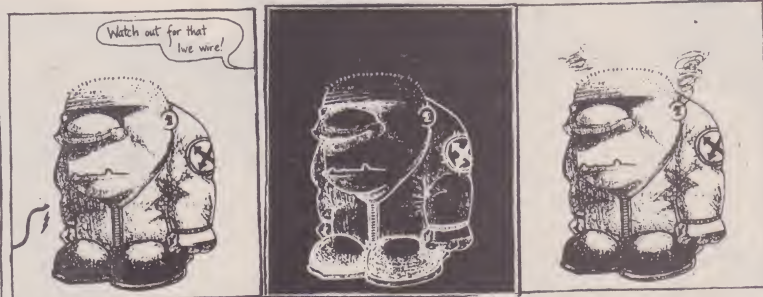
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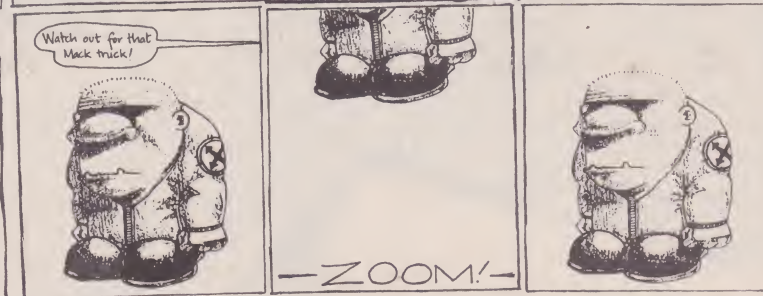
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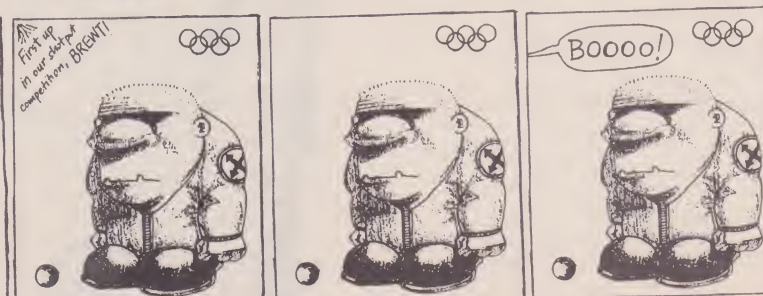
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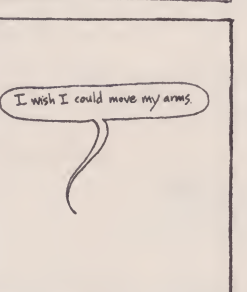
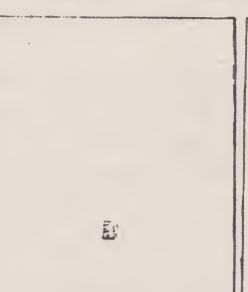
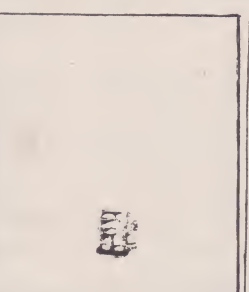
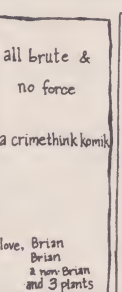
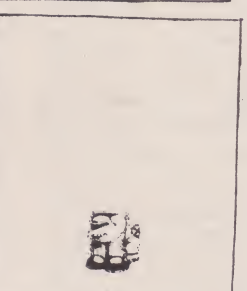
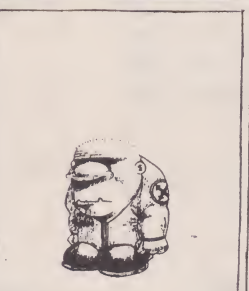
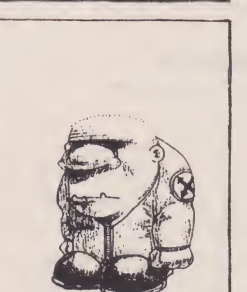
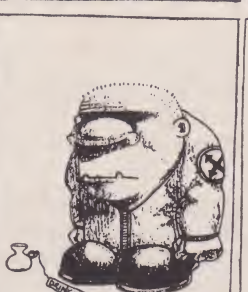
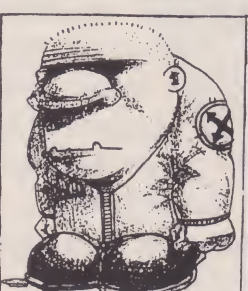
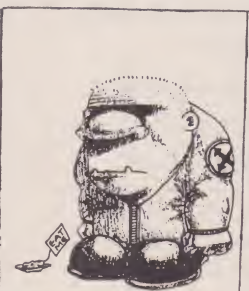
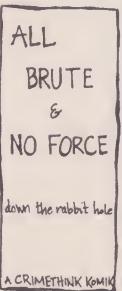
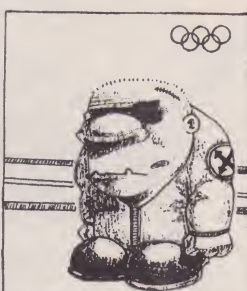
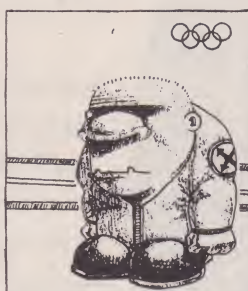


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MILEMARKER

"Industry for the Blind"

This is not conversation. It's just well-wrapped sensation with a mannequin lining to remind you to sign in. It's not altercation, it's just reaffirmation that you're standing on desks shouting at no one at best. You've got to get up to stand up. Don't bother playing dead. Gouge your eyes out. It's better not to see the way things are without a way to get where they should be. The ones who don't were just thinking ahead. They dug this ditch for you, now the best that you can do is lie in it. This is not altercation, it's just well-wrapped sensation, and now you're telling about the chaos you're wearing. The ones who lined in the blueprint to sign in have got you sucking hand over fist. You've got to get up to stand up, don't bother playing dead.

*Milemarker c/o Al Burian fan club, 307
Blueridge Road, Carrboro, NC 27510*

NEWBORN

"Citadels Burning"

Why are you shouting against certain things, when you just do the same? I can't believe you're so fucking ignorant. Instead of breaking down walls together, you're just raising them high to the skies. Your actions driven by your ignorant arrogance just fuel their fire. And we don't have the time to spark ours. How many words have been said, but

nothing came true, how many songs have been sung, but it seems all that we've found are some deaf ears. I just can't believe you're still here at this point. And if you keep doing your pity things, we won't reach forward for the cause. The saddest thing is that you're always having crowds who believe and follow blindly your slogans. But don't expect me to follow you, and don't expect me to believe. I'll be the first one to throw stones at your citadel, I'll be the first one to burn them down. Burn them down. I'll watch your citadels burning, I'll watch them end in ashes. End in ashes.

*Jakab Zoltan, H-2120 Dunakeszi, Rozmaring
U. 30, Hungary*

REDEMPTION

"Daphne"

I knew of spirits who transited as fast as the wind. I knew of men who moved slow through the crowd with enormous weights of skulls. If I stare at my eyes and I search, I know I can find the good angel. Mirror - look well "heart." Angel, I was searching for you by sight. I want to learn how to love, and loving more than myself. Bring like clear river - search and taken I'll be by your sight. Slow I'll go on my without turning back, I'll bring you out of hell "Daphne" and at the sound of the sunset. I will look to a reborn spirit.
I'm not gonna leave you there.
You left me there for a long time.

I will not turn.

Turn around but stay with me.

Redemption is: Perilli - voice • Valentina - voice
• Simone - guitar • Livio - guitar • Emiliano -
bass • Giorgio - drums • Chiara plays piano in
this song • Recorded at The Temple Of Noise
(December 99). Produced by Christian Ice and
Redemption • Mixed by Christian Ice.
Mastered at The Temple Of Noise.

ENDSTAND

"The Way"

POINT OF NO RETURN

"Casa de Caboclo"

Endless nights of persecution
reopening wounds - never healed.

Always willing to suppress our attempts to be
free.

Violence is always a tool in so called
democracy.

Agents of the state allowed to spread terror,
seeking to eliminate sparks of political
resistance.

Endless nights of violation
breeding fear - anguished cries.

A blood oath to never surrender.
Committed to the struggle
until all fences are burned.

You'll try the taste of pain we endure every

day.
 To quit without resisting would be to live in
 vain.
 Attentive eyes
 guard the tents in the twilight.
 Women and men
 ready to counterattack.
 Full moon shines...
 The enemy crawls in the dead of night.
 No way back...
 The masked cops take their final step.

You're trapped.
 Surrounded by the mass.
 Laws are ignored.
 Justice from bleeding hands.

There is a real war across the Brazilian territory. It is a war against hunger, misery and social injustice declared by millions of peasants who joined the Brazilian Landless Workers Movement (MST) - now one of the largest and most important social movements in Latin America. From the past colonization, which fed off all forms of exploitation, very few and privileged people in Brazil inherited a huge concentration of power and wealth, including lands. Nowadays, two thirds of the Brazilian agricultural land are controlled by landlords and by multinational corporations, whereas approximately thirty-

two million Brazilians suffer from starvation and sixty million are underfed. This system of atrocities and inequalities has given Brazilian rural workers no choice other than taking the land by force. Either they carry out occupations in order to have a place where they can live and grow their own food or they starve to death. The MST was then formed to speed up land reform, and achieve social equality. It has investigated unused and unproductive estates and organized landless workers' families to occupy them. Predictably, their actions have faced extreme repression all over the country. Militias have been formed and financed by landlords to suppress and kill members of the MST and there have been frequent violent conflicts involving landless workers, police troops and professional killers, which have always ended in bloodshed. Thousands of peasants have been killed in the last thirty years and MST members have also faced politically motivated trials. Fiction and reality are mixed in Casa de Caboclo as we try to narrate the terrible nights of persecution and torture against the MST. In the middle of the night, the landless workers' tents are suddenly invaded by armed masked people. Children are separated from their parents and shots are fired creating angst and despair. Men are kept naked for hours and are often threat-

ened and tortured. This situation is nothing but an illustration of how violence is always used by the so-called democratic governments that rule this world. It was used during the massacre in Acteal, Mexico, where 45 people were murdered by a military group in December, 1997. That's the way it is in Brazil, too. So far everything is part of a sad reality. The fictitious aspect of these lyrics emerges when the workers, tired of being tortured, decide to react and plan to corner their attackers. This song, however, expresses a feeling, maybe an irrational one, we have rather than some form of behavior we are proposing. In fact, what this song reflects is a position of total intolerance towards the methods of repression used by the State. We would like this intolerance to be present in all sectors of our society. "We are afraid, but we don't use our fear."

Casa de Caboclo was taken from the first Point of No Return CD, which is called "Sparks" and came out on Catalyst Records (www.xcatalystx.com) from the USA and Liberation (www.xliberationx.com) from Brazil. Contact the band at: Caixa Postal 4193 Sao Paulo-SP 01061-970 Brazil valovelho@hotmail.com

LARIAT "CULTURE"

(this was recorded August 12th, 2000 @NYU by Steve Roche)

THEY SAY ART IMITATES LIFE, SO THEN WE ARE ALL DEAD. OUR SOULS HAVE BEEN STRIPPED AWAY FOR COMMERCIAL VALUE.
 WE ARE THE CULTURE OF THE DEAD. OUR WORDS HOLD NO MEANING. OUR EXPRESSIONS, OUR WORDS, ARE A COMMODITY.

I woke up this morning to discover that my world is constructed.
 The "free market" has selected everything I eat, wear and enjoy.
 This is a market so free that the majority of the great wealth generated by it rests in the hands of only 10 percent of the human population.
 I watch television and read magazines that tell me the path to happiness is consumption. If I buy a new car or television I will be happy. The unneeded items in life represent our power; how far up we have climbed on the social ladder? In this free society of so many choices I find it increasingly difficult to find affordable and available goods that are not created by sweat shop labor. I am not informed of the food that has been genetically enhanced by science. If I was not connected to a "sub-culture" I would still believe that cooperate media was giving me unbiased information. Art, which is supposedly selected by the people, is just contrived dribble which is spoon-fed to us by clever cooperate advertising. We don't need a Gestapo to enforce big business's rule. We embrace it, afraid that we will miss out on the next trend. Because our social superiority is based on the ability to be the first sheep lead to pasture.

Lariat Headquarters - 22 South Lake Ave #2A Albany, NY 12203 USA lariatnyhc518@hotmail.com

NEWSPEAK

"A Nice Talk Between Hollow Walls"

I've found a broken mirror smashed by
expectations
Reflecting privacy violated by the policy of
illusions
Incinerating images of failure and marching
through pacified bodies
I found the gunfire and I keep on telling
myself
Emptiness
We are falling
Silence
We are falling
The lack of hope, the absence of possibilities,
stimulates me to relax and let it go, overlooking
everything I condemned myself to look
at forever. Anyway I pay obedience only to
"judge me," and not to circumstances forced
at me by the objects of my hate.
Distance is bigger and now we don't have a
horizon
Makes me want to know where all this blood
flowing through my hands came from
But some guy called "confusion" came first
with opportunities and smiles
And we sit down together eating peanuts and
hiding our knives
We're falling down

Counter-cultural production has always

tried to militantly knock down old myths.
But instead of disassociating with these
myths, dissident music introduced a new
mythology, incarnated in the fantastic idea of
a "day that will come," with the function of
absolving the listener of any responsibility in
the historical process. Thus, protest music
becomes, for many people, a moral support
for their theoretical beliefs. In punk and HC,
this self-patrolling stance became an obstacle
for a bigger (and better) production. Our cir-
cuit becomes standardized, and little by little
the questioning and interrogation become
cliché. A hierarchy of values, that indoctrina-
te "rebellion" was institutionalized.
Challenge was mechanized, transforming
something that was once so intensely vision-
ary, into something dated and pedantic. If
we revise the means that we ourselves limit,
we can have a strong instrument for social
action. This latest affirmation may be ques-
tionable, but applying a little skepticism, in
the moment when we expose ourselves, we're
socializing our principles. Everything is cen-
tered in the scale of absorption, in the num-
ber of people reached. And even having a
limited scale, we can't underrate the channels
that remain outside corporate entities.
Therefore, we must use our means of com-
munication ('zines, bands, pamphlets...) wisely,
with a latent spirit of renovation, so
we can plant the seeds of a real departure

from a world that, day after day, takes away
our taste for life.

*Newspeak, Rua Juranda 126, 05442-070,
Sao Paulo, SP, Brazil*

SHANK

"His Giro is Gone"

My Giro lies by my front door
It was spent before it hit the floor,
Jesus Christ, what a rigmarole
to be in debt, living on the dole

A handful of smash to furnish my dreams
punishment for living beyond my means
my debtors all know it's giro day
but salvation always seems to be a fortnight
away

This grinding eternal now
from which even work won't set me free

You want to experience real fucking
ennui? Try signing on the dole for a year or
two. Living hand to mouth day after day in a
twilight half-life, always conscious that a bit
of unexpected expense might force you to
forgo electricity for a day or two. That bub-
ble of short-lived joy when your giro (that's
'welfare cheque' to our American friends)
arrives every two weeks is inevitably burst
when you calculate just how much you owe
out. And yet, we are supposed to be eternal-
ly grateful to the government for this bind.

I realize that many people around the
world are not afforded this kind of 'safety
net', and I suppose I should think myself
lucky (if you think this kind of enforced
docility can be called luck.) But what really
pisses me off is when the same politicians
who were responsible for cutting back on
my education, turn round and call us 'dole
scroungers' or 'welfare cheats'.

Sorry, but you failed me with your sub-
standard schooling, and now that you've cre-
ated an unskilled, uneducated underclass,
you want to pin the blame on us? You
trapped us in this Pavlovian cycle - not us.
You seem to forget that welfare was created
as a pacifying strategy - 'three meals away
from revolution' and all that.

If I were you, I have a long hard think
about what might happen when you starting
cutting people's benefits en masse. You
would do well to remember that the most
potent revolutionary forces are compromised
of people with NOTHING LEFT TO
LOSE.

*Andy Stick, Flat 1/1, 274 Kilmarnock Road,
Glasgow G43 2X5, Scotland, U.K.*

**★ RESISTIREMOS! - Sociedade em descalabro/Afogada em cos-
tumes inválidos/Conformismo e inércia/Retardando a insur-
reição/Condicionalizada a micro valores/Trabalho árduo por pra-
zeres fúteis/Estresse e violência/São as cartas na manga do
Estado/Sim, está uma merda!/As vezes realmente desanima/
Temos que convir/Quanto poderoso é o nosso inimigo/Nem
por isso vou dar um foda-se/E me entregar ao desalento/Se
meu ódio é algo maior/A todo momento/Então que fique bem
claro: Nós resistiremos!!! ★**

**★ WE WILL RESIST! - Society on decline/Drowned on invalid
customs/Conformity and inercy/Retarding the insurrection/
Conditioned to micro values/Hard working for foolish plea-
sures/Stress and violence/Are the cards from State/Sure, its
bullshit/Sometimes its take us down/We have to realize/That
our enemy is really powerful/But we wont turn us back/And
bring me to sadness/If my hate is bigger/All the time/To make
it clear: We will resist!!! ★**

**Abuso Sonoro today are: Juquinha- Drums; Angelo-bass; Rui-
Guitar; Arilson-guitar & vocal and Elaine-vocal. They recorded
respectively the vocals, drums, bass and guitars live on studio,
in the middle month of June'2000.**

**For more info, friendship, barricadas and resistance, write for
this address above : Cx. Postal: 2098 - Santos/São Paulo**

11060-970/ Brasil/Latin America.

E-mail: abuso_sonoro@yahoo.com.br

website: http://www.abusosonoro.cjb.net

Constrito

Permissividade

Forjar os cadeados e prender as escolhidas
 Sugar a egergia de seus corpos jovens
 extirpando sua inocência
 Herdeiras de um legado hipócrita
 Patriarcas e mães submissas - violadores
 demoníacos com tradições arbitrárias
 Negação continua / traumas profundos
 / segredo de família
 De seus lares a imundas alcovas
 Começando em casa, indo para as ruas do
 desespero
 Sofrer!!!
 Iludidas na promessa de emprego
 Confinadas sob ameaça
 Obrigadas a vender-se para sobreviver
 Elas sentem a pele em contato com a sua
 O fodor do hálito é o suor de corpos
 Para quem foge, morte e perseguição
 Espancamento para as que voltam
 A dor e a terra da vala comum
 Sem lamentos ou alguém para se lembrar
 A depressão alucinógena cheira álcool
 Que os aliciadores sejam empalados
 De seu sofrer vem meu regozijo
 De no mínimo uma vida salva
 Elimine os opressores / liberdade ao corroer
 o sistema que se alimenta de destruição
 Não posso virar, fechar meus olhos e negar
 Um grito mudo explode meus ouvidos a cada vida violada
 A ferida aguarda o curativo
 A estrada da conformidade leva a cidade do descaso
 Junto ao muro da lamentação
 Eu busco a elevação da dignidade perdida
 Peço que me ouça / considere o meu apelo
 O sofrimento deve cessar / grite de suas entranhas
 Com a dor dos corpos delas (altruismo é a ligação)
 Seremos uma voz, um instrumento de justiça.

Permissividade

(the title is a combination between two words: "permissive" witch means permissive and "passividade" witch is passivity. So it's a tolerance for passivity. In other words stay quiet in your home and close all the windows.)

To forge the padlocks and lock the chosen ones
 To drain the essence of their young bodies
 Striping of their innocence
 Heiresses of an hypocrite legacy
 Patriarchs and submissive mothers
 Demonic violators with arbitrary traditions
 Continued negation / profound traumas / family's secret
 From their homes to filthy alcoves
 Starting to suffer at hearth, heading to the streets of despair
 Suffer!!!
 Deluded with promises of work
 Confined under threats
 Forced to sell themselves in order to survive
 They feel skin in touch with theirs
 The sweat and the stench breath of bodies
 To those who run away - persecution and death
 Beating for the ones who comes back
 The pain and the earth of an unknown grave
 Without lamentations or someone to remember
 This hallucinogenic depression smells alcohol
 Let the executioners be impaled
 From their suffering will come my satisfaction
 Of at least one life saved
 Eliminate the oppressors / liberty as this system
 is corroded
 That feeds itself on destruction
 I can't turn my back, close my eyes and deny
 A silent scream blows my ears at each life raped
 The wound awaits for the cure
 The road of conformity leads to the city of blinds and
 to the wall of lamentations
 I seek the elevation of the lost dignity
 I ask you to listen to me / to consider my call
 This grief must end / scream from your guts
 With the pain of their bodies (altruism is the link)
 We must be a voice, a tool for justice...

The explanation : first of all we'd like to tell you that the translation lose some of the expressive aspects of Portuguese, so if some parts the lyric sounds strange it is due to this fact. when the question is about sexual exploitation on women, Brazil represent itself as one of the leaders in that matter. Because of the 500 years old macho tradition to the enormous profits of sexual tourism the Brazilian society sees this problem as something that should not be spoken of, "the family's secret". Even if we are five males and do not suffer directly from this situation we cannot live in this denial and not defend women rights. We consider ourselves as a feminist band and every fight in order to reach justice is a fair fight witch needs to be revealed to the public so discussion will take place and solutions will start to appear.



Por falta de espaço e pelo fato dos leitores deste zine dominarem o inglês, não colocamos uma explicação em português. Mas para adquirir-la entre em contato com a banda:

constrito@zaz.com.br

Cx. Postal 21053 - São Paulo/SP
 CEP 04602-970 - Brazil

Ruination "Losing Friends"

"No, I'm not quite sure just what it is you're trying to rub my face in here, but yeah you've changed, as all things change. If that's your point, it's loud and clear. I think you want me to kick and scream, or try to tell you who to be. I'm still trying to figure out if you're really talking to you or me. Maybe I'm sad to see you go. Maybe I just hate feeling alone. Maybe I don't know how to take it when it hits this close to home. All we had, the times we shared. We always said it was thicker than blood. I know it's gone, and not coming back, but what IS left? Do we write it off and walk away? See all those years just laid to waste? I can't tone down this life I've found because you've changed your mind. So what we keep and throw away is your call as well as mine."

There is no Inner Circle. Consistency is the exception to the rule. We don't account for changes of heart, and our friendships suffer as we fall into the familiar roles of The non-

sistent and the Intolerant. Those of us who fall out have to accept our friends' consistencies as much as we'd expect them to accept our changes. Nor should the rest of us have to play down the things we do still care about to save ourselves discomfort. Respect where someone is at, their politics, their lifestyle choices, especially if you've been there, has to be mutual if our friendships are going to see us through our lives and not just our youth. We've all waded through too much shit together to just write it off and walk away.

Recorded on 4 tracks 7.21.00 by Ex-Members of Mike Surfin in his living room somewhere in Illinois. Ruination is Andy Dempz, Chris Colohan, Ebro Virumbrales and Mike Haliechuk. You can reach us through +/- . Mike is sponsored by Etobicoke track pants and wears exclusively Velcro shoes. Thanks Brian.

SPEAK UP! "Abused Words"

You're always talkin' to me about love
But the only thing what you want is to fuck
Idealize your instincts and call 'em feelings
Love is what you pretend, is this the end
Your soul is full of filth, guilt
So I don't need you to tell me
What's unconditional loyalty

Rape the love
Abuse the purity
Betray the loyalty

You're hiding behind words
You abuse the words which still mean something
You don't give respect
You come to an agreement with yourself

My love is real!
My love is clear!
My love is true!
I hate you!

contact *Speak Up!* through Zoli from Newborn

consummate wrath

a steady bleeding on demand
onto the altar of sacrifices
the candle of hope
it never gave me any light
in life

the pain begins in understanding
i'm bathing in anguish and silent despair
finding myself alone in crowded rooms
all we are
puppets in our own naive drama
and our hollow deeds
create a restless nothingness

relieve my torment, kiss me a last
goodbye
i'm dying, leaving it all behind



i feel no regret, can feel no remorse
i found home in darkness
i killed all love, killed all life
i killed my god

inside i'm burning with hatred
the incarnation of wrath
yearning to extinguish, i feel no regret
i found home in darkness
and the pain ends in understanding

she's the perfect victim,
her beauty is her guilt
she'll walk on my side
through the gates to hell

her statuesque figure inspires my creation
slivers of moonlight on the blade of steel
i feel no pain now that she's mine
to fulfill my work in flesh and blood

Since we are forced to hide or deny our real emotions in every day life, there grows the danger of a sick society that one day will violently break out of these chains. passion and desire is considered evil or "uncivilized" and so we pretend to be happy and well-balanced personalities although anger is nothing inhuman: building up this anger is the demon that may develop to such madman like a mass-murderer. these lyrics do not justify violence but we should consider where this brutality comes from before judging such people.

"beauty wasn't the treachery he imagined it to be, rather it was an uncharted land where one could make a thousand fatal errors, a wild and indifferent paradise without signposts of evil or good."

anne rice

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CWILL
"Darkness"

A dream of darkness
Saved from the burden
Free finally free
What remains is what I love
The only light

Redemption—please save me
Save me from myself

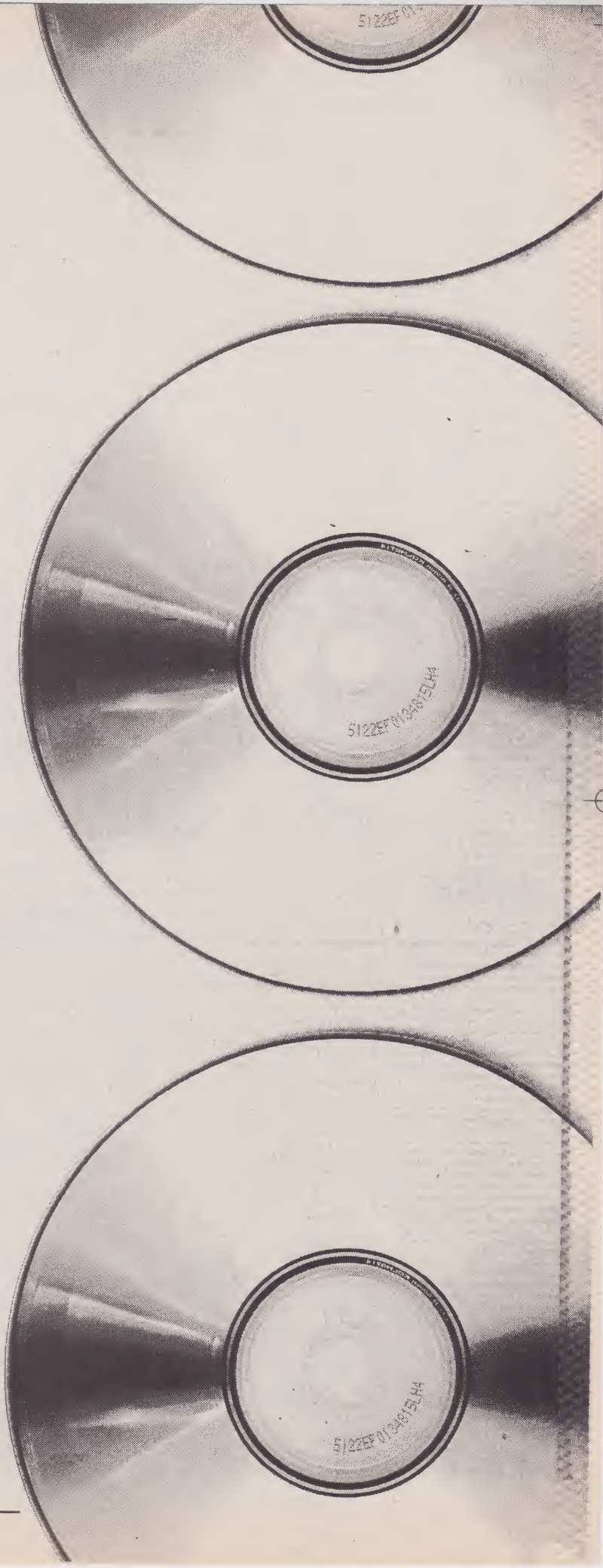
Save me from myself
But I hold back
It's not time yet
Perhaps soon

Endless falling,
Endless redemption
Sleep find the silence
Saved from the burden
Free, finally free

What remains is what I love
The only light I see

A dream of darkness
Endless falling,
Endless redemption
Sleep, find the silence
Saved from the burden

*Thomas Vogel, Honggerstr. 18, CH-8037
Zurich, Switzerland*



Afterwords...

It's been three months of frustrating layout delays and postponements since I wrote the last words of the last review for this issue, and it's ridiculous that this thing isn't out yet [Designer's note: fuck you!]. I guess that's the way it works in the world of 'zines. Now I'm sitting in my lover's apartment (freezing of course, in the Inside Front tradition), listening to Stef's tape of the incredible new Tragedy record, typing the filler for the absolutely final page.

A lot has happened since I first wrote the introduction, of course, and it almost seems naïve in retrospect—not because it was too hopeful, but because I didn't have the perspective then to see just how quickly the things I've been waiting for would start becoming possible. This weekend we were in Washington, D.C. to participate in the Un-auguration activities... imagine a world in which the new President of the United States has to ride hidden behind black, bullet-proof windows to get through the Inaugural Parade, as tens of thousands of U.S. citizens scream "FUCK YOU!!" and wave their fists at him from all sides—now check this out: you live in it. Not that this is much help or consolation to the millions still strapped to the wheel of work-rent-television-taxes, but when a march of liberal democrats changes course to rescue a fragment of the Black Bloc trapped and assaulted by police officers, knowing full well that these are kids who oppose voting on every level and are out explicitly for the sake of property destruction, it indicates that a fundamental shift in values is taking place away from the complacency and timidity that make such absurd conditions possible. If this doesn't seem to be taking place in your town yet, hold on tight—or, far better, make it happen.

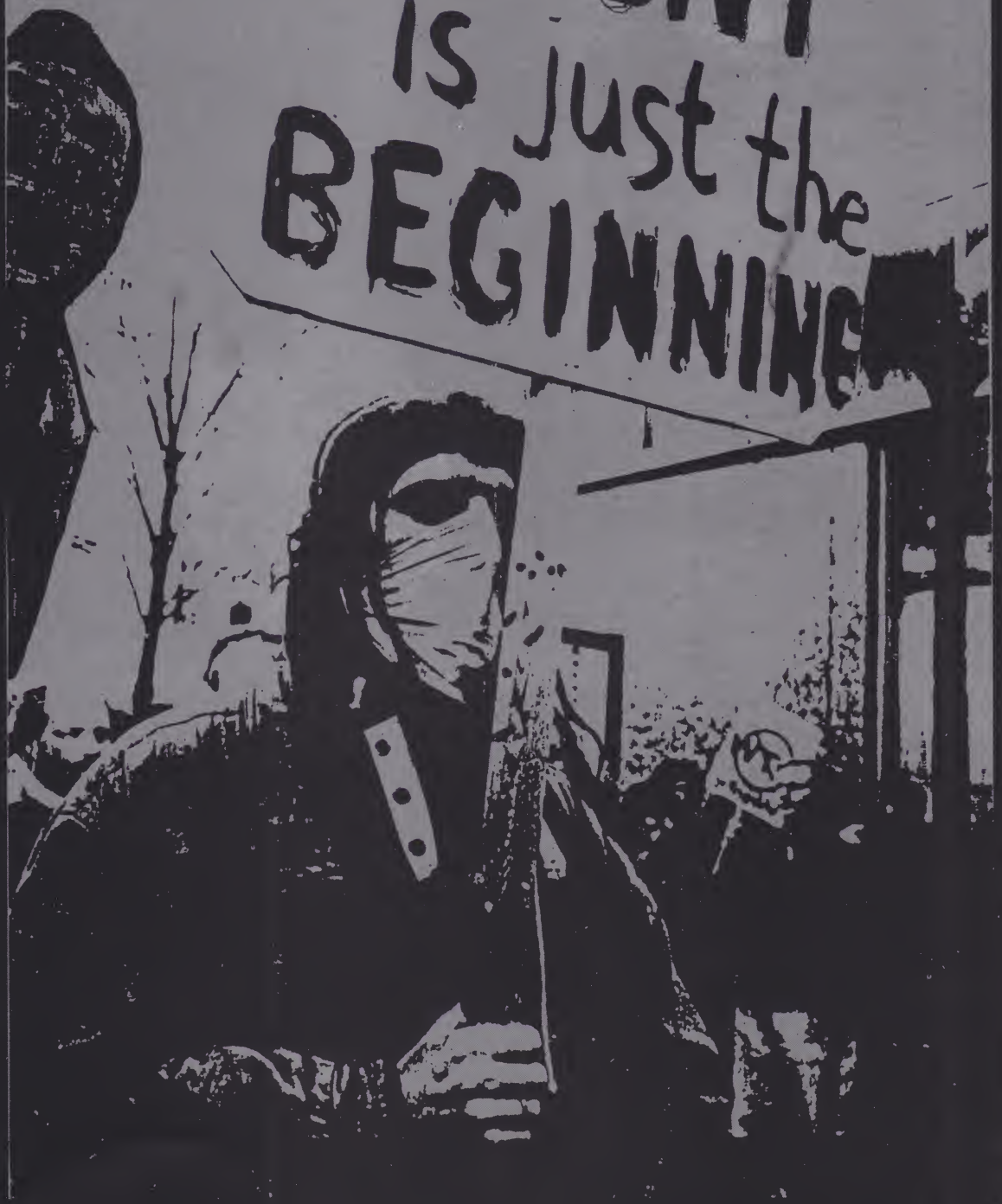
I spent the week leading up to the Inauguration in Pittsburgh with two friends of mine, establishing a workshop there with which we mass-produced stickers, fliers, and posters to be applied and given away at the demonstration and afterwards. As I described in the features section earlier in this issue, I think that's where it's at for the next stage of resistance—autonomous cells everywhere across the world, capable of organizing their own cheap/free living, propaganda, adventures, activism, taking responsibility for making life something awesome and beautiful...

Here's the bottom line, which I've said a hundred times before, but I don't think it can be said enough—you have to find ways to simultaneously stay alive in this world and make changes in it. Yes, it's hard to live, yes, it's hard to believe in anything when you're filled with pain from childhood abuse or workplace boredom or the simple struggle to get along with the motherfuckers around you—but for heaven's sake don't stop there. So many of my friends are left out of the transformations that are taking place right now because the ways of surviving they found are dead ends—one is an alcoholic like his father, another already dead from a drug overdose, another still working full time to pay for more tattoos, another working at a job he hates to save up money for his next vacation, another spends all his free time working on an intricate model boat. These are all legitimate ways to live—hell, everything is legitimate as far as I'm concerned, and whatever it takes to be able to bear life is right on—but they don't offer open horizons, they don't do anything to put you in a situation where the conditions of your life might change.

If you can tie your immediate needs to pursuits that can create new opportunities for you, you've got a chance to beat the system. If you need to eat, eat in a way that helps others eat too, by working with Food Not Bombs—if you love bicycling, don't spend all your time working to buy new bicycles, new surrogates for adventure: start a bicycle repair collective so you'll have all the stuff around you for free, or go out bicycling across the country, like some friends of mine did to raise awareness about the plight of children in Iraq—if you desperately need a break from the repetitions of the work life, go on tour with a punk band or activist group instead of taking a tourist vacation—if you have to have a place to stay, try to organize a collective housing space, it'll save you money and help you avoid the isolation of a normal living cubicle—if you have children to take care of, there's no better time than now to start working on establishing better day care and school alternatives, especially since your kids are going to have to deal with thousands of other kids who didn't get the benefit of these things otherwise—if you have to work to support your family, work a job where you can join the I.W.W. and help organize your fellow workers—if nothing feels honest and liberating to you except smashing things, you can smash them with the Black Bloc and still participate in making a different world. You don't need to do this shit to serve the cause or whatever—I'm just saying that in my personal experience, it feels better. Being a revolutionary is right on just because it's a more exciting, rewarding way to live—I don't recommend it to others because I want "converts" for the "movement" nearly so much as because I'm desperate to see the people around me feel better about things, feel more optimistic and excited to be human and alive.

And the postscript to all of this is that those of us who think we've found ways to do it already have to figure out what it is we're doing that is scaring others off from joining us. Could it be that the greatest obstacle to this revolution is our own self-importance, our desperate need to assert ourselves as the saviors, the knights in shining armor, the assholes who have figured everything out? My personal project for the coming months is to work out how to be less intimidating to everyone else. Anyhow, I'm off, as I hope this 'zine will be to the printers soon—expect to see more from us and of us very soon.

INSIDE
FRONT
is just the
BEGINNING



From here, whatever was worthwhile about Inside Front is in your hands. We're not ending our work with the magazine in defeat or exhaustion—to the contrary, we're more involved and active than ever—but rather because it has taken us as far as it needed to; now we find ourselves standing at a vista from which new horizons can be seen, and we have to make new vehicles to carry us to them. This isn't the end of hardcore being relevant to our lives, or of life being relevant to hardcore, or of our contributions to either of those things. But Inside Front is now yours, yours to improve on, yours to apply and add to. We're absolutely confident that from these seeds, a hundred greater forces will grow, and we who have nourished this project to this point must simply let go of the reigns to let it become what it must now become—which you can see more clearly than us, we're certain!

Thank you all so much for supporting us in so many ways over the last seven years, which taught us so much—everything we know, really. Hope to see you soon, wherever in the world you are. Yours with love,

Brian and the rest of the C.W.C.



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A semi-complete listing of all our other projects can be found in the first few pages of this issue.

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