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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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 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 exploit-ed 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 clique, infighting radical group claims to have. That was never our inten-tion. 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 partic- ipant in an unsustainable global system is sheer madness; relying on the assurance 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 collectively house 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 the all the time and energy that we put into them instead of into working—ever 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 couchsurfing revolutionaries won't always be occupying this no-man's-land between generosity and dependence.

A snapshot from my life: the past few days (as of Sunday, about midnight, June 17, 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 Eyo Ki). They started the show (after a hilarious performance from a punk kid with an acoustic guitar and a manically 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 shoppedlifted in mass quantities to celebrate their first show (when it started running low, some of them hacked 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 Eyo Ki, and it was beautiful for me to see our community live up to its pretensions about fighting sexism and gender roles: the men presented 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 dumped, 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 noisy band for months, and never got around to it, until a week before the date he'd promised they realized this in trouble and started trying to come up with a solution. He hit up 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 he'd forgotten to book a show for a band that would be arriving on Saturday. Zack drewled "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 Kinkos... 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 noontime marching, entering, and exploring we did, 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, 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 recorded 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 it’s 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 candles 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, clenching 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 hardly 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 pranked 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 dum-}

headed to the stove to make some noodles, eating the introduction to our hardcore magazine on my bequeathed 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 HeartraaCk: 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 no people rather than being a place 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 to 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 periodic, 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 even 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 Habinger 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: CrimethInc. Far East P.O. Box 1963 Olympia, WA 98507
Or visit the CrimethInc. webpage for more information, news, further reading, etc.: www.crimethinc.com paulfmaul@crimethinc.com

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 #11: 104 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

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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
642 Chalkstone Ave 3rd Floor
Providence, RI 02908

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 Shortsight. 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 '90s, 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 Meat" 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

"In Our Time" 12" compilation: Damad, Systral, Gehenna, Timebomb, Jesuit, Final Exit, Congress, and an insert discussing the standardization of our world under capitalism... and what to do about it. $8 USA

Gehenna "War..." CD: Universal destruction, merciless and bitter. $10 USA

Catharsis "Samsara" CD: A Pandora's box of suffering and tragedy, with hope trapped at the bottom... $10 USA

Trial "Through the Darkest Days" CD: The world's most sincere, intelligent political straight edge hardcore. $10 USA

Coming Soon: Another CrimethInc. compilation (the follow-up to the "In Our Time" record, including Zegota, Undying, the last By All Means song, Bloodpact, the Black Hand, more)... a new Zegota record... the Umlaut full length... a new Catharsis record.

contact:
Stickfigure Distribution
PO. Box 55462
Atlanta, GA 30308

You can get all the information about domestic, international, and wholesale prices off Gavin's webpage:

www.stickfigure distro.org
stickfigure@phyte.com

FURTHER CONTACTS

If you wish to write any of us a letter, ask for whatever further literature we have on hand for you to read or give out, get patches or posters or stickers or Catharsis shirts or sweatshirts, or offer ideas/cooperation for our next actions, please write us at the original CrimethInc. address:

CrimethInc. Central H.Q.
2695 Rangewood Drive
Atlanta, GA 30345 U.S.A.
www.crimethinc.com
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 (Harbingers) 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 bee 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 didn’t stop 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 is 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 makes you—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 desire, 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 Harbingers 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 individualists 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.

As 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 Krisoffer 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 beforestorming 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 wiscracker 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 has 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 Catharsians 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)

Dearst 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 hemo graphic (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 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 other serious things that involve possi-
ble police attention, prison time, cointelpro involvement, etc., then you should first do some studying of covert guerilla 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
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 ghetos, 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 strangu- lating 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
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 “fag” 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 “homophile” as a slut, 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!
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 friends 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 other's 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 each new thing 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...
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 catalysts 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 test 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 confines of the monogamy model are denounced 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 any 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 (for 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 project 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 not to 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’ve 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 doseie Easton and Catherine A. Listz, 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 separate 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, ‘till 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

G

antied, 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!

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.

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
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 alien Nation.

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 squared 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 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 "Got!"—whenever he says "package," applaus 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, spattering 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 McLeanville, 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 the 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 McLeanville for two weeks and we built it.

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 leaving a site first tall inflatable Arnold Schwarzenegger prop. Drew was in the sub basement trouble shooting beam on the sequencer. Erick was securing projection and hauling equipment. Jason was scribbling the last of the shirts and posters. Chris, who was on his insider bike picking up an electric nation, managed to downer 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 round, 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 publications. The next day, I was convinced by my cohorts to sleep in, the car on the way to Providence. Because of the
Their insistence, the publication remained unassailed until we arrived. Thankfully, Fort Thunder had a good stable and some willing bodies so we got the job 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 me 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.

Premise: Documentation of thinktank is best handled after the fact in the form of propagandistic 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 wrapped 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 eye acted 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 Catharris was in South America, he combined his efforts with Mark and together 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 confusional 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 absenitia by the parade on behalf of my own CrimethInc. faction also appeared in E.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 have 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 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: there were no normal protest signs... one read "You can't push a rope, ropte," another "Viral or bacterial?"]

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-glorying so much as inspiring, imparting, 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 this 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.

Crimehi Inc. 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 dump 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/Folkway, a tour that had 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 jukebox 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 its body 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-

22 Inside Front

Lucky Number
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 “staff 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 exaltation) 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 (being 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 a statement of intent when the head seaches with all the fluctuating statements of the past instantly and merrily 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.

———

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 is it 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 abound our world were about trouble shooting the realm of wasted time and creativity. The Sub-Sub Contrabass Blaster is a machine for creating soundblasts, but it is also a machine for smashing its maker from the jaws of boredom with a process of production that requires no 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.
**EPILLOGUE:**

Where do we go from here?

There are so many ideas I wanted to write about 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 model with something at once new and primal, doing audiovisual 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-breaking*

Part One:

.........the sky is making that color, the birds are making that sound, 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 split 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 inexplicable. There was little I could do at the time but cuss and take deep breaths, "Fuck!" I said, head shaking. "What the fuck."

Eventually we climbed back into the van and set ourselves back on the road; but something from that moment stuck with me, something like a seed, or an epoch that begins slow and expands in meaning and importance. I looked around — all that I saw had been accomplished by hands and feet. I twiddled my fingers and wiggled my toes. That was the moment all this began, when an idea was born, when the art came off the wall, when the words sprang from the page, when the music became ALIVE. The Kinko's on Tate street is not quite as dramatic as the desert in Wyoming, but even so...

There is a moment where ideas crystallize around you and you find yourself with a new freedom of movement, with a strange and remarkable ability to act on the physical world, when the emotional gravity releases its hold on your muscle fibers and a spontaneous and creative energy takes over. This is when the billboards have failed, when the cop inside has lost his voice; because no one lie can tell the truth, because if the world is to continue, the past must be eclipsed and the future necessarily usurped, when the only alternative is death — death of the spirit and death of the mind. Moments like this are the only real reason to keep going. They are reason enough, for now.

**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 stumble 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,
This was 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 weds 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 HartattaCk 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-rusted 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

Charlotteville 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
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 Gait 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 a large hole in the paper airplane and threw it down. We unfolded the piece of paper. "Leveling the Playing Field (1 of 2)" it read, "Lawyer was disbarred in re Pajerowski, 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 claim..." 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 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 the 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 into 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-
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, allosaurus 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 exorcisingly 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 passing 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 those first 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 serpent, should they lay in my heart's 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, so let you breathe. I vow to never let go of life.
A SUBVERSIVE PLOT,
A CHAIN OF EVENTS.
by F. Ullivit Buck, Minister 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.

It's 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.

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 predicts 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 allows us to thrive in areas where our internal metabolism is insufficient. The internal and external ways we use energy are inextricably 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 shifty 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 restating 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. Kempt 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 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 for 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: Criminology: Special Bullet-in for Maximum Rock'n'Roll, volume 2, number 1)

There are about 1500 of us gathered there in front of the hared 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 outlaw, 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 hauls 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—one 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 "civlized"—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 Horizante 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 untouched 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 starting 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 underconstructed 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, thankfully 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—
the powers that he 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 unfilled. 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 1960s 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 press 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 reactions 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 appear "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 Profe 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 nukes 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 obnoxious 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 safer 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 because the solutions we were offering just didn't seem radical ENOUGH, given how disenfranchised everyone is—even 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...
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 this 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 Bohme

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 predominately 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.
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 hierarchical 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 senate, 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 swivelling 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 loaded 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 disenchanted yuppie is twice as likely to padlock 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 find-it: keep 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 Nirmala 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. Cara, 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 both looked at the huge bag of bread I was toting like Santa Claus. "I...uh..." started to explain but the two went back inside before I managed to get out of my doctor's 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 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 goodsies 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.

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 15x 6" sheet of industrial museum foam (twenty pounds of steel shavings)
- one garbage bag (for video project #1)
- one pair of white male 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 hippieyuppy 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...
Arthur, Bally, knocking, what are the same ly.

I'm trying to 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 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 does 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. E. 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 assailing 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 (counting 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 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, repellant, 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 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 unbuckled 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...
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). Nor 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 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 go 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 ear 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 orditeness 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 Boheme

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 vague, 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. Desiring 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 desire multiplicity, many sources create your pleasures. Yet which sources should I trust? Which origins are uncontouched? 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 be seduced. 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, fit and echo, experiencing without cessation, digesting and forgetting, cutting a swath miles wide. Always already moving 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 inflect it on others, 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? Ironic 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, sharing 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 relations, of possibilities, of perfection. Bodies never know perfection, bodies know degeneration and death. You mind, imagine perfection, creating permutities 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 body, want to be cradled and at ease. Yet body, you must pursue ecstasy, you must move outside yourself as body. Organic 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.

ATR Zine. 118 Raritan Ave. Highland Park, NJ 08904 ehoehme@eden.rutgers.edu

**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, stealing 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 whatever 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 fit in profit, fame and propaganda as main objectives. Following the same logic, there is DIY porn based on the subversion of values, on the expertization 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 libertines, 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/collaborative 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...
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-determination 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, 'twas 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 masochized, 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 performance,” a world of Barbie dolls, phone sex, online pornography, anorexia, Monica Lewinsky, Jerry Springer? To base pornography’s worth today in its mercurial 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 relationships 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 disgrace, 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 hookers 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-dimensionality 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 pornomance 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?

Moreover, 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 stimul 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 is 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 to 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-option, or exchange value. To think what could happen if we could live our sexuality however 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)

CAPOERIA, 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 malas, were hired as thugs by the wealthy. Business owners would hire mala to rob or trash rival businesses; elite criminals would pay mala to beat up groups of cops. The mala 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 their 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
Afrobeat, Americans; castic songs same addition long-playing the music tour Gh'anians, slowly Kalakuta high-life light, Pan-Africanism Isodore, radicalism. Fela. passionate Nigeria Fela Republic. In read Africa, In independence Fela's an idea about radicalism and Pan-Africanism (the idea that all black people are Africans, as opposed to Nigerians, Ghanaians, 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 her 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 squabbling 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 realized 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 colonialists 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...
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...where do I stop, 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. 

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**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 millennium...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.

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**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 re-packaging 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.
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, can- onized, 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 Kiss and Extreme EVER understand what it was like to kickbox in the center of a pit of metalheads 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 un-block" 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 over- come 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 prehending 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 trans- pile 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 out- last 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
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, me 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? You're 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 reestablishing ritual into our lives, the symbolism in 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 on screen 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. The writings will be much better have 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 nxbb@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 xjugglers@yahoo.com and check out http://www.alphadce.com/wshdp/.

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, Daemon) came up to play with you, a contrast became clear to me. What Amy was doing was Rocking, with a capital "R." She's 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 then 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 "immediate" 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 practical examples of when this "emotional music connection" has been most immediate, either as musicians or audience?

Mi: 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 nobdy is out there watching me. I gotta be like "Hi, how are ya?" "How's the famly?" 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... hmm...

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 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 it 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 myself. 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/movies/news 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 be still be lumped in front of the TV? Do we really need to see their 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 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.

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.
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 about these issues through themselves.

Before we get into this, let's talk about 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 pass 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 vision 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.
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 further, 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 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 emboldened all the resources (money, time, patience, you name it) of the rest in court cases. The lawyers and judges are the surest 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 blackouts, 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 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
you had ten people who were ready to get a little crazier, you could achieve the same effect. Have a few event 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's 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 it's 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 extricated 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 tedy 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. Disturb 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-yos 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 come together, 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.
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 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 needed to remain active in the places (like the much-maligned punk community, and even the college activist scene) where we first learned about activism andarchy, 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, than 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 fler 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 wheatpasting 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 easily 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.
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 of 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 official 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 protestors, 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 an 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
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.

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 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 $420,000.

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 its 5 on 5, or when its 5 on 500? We should not be willing to sacrifice our lives and freedom in ill-advise, 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
This is just our second attempt to do a scene report section that transcends the tedious 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 wherever 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 this. It is just my story, and I hope reading it empowers you in some way. I strive to make every 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 starred and thought and tried to sleep. Milwaukee, Madison, Eau Claire, Wednesday morning in Minneapolis. Haggled young women with kindly, disgruntled truckers, teenage runaways, Fugia, Bismarck, Billings. The North Dakota whose car broke down in Minneapolis who couldn’t afford to fit it. Butte, Missoula, Couré 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, 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, ravishingly hungry, and in no condition to cope 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, bowling, 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 ’97 in a van with him. He is in Seattle with Ms. X and X-Dog. Our reunion is cut short, however, when a psychotic in a fancy cat 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-
At noon a parade complete with giant puppets, street theater, radical cheerleading, and an anarcho 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 Hirco 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 at last. 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 F**K ARE YOU 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 toilet, 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 out, negotiate, agreeing that he will not accept, refuse, offer, or request any proposal before we have all consensed 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 concede 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 anticipiation. Around 5:30 they swear that in thirty minutes they will kick down the doors, break 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. There a lot of people out front, but not enough. The situation looks bleak. At 6 the riot cops show up. We declare 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 tombs. 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 the light, barely.
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 blocking entrances to the building. Everything you can imagine turns into a barricade. Bodies, puppets, lockboxes, 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 they 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 armored 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 barricades 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 ramble us, and form an enormous immoveable 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 sink 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 bad 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 evry 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 and 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 lamryx 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 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. Bonfire 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 emblazoned 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, jay, criminal, gok, 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 trailer contractor 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 nothing 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 rejoiceing. I have been waiting for this to happen since I was a little kid. There is nowhere, in the world, except 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 do 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 smoke 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 we 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 healthier and strong and fulfilling and desirable and fun relationships that rest on mutual respect and consent and understanding and solidarity and love? And more than one 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 see? Can you change your mind? 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 just don't want to remain my enemy then 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 tank and 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 just 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'Neill, 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'Neill? 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 foolishness! Why isn't your boss, and their boss, out here with you. O'Neill, 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'Neill, 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'Neill 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 into 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'Neill, 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'Neill'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'Neill 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 bears 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 the venom that I hold reserved for O'Neill and all of the rest of his kind. These wretched scabs, these Uncle Toms, these despicable butties, 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 throb. Training has debumnnized me in O'Neill's eyes, and O'Neill 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

Illustration s.2: St2 in Prague

I.M.F. MEETING
IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

courtesy of Ameliatate

"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 grows 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 me. The more I reminisce I realize that there is a tug 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...
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 lights, noticing it’s 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 to walk, we were met by a block of onlookers, trying to get a glimpse of the events. 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, the 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...
at the courthouse for arrangement. 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. 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 version 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 homemade kitchen, and the remaining mringing 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. Attributes 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 heard 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 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
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 Reclame 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 pigly 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 bannaryed guests present that day: pigs in riot gear, hogs on horseback, swine on bikes, bikers on motorcycles, pigs in normal uniform and plain clothes, pigs in cars (marked and unmarked), piggies in vans and trucks (marked and unmarked), and pokers in helicopters. ... And because a bunch of real hoods 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 companions and I clutched each other's nervous hands tighter as we tried to stroll 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, decrepit 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-neglected 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 typing 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
Screw up the courage, get out into the streets, and risk getting our actions infiltrated by undercover agents or cowed 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 latecomers 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.

Although I realize that it's an extremely difficult task to convince any Joe or Jane Know 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 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 (aka 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 (Eight Club, anyone)?... We’re getting close, so let’s keep working.

Peace. — Nick
FBlazine@hotmail.com
www.fblazine.n3.net

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-brides 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 be. 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 felt 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 protestors 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 of 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-owning 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 right up to the convention center with cops totally surrounding it, with buses and paddy wagons just ready to take people away in. I saw lots of little helicopters, like activists tearing the media (who unlike the cops swamped the march to standstill) off the march, protecting the homeless children, and scaring 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 hundreds 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 so 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, actually, 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 folk 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 bizarre 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,
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 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 couldn't 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 getting insane. We refused to eat the "nutrition-approved" meals of two slices of stale bread with cheese and some chemical Wawa (which 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 cheddar 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 Rosy," and "State Violence, State Control." Discharge would have been proud. When our friends from the 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 "motherfucker Mumia". Actually, one chant that really drove the cops almost too far in anger was "Brick by Brick, Wall by Wall, you'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 proceeded 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-protestor 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 people 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 misdemeanours 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 knew 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 dealing with the lawyers, the media, and the prison a hippie Quaker woman 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 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 snatched 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 to 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 Bloc. First, the black bloc is necessary. The government strikes back and 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 extra-legal 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 art, but as concrete and needed tactics meant to defend people. To do this, the Black 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 spraypaint 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 people. 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 Maoist, lifestyle rebellion hippies, and anti-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: 6: S26 in Prague

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 perceptive that

Number
Thirteen

Scene Reports

Inside Front 67
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-1, we were all as ready as we could be. We woke up at 3.30 am, got our stuff ready and caught a 5.30 am 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 diatribe 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 fact that the people fighting political bullshit, and it was only the second day! A quick note: it’s unhealthy to be dogmatic about anything. Sure, anarchism is a great thing, but if you treat it like it’s the be-all-and-all then you become 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 walked 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 (I), 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. Buck! 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 friends 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!" He got angry and started following us. He didn't do anything.

We found Jyoti and our friend 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.

Anyhow, 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: $26 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
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 (Initiativa Prti Ekonomik 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 Vysehrad. 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, respi- rators, gogles, 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 Nám?stí Miru 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 Nám?stí Miru 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 mostly exploding with adrenaline and nervous energy. Not far from Vysehrad near the intersection of Krokova and Luminova 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 sweep down a hill where members of the press were trying to photograph and videocam the events but always retreated. At one point it looked like the police were making a full retreat and 1, 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 barons. 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

S26

SBNCE LA BANCA MUNDIALE!

by Kim Bae
could do nothing more especially with the peace police faction of the protestors 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 flowing 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 Miru 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 little 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 Miru. 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 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-
PART TWO: TRAVEL

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 mornings. 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 pretend the ability to show 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, woodstore 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 tree, 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 and 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 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 paralegic 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 bus, 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 buses, smoking cigarettes, looking suspicious. There were other 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: gypsy’s 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 grasshuts? 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 cell phone. 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 live 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 its 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 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 imperialist, 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 PIM (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.
because it emphasizes a basic commonsense 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. PM 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 ghetto) 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, really did.

IV. Before we played any shows, we got to see a guerilla 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 Ksna 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 and 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 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 farmers’ 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 back...). 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 their 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 be 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 time has been for a few years, and has been legalized; but this one was new, freshly erected houses with tarp 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 good 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 to not 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 of Liberatingam, 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 drunks, 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, 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. P.M 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
shut:
on
because
one
bus
the
XI.
probably
job
that
and
the
Brazil,
for
music
industry
ecstacy.
The
cool
core
kids
that
we
the

XII. The pinky
us.
we
a
radio

XI. We
in
Rio
de
Janeiro,

x: in

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
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
bus
arrives,
and
a
man
leaps
out
screaming
and
gesture
to
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
dehumanization,
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
total
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
New
Jersey.
I
attribute
this
to
the
fact
that
it's
a
tourist
city
used
and
abused
by
rich
asholes
from
all
over
the
world;
of
course
the
city
is
left
to
deal
with
all
the
garbage
and
bad
karma
of
their
bullyish
attempts
to
lose
themselves
on
vacation.
Matt
had
pinky
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
crushed
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
buses,
a
higher
class
one,
but
we
opted
to
pay
the
extra
couple
dollars
each
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,
manage
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:
pinky.

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

XIV. A
few
days
later,
we
played
a
show
in
a
water
park
in
Joinville,
farther
south
in
Brazil.
It
was
an
old,
slightly
nicky
water
park,
and
after
the
bands
played
the
players
were
cooled
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,
I
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
deck
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
time
as
one
of
the
high
points
of
my
life
in
this
past
year.
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 cold 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 some 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 will be 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 tangled (and dangerous) local handwork. 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 some 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 protests! Gustavo's parents were full-on Tupamaros, part of the terrorist resistance to the dictatorship government of Uruguay a generation ago—they were captured and tortured and governed 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.

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 E.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 1920s. 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 E.L.A. was this awesome old man who, it turned out, had once been a race car driver (something Ernie fantasizes 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 9: View from Alamut

Our best show in Argentina was in La Plata, a мати one. 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 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 meshing 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.

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 anyone 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 okay.

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 Carthage war story... the last show of the tour (besides a free show we played in a bar 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 don'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 reach about the way imperialism works, the function of class and race in nations like Brazil, the last 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 Tacito

1. The M.S.T – 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 on 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. The 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, *Revolution* - has published a special report about the MST; the cover of the magazine, with a dark/red background and the picture of a group of people, was quite angry each time we published an article critical to the government and its regime); 2) by the police, military and paramilitary forces, who have committed numerous human rights violations and crimes. The repression and violence is so strong that even the mainstream media and the government itself have started to speak about the "independence" and "ideological subversion" of the MST.

   In this context, the MST is perhaps one of the most active and autonomous movements in the world, fighting for the right to land and social justice. They have been forced to carry out their struggle in extremely difficult and hostile conditions, but they have shown great resilience and determination.

   Despite the challenges they face, the MST has been able to establish a strong presence in many parts of the country, with a network of local chapters and a national organization. They have been able to mobilize large numbers of people, especially young people, to participate in their struggles.

   The MST has been able to achieve some notable successes. They have been able to negotiate agreements with the government on issues such as land reform and social programs. They have also been able to negotiate agreements with the police and military to protect their members from violent attacks.

   The MST is not a simple organization, but rather a complex network of organizations, with a strong grassroots base. It is made up of people from different social backgrounds, who come together to fight for a common cause.

   The MST is a truly democratic organization, with a strong emphasis on participation and decision-making at all levels. They have a clear commitment to social justice and human rights, and they are willing to take on the powerful to fight for those causes.

   The MST is a truly inspiring organization, and it is one of the most important struggles in the world today. They are a true example of the power of the people to change the world, and they are an inspiration to all those who are fighting for a better world.
MST member in the first plant, looking like a crazy fuck, showed the following line: “The tactic of río: how the MST wants to transform chaos into a socialist revolution”. Do we need to tell anything more about how tendencies 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 Catharina was on tour in 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, Isabel, welcomed us. They were a couple – Tani Rose and Magela – and one kid – Ipa – 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 collective effort and militancy).

It may sound astonishing, but the first thing that caught our attention is 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

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

Number

Thirteen

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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 been 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 milder. 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 to go to a poor place you will find the picture of Jesus Christ or Ayron 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 maneuver, 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 retard 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...

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 same very 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. 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 produc-
places we live in, so that we are able to come up with real effective, solid, threatening counterattack to capitalim 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 boys. 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 boy. My housemates were gay, many of my friends were either gay, straight or bisexual kids 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 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 kids), and regular gay boys 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 drinks and try to develop a repeat clientele who knew me and would come to my bars rather than the other guys 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-
drinks or shots. Chances are, your biggest tippers are the ones who give you 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**

I'd be a bar-back, I had a unique relationship to the bartenders when I wasn't bartending. In many ways, that meant that I was the production-assistant, gofer-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 hot, i.e., 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 frantically 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 train-wreck of sentences.

Sex and drugs were everywhere. Indirectly, I guess we as bartenders 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 conservation 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 shouldn'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 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 working 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 passing. 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 us with us we would clean up and wait for the owner to count our cash drawers. The best conversations during these times were between the police officers and the most effeminate bartenders. The thing was, they agreed on everything. The security guys and the more amiable 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 some nights when there was no work to do at the club. 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 exhorited 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 unfilled, 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 always 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 lessons 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.

ATR Zine, 118 Raritan Ave. Highland Park, NJ 08904
doehome@eden.rutgers.edu

*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 of 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, Vehor Speaks

Prologue
After a 56 hour bus trip that took me through most of Turkey, countless mountain passes and litigation checkpoints, I reached Iran. After an overdoze on Persian pop music and a day of severe diarrhea I was overwhelmed with relief when I got off 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'il 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 assassinations. Alamut is said to have been seized in 1090 by the Assassins and stood unsailable 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 sect 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 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 sensual delights as wine, food and sexual pleasures. The initiate was led believe that he would return to this paradise after death. With this prospect in mind 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-
The religious teaching emanating from Alamut is said to have been a derivation of the Isma‘ili faith, a peculiar and unique blend of Shi‘i 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 Fatimid, 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‘ili, 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 Arkan Danail’s book.


Plagiarized and supplied by Volvo — CrimethInc. Travel Agency
eventually, I decided it was nearly 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 buses 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. I 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 cop service, and, when he’s not working, his owner, Seth, can occasionally be spotted riding a double-decker bicycle (with optional chetah 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 one-night 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 away 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 stuffing 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 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 Weber 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 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 Carrboro 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 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, punkers, 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. You 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 shampoo, soaps, etc. there is a shop called Lush near Trg Bana Jelačića. It’s open Mon-Fri. 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 Běšatska 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 Držića 12 south of the center of town in a former factory building. Telephone: +385-1-461-12-671. Website: members.nbi.com/zap_gz/news1-eng.htm. Email: attack_gz@ramir-zg.ttn.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 Kvarnerik 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 Kvarnerik Trg. There you can find everything from broccolli to dried soy 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 can 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 Medulijića. There is one also called Rosas which is on the south side of Hebrangova in between Gajevo 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 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 was but it’s on the first floor and the buzzer is also written on a little sign for the restaurant and the food is good 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. Ajvar 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 3ipak (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’okolada Napolitanke in a red and brown box are really amazing chocolate wafers. Dorina Šokolada 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. Frucal 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 kobasni 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, Neža, 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 Neža 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 eat bread with adjvar, 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 sustenance 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 8.15: Stuffed tomatoes in Zagreb

Inside Front 87
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 daring people, breathtaking beauty and ingrained with (I dare I violate the cynicisms?!) 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:

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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 "I reckon something you can't miss tonight."

"What's that?"

"Some folks are coming down from Seattle, a band... err... 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 trees steadily increased, but a number of trees 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 Prague 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 mist.

***

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 trac 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 to be 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 us 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 coffee. 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:


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 guitarsit was thrusting about. A woman was standing stocic like an angry demi-goddess, violin in hand. A burly 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 our futures our modern society has destroyed; for wounded forests and our polluted bodies. 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 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 pair with some brilliant burn 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 me as 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 an 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 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 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 transfixed.

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 dreadlocks. 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 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. Firstful after firstful 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

Number
Thirteen
Scene Reports

Inside Front 89
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 "reality 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 communities 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 '80s) with his saxophone, and was so musically 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 Circque 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 walking around the aisles of the amphitheater, sneaking up behind people and reaching over their 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 out! 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 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 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 'times 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.L.'s 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 (penepalized 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 all most daunting odds stacked against him, who must struggle everyday 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 revolutionary struggle into my own struggles for a better world, and to never disregard their perspective, which could teach me 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 to have 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' crums and fillin' up da prisons/ Dyin' ov' 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 da comin' years ahead of me! I'm ready for whatever they bring themselves! I'll go against a tank wit' a Shank fo' my dreams and that's my first words!" — Reprint from F.B.I. #3

www.loud.com and/or 79 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10003

EVENING, BY SUSAN MINOT

by Gloria Cabana

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, suddenly, at times, just as 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 lost, but 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 watch 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 you carry in the 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 strength. This is slow and gentle and silent. Laced with pain, even with sorrow, but without regret. The pain: an ache, ghosting through the chariscos membranes of your life, but not a stab. How can one find such joy in death, which is a small, almost inoffensive carpet that stretches out the floor?...
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 capping
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 revital-
ize 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 cor-
rect 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)
have become the golden calf around which we
dance. Having the characters' inner lives justi-
yfying 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
paths and an illusion of love." In order to ful-
fill 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 move-
ment or immobilility perceptible 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 consider-
ations.

The film "The Idiots" is an incredible fic-
tion 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 retar-
dation—and with this ruse they manically
careen through life. Says the official Dogma 95
website, "The project (of the idiots) is a mani-
festation 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 uncon-
trolled, egotistical primitive sexuality." The
film plumbs depths and scales heights which
most other movies completely ignore, all with-
out resorting to cheap violence or worn-out
action sequences. I strongly recommend this
film to anyone approaching to Grimeshia'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
Gentileschi was raped she began painting sev-
eral 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 flirt-
ing with her. 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 grim-
ly enjoying her task. The painting is quite gory
—long spurts of blood erupt from Holofernes' 
neck as Judith saws through the flesh. His eye-
balls 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/gentill1.html),
though any decent library should have a
reproduction of the image within its art histo-
ry books.

Strike at the Fools Who Are
Laughing At You: A Personal
Reminiscence / Review
of Kinghorse
by Janie 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
blasting 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—we the self-anointed
Triumvirate—who were the front at every single
Kinghorse show had no exceptions. We taped
the shows constantly (video and audio), we deci-
phered the lyrics long before they were pub-
lished, 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 class-
mates.
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 beating 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 breaking this empy advice with cookie-cutter music styles and sceneester-approved clothing.

Therefore their words ring hollow in the finely-tuned, hypocrisy-detector 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 Contrarys 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 tyrifies 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 kow-tow 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 "reto" people who consider themselves unique because you have embraced a certain long-dead style of music or clothing or 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 BO two and Wham or whatever.

Kinghorse combined the best elements of punk (the attitude, the stripped down essentials) 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 Trivumvurate. 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 adorns us to excess? Is it the conservative establishment which frows 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. And 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—and 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 Slamdex. 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 Cryptsphere 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.


Hip hop, jazz, world beats attempt to keep pace with the camera (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; sublime freedom perhaps? (I gaze over to see Döte 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? Sighs. 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, it's 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 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 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 be tailored 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 those 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-hypotraumatic 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 propst 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 torturing the feeling that there must be more to the world, that there must be more to life? Consider the limitations 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 fragments of falsehood? Have we become like embers held alive 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 Cypher betrays him and murders his friends so that he can be reintegrated into the system; but can we deny that 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 he 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.
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 Kinko's Employees. How many seven-inch covers, CD booklets, LP inserts, flyers, and zines have been produced for free by Kinko's Employees? It was for this very reason that 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 who 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 Kinko's amigas. 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" — Kinko's Employees. I give them four stars. Highly recommended. Available at the Kinko's nearest you.

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 face, 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 (Hal) 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 haunted 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 — "I'll

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 New York City through the late '80s and early '90s. 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 despica-
MUSIC

Actitud Sucesiva “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 oil/punk feel to it—the simple melodies, occasional major key guitar leads, gruff singing with back-up oo-oo-oo-oo—its well done, spirited, and non-monotonous, if firmly entrenched within the conventions of the genre. A Puerto Rican Krítica 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 D’Aur, 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 mind—this is modern U.S. metalcore/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 Leining, Germany

 Analecta “Arhythmetics” 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 McDonald’s 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 hardship, 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

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. Sergei Vavry, Bahnhofstr. 2, 74072 Heßlingen, 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

Hopeswell Records: Ondrej Beneš; U Huaze 1; Praha 10, 100 00, Czech Republic; reskator@post.cz or reskator@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. Lyrically 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...

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 cardboard folded around the vinyl, with a hauntingly simple image of an old man's bare head on the front. The music is arty 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... 

Bloodpart "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 suddenly shift to the ride cymbal, becoming totally sparse, cutting the beat in half—only here, instead of a falling guitar wall 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 

Bum Dead Inc. "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, but was totally off. Remember (you may not) how the Amebix thought they were Motörhead? This is like Motörhead, if they thought they were the Amebix—it has the Motörhead workmanlike approach to songwriting, the Motörhead aesthetic (gravelly vocals, ridiculously fast single bass drumming, bare-bones rock'n'roll chord progressions—shit, come to think of it...
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, trash 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 eighthdaydisson@hotmail.com

Brethyn "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 at 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 Statkweather 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, seques 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

Burden "Strength of Conviction CD: I reviewed this in the last Inside Frost 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

Burden’s "Inside In and Of The Self CD: The first song starts out in the screaming moan metal/hardcore format, then goes into a more retro deathmetal-growing 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 the rape/consumer/dominion 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." Apocryphal Now samples over a piano/operatic 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 Leighaton 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 metal 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 altravista. Translate it back and forth a few times, and you get: "This CD opens with 'Omen'-as the intro musical and then again in order to jump immediately in one selection of the metallic of the dead man of the songs. In order to think elsewhere close next to the year of our 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 altravista 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

Caliban's "Youth Of Our Lord"
Cast-down "these autumnal tints"? 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 Enzovar 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, 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 really 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 sick, 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 ever to come 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 Click UL; celebrating review courtesy of Ray, Click & listen to the latest release by Black Click. They're kind of an odd band in that they are just beginning to work. They are currently working on a release that is quite refreshing and is quite different from what they have done in the past. The band has a very unique sound that is quite refreshing. They have a lot of energy and are quite lively. They are definitely worth checking out.

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 c/o Stein: 7529 South Campus Circle; Salt Lake City, UT 84121, Stillborn Records; PO Box 3019; New Haven, CT 06515.

Cloudburst "Love Lies Bleeding"? 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 scream 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

Mooh Bart, address below

The Control: Ruination is a perfect point of reference, although I think these kids practice more. A lot of oldskool hardcore songs here about getting lost in the working world. The melodies are good, not so simple as to be pelling, 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

Incredible, P.O. Box 425, Ithaca, NY 14851

Cower "The Annual Horseyrens Convention" CD. God, this is just plain weird. I guess the comparison I could give you is 2 tablespoons Melvins mixed with half reaper-dated Eyehategod. And I'm not even talking about the halfway cool early Melvins stuff, I'm talking later, psychedelic, 10 minute long, lounge-music shitty-ass Melvins material. I'm guessing Cowere 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 really, really sssllllloooowwww... 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 Gent 12, Belgium

Cross My Heart "The Reason I Failed History" c/d/eg. 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.

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.

PS. 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?!!? (12a)

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 chords, 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!"). This is fucking awesome. The fact that they can do a Cro-Mags cover and make it exciting should give you an idea of what their strengths are. —b

Tristel, 1192 Budapest Kz K, Tel 14, Hungary

Degarne "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 spasmatic, jerking music, creating a sand-blaster effect similar to the one that made the Acme record so amazing. Acme isn’t coming 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 issue’s reviews: fast, fast, sneaky, angry high school punk rock, Government Issue shirts, yelling vocals (that end in a heavy "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 blazed on the ear stereo between bands. Their simple values (fucking the greedy rich, do what you want, teachers and parents get out my life, break shit, yeah!) are right on, and the rebellious energy that makes this stuff work is all there...

So Fucking What?, 253 Alexander Street, Apartment #322, Rochester, NY 14607

Deadrhythm "Transgress, Nulify." 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 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

Jacko Records / 5145 N. Bridge Dr. / Alpharetta GA 30002, 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 to many bands, and Janne gives everything he’s got on every
they do, so it's not a guilty pleasure. And they're not scoring 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, PO. 938, 08900 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 had a couple of good bands, you know?

In the last sentence of Brethen review here. — n Whirlwind Productions / PP 770338 / 93076 Regensburg, Germany

Exigencia "Usando la Consciencia" 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

Fricative 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're going on 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-

The thing will always be right behind my friend. Who, I thought we would always sit next to each other in line in line up for something similar. But, we're not. I'm at the end of the line. But that's okay. I'm just glad that my friends are there. I just want to be able to say that everything is fine. I want to be able to say that everything is fine.

The World is just one big, boring, predictable world. But I'm not one to be easily discouraged. I'm going to keep on fighting, no matter what. I'm going to keep on fighting, no matter what. I'm going to keep on fighting, no matter what.

The thing will always be right behind my friend. Who, I thought we would always sit next to each other in line in line up for something similar. But, we're not. I'm at the end of the line. But that's okay. I'm just glad that my friends are there. I just want to be able to say that everything is fine. I want to be able to say that everything is fine.

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shakes 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

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

...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

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
Fear is the Path to the Darkside "Someday this war is going to end..." 7"; Starts with a Star Wars sample, hmp. 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 thrash 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

Forstella Ford "Insurrection 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 its 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 albatro 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...]

Deaf Alive Records / PO box 97 / Caldwell, NJ 07006, USA

Giveuntillgone "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 Nineteenskyswonder review]

Great Shansky "Encroachment" CD; Twelve songs, all named with numbers (presumably according to the order they were written, like Zeorgia), 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

Mont, 255 Hillcrest Avenue, Athens, GA 30601

Irre "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 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 "Truth" 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 Cadighiana 18/a14, 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 Kr.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 out loud, has to get my go ahead. Gorgeous hand-drawn insert artwork, too.—b

Plays, address nearby, chow!

Lariat "Means of Production" CD: OK, first off, the idea to review this came spontaneous-ly when I found this CD right after writing the review for the Lariat demo tape, and go 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 rhythm...they represent the
event musically, tearing at my very fucking narrow, 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: P.O. Box 843; Round Lake, NY 12151.

Last Effort Recordings: Dankwurt Dreyers Vef 9; 5610 Asens; Denmark.

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.

Commotion, #5, 227 21st Avenue SW, 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 oil/punk roots still barely discernible, gravelly 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 Alff (editor of Comrascence) and Alex Couglan (editor of Dagwbr, 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-man, P.O. Box 8344, Minneapolis, MN 55408.

Man in the Shadow “Pax Americans” 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, unbound world that opens before you when you do. The music moves ambiguously 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 too 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 chins...? I’m not sure what we would become, but we might become calmer, kinder, more generous people? Find out next time you see me, with a neck beard halfway down my chest... —b

Mirjan Ruusun, 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 dish 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/Jan, P.O. Box 139, 00131 Helsinki, Finland
Milemeker: 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/musings 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. Milemeker 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 imagesgracing 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 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 technopopish (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 Milemeker 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.

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, wimp-y 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 band because I don't just dislike 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.

Milemeker, I dare you to be vulnerable, like a lover! We may betray you (like all those before), but why must you lose! -BB Stickfigure, PO Box 53462 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 melancholic he 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. (tax)

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 curbs 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. PO Box 5117, CH 1211 Geneva 11, Switzerland

Nueva Ecija "Momento de la Verdad" cassette: This is Vieja Escuela's sister band, the '90s version of the same thing. the vegan straight edge revival band. Maybe I like V.E. more because we're far enough from the '80s to forget all the dumb shit that went on then... we're not far enough from the '90s, unfortunately, to 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 straight, metal- lic, moody, three-vocalist '90s hardcore with at least seventeen X's discernible in the band photos alone. —b

Firme y Alerta, address in V.E. review
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 up 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

Rockaday, 12001 Aintree lane, Reston, VA 20191

Pensa o Morir "Hardcore Head Eternamente" cassette: Musically this seems to come from the tradition of New York hardcore, a lineage I

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-’90s 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 moody rhythms to acoustic parts, even guitar leads sometimes. The gruff yelling vocalist (think post-Agnostic Front and Warzone) is
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

Underrated records, address somewhere else you should be able to find, move on, nothing to see here...

React "Deus Ex Machina" 12: Me and my friends Pippen 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

singer's voice is rough enough to have drama while 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 associate with Milemaker, although more idealistic, much less deliberately cynical (to their credit!). I wish I had a full length record here (what that would be from these guys, twelve minutes long?) rather than just these two songs.

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 Dag Nagasty... simple, traditional hardcore riffs, melodic, melodramatic vocals that work up to a yel at some points—oh shit, I've got it! Token Entry, that's an example. Anyways, the lyrics are elo-

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 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-"emo-core" melodic stuff), but this really has the teeth to make it work. The
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 (anarchom-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 melodic 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

Revolver 10” Eight different label addresses on the back (a couple of them tape traders), great punk artwork that a modern Purehead might have drawn (ruffian 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 ’80s 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 builds 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 Fachs, 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—possibly 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 fast bands to undertake this project. —b

Plastik Culture (with a machine gun over a star for the logo), 13100 Aixen-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—its 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 terminal sleeve room Jon used to live in, when we would slouch together in a bitter terror 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 “77: 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, 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 fith 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 stuff to more off-the-top-of-one's-head incoherent frustration, but that all works fine for them, and they express all the ethics and attitudes that I love to see in bands. If this sounds like you like it, I'm sure you would—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.

It's guitars least a love of their range—like they try to hear this friend, Thirteen velocity, vocals comes first you can certain no this is so violent!"), I'm of course, I've been the victim of some anti-imperialist sabotage. All the same, I can make out that this 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-ary-than-thous 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-

bibliography: C.D.R. and Arts: 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, else. The sheer, idealistic ambitions of a product that is itself inspiring that can easily access this sort of thing, that can be so correct, so precise, are incredible. For those of us that are familiar with the "flagged" world, to be able to have a product that is so correct, so precise, is incredible.

The dualty 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 screaming 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), grany 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 '80s punk bands like Minor Threat comes across here, in their irreverent but high-spirited use of the genre. Really nice, personable d.I.V. 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-ary-than-thous radicals types. The whole CD goes by quite fast.—b

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Scars "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 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
were the again more straightforward, heavy much U.K thing in ty Severed ping with 114 as those here, roaring Those those here, roaring mask with chunky riffs but not very much metal in the mix (no solo!), 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
Fart Ear, B.O. Box 169, Bradford, BOI 2UJ, U.K.

Season "77": 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 Brouex, 78200 Magny-ville, France

Severed Head of State "77": This brings to mind crowds of unsavory 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 banana 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抱怨), 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
Elevation records—if you can't find this address somewhere, I'm surprised! Anyway, the band's address is 1012 Brodie St., Austin, TX 78704

Sharpieville "At the Late Hours" 12": It took me a few songs to realize that Sharpieville 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 Axxecrider (a sort of updated anarcho-amoeba at the end of the '80s), 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 Snap of Reality" 7": More straightforward ranting and raging political punk from this label, this one with a few less '80s 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 Hall, 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 are here, they seem to be personally directed, in most cases, as people the singer thinks are doing dumb things. The last song ("Pull the Plug") is my...
Thirteen

Weird. While in great most the whole hell CD. Combined of the rock. 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.

Get Up & Go! Marineur. 2176137 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...

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 and moving 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

...consistent with a sandwich bag with a folded over and a CD stuck in the middle. The cover is a piece of silk-screened fluorescent yellow cardboard, 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.

Sommerse "More Songs" CD: I'm not sure how much of the "typical" IF readers will

Stack "Selbst find unsgruppen": 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 building 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.

Conspiracy, P.O. Box 269, 2000 Antwerpen, 1, Belgium

Stiffed Cries " 7": Gorgeous handmade 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 rawhearted 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 unspoken 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 nor 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 jump, slightly heavy grooves to subdued emo 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-clched way with personal and relationship issues, and the layout is fresh and inventive, with a Morchele 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 Enidayskover sound)

Suicide Nation “A requiem for all that ever mattered” 7”: 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 flounders and theatrics come across as more real with a little more rawness, 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 Karlshude, 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, while using full-speed-ahead simpicity. 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

Underrated, 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 intro's 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 rare 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 barky 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

4th grider 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 / Italiés 589 / 2018 Antwerp, Belgium

Terpilene “... 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 Bloodspact and the polished, chunky mesh 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 mesh 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 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 "Not 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 fnendz. (There's a fucking Gorilla Biscuits cover at the end, to undercut everything I've said about metal here, in which one of the vocalists suddenly sounds about ten years old.)

- b

/+/- records, address all around

Twenthieth 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 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 right" 7" 20/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 growing, of course, this is political hardcore music, so to paraphrase "anarchist" Roberta, thematically it's a very hard one.

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 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 invites 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 Stanuski, Veljka Petrovic, Tragedi 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-nana guitars, and the songs are written well. You can hear the vocalist

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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-'90s...). 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 mash 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," "Diversión 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 illustrate youth crew needs 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 

Chitainu Safety, P.O. Box 200318 Bellinge, 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-nana post-Discharge/Nautea 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 is 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 for the accelerator enough to lose 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 they took 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, that vocals 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 "diabolic murder comes with every choking laugh" and I become a fan for life. Great job here. —JUG 

Lifeforce Records; PO Box 04011 Leipzig, Germany; caret@biffoot.com; www.careteldis\trobution.com

Agathocles/Deadmocracy split 12"; Agathocles recorded their side of this record alone, which appendages bother that I can discern which appendages are my fingers, let alone type these words. Russell...sometimes even sounding like they have a flanger effect on them)... they have the growling bass (when it plays by itself
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 grinty 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 the class in the world of split 7"s this issue. —b

...that we're here—this is 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

Cable Car Theory/1. Robot split 7": When C.C.T. are at their best here, they're playing a tense, constantly changing melodic hardcore with thrasy screaming and occasional sung notes over it, plus jumpsy, busy drumming, that expresses desperation and drive at once. The first comes in fucking rocking, and keeps

To their credit, 7"s in C.C.T.'s case are even more proficient than the current album, which is less than perfect. But the guitar work is sharp and the vocals are better than on the last two, and the arrangements are more rugged, melodic, and moody. —b

The first song, the one with the title, is a beautiful ballad with acoustic guitar and piano. The second is a raw, intense, and emotional track with Julie's voice singing about her life and experiences. —b

Unsightly. Black Smoke CD. The thing that struck me when I first heard this that this is a CD that plays at the wrong fucking speed. You can't hear, not just from the normal speed, but even from the absolute lowest part of this thing, which is also slow. —b

Out of Step, Fernando Nascimento, R. XV de Agosto 525, Santos, Sao Paulo 11082-320 Brasil

Ananda/Submerge "the dead bird e.p." split 7": Ananda begins 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

Shegun, Phil Keiffer, 39 rue du Mont d'Aテーブル, 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 150771, Brooklyn, NY 11215

Traveling to Singapore is a bit of a problem. There's like a 2cm difference in the height of the boxes, so you can't make a box fit in there. Some good news to take about is that dealing with that tragedy will be a bit harder now with unthem.
Cable Car Theory/Realign split 7": C.C.T.
concentrates more on the melodic parts here,
but they still have the tense, constantly-shifting
tone that characterizes them, and they
throw in some little blastbeat parts for more
energy and unpredictability. Maybe the master-
ning 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 exalt the Lilith Fair
tour, as "one of the best-selling events in
rock history." That's history, guys—or is it?
Can we point to the marketing of our fem-
nism as an advance, or is it just more com-
modification 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 sex-
ist 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 singing, 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 Leisinger,
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 sec-
ond 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 bores 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 not do the occasionally bombas-
tic 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 combina-
tion 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 '80s
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 emerge 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 inter-
ested 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 back-
ground (in Italian) is something like a fascist
dressing up a cheering mob. Costa's Cakehouse
surprised me by coming in with a lot of
screaming and grind, then cutting to an ener-
getic acoustic part with a Santana solo over the
top, before going back to the busy hard-
core 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 excel-
ent)—for example, their vocalist has what

Text as CD. Get this CD, mail it from a friend just as we
were finishing the reviews. Hold on, let me tell you... We were
talking about the young man's coming. (When we are together, we can
talk and compare, there's no way to hide away one another even
even when each of us is dealing with our individual projects.) But I think
we aren't dealing with our individual projects. We're meeting each other's
and this is the way to understand music. (To understand music)
We can imagine a space that would be safe to talk, a space that would
be free of feeling, without a way to hide away one another even
even when each of us is dealing with our individual projects. We're meeting each other's
and this is the way to understand music. (To understand music)

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 awes-
ome, even though it's just simple chunk-
chunk-grrrt 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

Lucky Number
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 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 ’80s metal introductions, extra energy somehow (not that Dealthreat 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 jacker 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

Dealthreat/Talk is Poison split 7". Dealthreat here sound like a pissed-off, no-frills, mid-’80s-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 both are playing jumpy emo/hardcore the one does it with the grace of shredded longing and the other with an impatient, irresistible 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
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 preceding albums, 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

Comorha/Helechill split 7". Comorha strays from the pack of German metal-hardcore

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. Helechill 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 being ominous rather than aggressive. Oh my god. Helechill just employed a high lead guitar, just in case there was any metal frontier they'd left uncrossed (I guess the high wall 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 more flourished 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 Eitenbach, P.O. Box 200521, 56005 Koblenz, Germany

Hokus/cheerleaders of the Apocalypse split 7". Once Hokus 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 "old-school" hardcore, but here's the catch—they're not dumb. They have a song about infiltration and Union-busting (classic line: "that bar 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 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 Havin), and that seems to be just too easy, in my opinion—racism is everywhere around and inside us, and it makes things seem 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 parroting yourself on the back for that. Anyway, both bands seem to be tight 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 ‘80s 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 chill, hang out, maybe dance a bit. —b

One Percent Records, P.O. Box 41048, Minneapolis, MN 55441

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 screamers and low growler) both sound snotty/growly, and the pace a bit slower. —b

Smack in the Mouth, Eight-0-Three, Flip Basement, 70-72 Queen Street, Glasgow, G13EM, UK.

Remus and the Romulus Nation/Pez
"Benefit for the Tennessee Coalition to Abolish State Killing?"? 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 a murderer the murderer will not be executed. RR&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 poppunk melodic punk

listen to it comfortably. —b

Soul Is Cheap, Zach Dane, 164 St. Agnes #3, Memphis, TN 38112

Stack/Narsak 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 intense. Plus, they have a singer who can jump forty feet in the air, in the old ‘80s 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. Narsak creates a similarly dark ambiance; their first song is simple, hypnotic, repetitive, and while
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 Daves 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

& S. Kent Road, Gaylordville, 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 before, and the result is that these new, 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 idea—double-picked metal guitars and double-bass screaming and growling from the male vocalist and a mix of more beautiful and even more screamery crusty stuff from Valentine like lyrics about the search for self—but Valentine 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 one 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 chubs fucking ass) 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 seashore 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 throughout the years. We were always expected to do something to act in a certain way, to say certain things, to sing 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)

Ward, Alessandro Andreoni, Via F. Medici 14, 00149, Roma, Italy

Whisper /Eterna Inocencia split 7":
Wow...this is the first issue where I liked everything. [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 you 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 suppose is either a rallying cry to storm said barricades, or perhaps a cry of pain after the storm of the barricades begins and the raider has fallen into a ditch "Argh...fuck...help me out of here or 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 Anarchists—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/bas, but it is still great because of the feel the vocals give. The record comes in a brown paper bag looking 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 C.C. 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 Cruudos, with most of the songs about issues such as environmental degradation, technological disaster, injustice, neo-nazis being losers, deceptive governments, and of course, love. The bands are: from Japan—Absent, Out of Touch, Refuse, and Social Crime; Aggressive Dog Attack from the Philippines; Balcomy, 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 the band, and a page for general scene news. On the front cover is a short, impressive disco graphic on the subject of 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 plebly who will dig this... —WG

Sprout Records c/o Toshiyo Konno: 1-10-27, J-bancho; Anba-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 "Days" 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 grunt and deep and sung, and a cool set of guitar riffs. I wish I spoke Spanish though to understand the lyrics. "Ta's"... Life... I8578...mail.com...This...was...for...set...H-...translate...I came...to...the...audience...instead...of...I...on..."Ta's"...song,...their...theme...song,...is...probably...my...favorite...on...this...by...a...good...couple...kilometers.

"Decade of Disissence: 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 of these bands have played in the 1 in 12 Club in Bradford, England. Seriously, there are noise collage bands here putting big pipes over industrial samples, old British punkers covering Motorhead, women playing strange diriges 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 Anget, 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.

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 of hunger, misery and hopelessness. Their own families left them. Alone and single on the streets looking for sweepings. They shelter is pain between alcohol and poison." Even if it is not exact, I think I get the right idea.

JUG

Kilometroceros Records: apartado de correos 8578; 28080 Madrid; Spain: xloyal@hot-mail.com for more info.

The real reason for this record to exist is that it's a benefit to support the people in Kosovo, who are trying to put their world back together after all the wars, witchhunts, and oppression...

"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 heavies 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 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 put unnecessary releases, and if you're interested in either of the two CT bands, just get their individual 7's (or albums). —

Slave Union Records / SN Grace St. / Waterford NY 12188, USA

"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 invokes 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 "beechatch!" here. The recordings vary from rough to well, a little less, rough, but all are sufficient not to hold the hands 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 exotic punk knowledge that first started to bridge the gap 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 Droogs (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

Fit 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 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, Uberzeinung, 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 Vujnovic, 12, V.U.B. 34, 25000 Sombor, Serbia/Yugoslavia

"Payroll Squat Benefic" 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 (Faulter, Diavolo Rosso, Spinibende, Wut-Embrannt, 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 squar itself, have an understandably rougher recording than the others, but it flattens 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, Remnewg 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 everyone 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 price-less 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 Introduce 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 Fehtr Members of Alfonso 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 banters 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. Let any of you embittered motherfuckers feel left out and isolated by all the positiveness 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, Projek 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 you of anything you remember that at all. Maybe not. Lots of guitar solos, but (dirty secret here) I'm a sucker for those. One band, Projek 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. Aemzi, P.O. Box 50808, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

DEMONS

1125. "Planer Mi Serye" 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 disc in Poland which carry 1125 releases and other Polish bands as well. Check out http://www.shinerecords.com for more info, or try their label, whose address follows here.

— JUG
Panzer Records; P.O. Box 42: 39-201 Debica 3; POLAND

wrote a 17 song tape while listening to old school NYHC and early So-Cal straight edge the entire time. F*ck...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 cardboard 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, post. 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 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 / P.O. Box: 1903 / 581 18 Linhoning, 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,
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.

Velerf Gijan, Gradnikove b. 49, 5000 Nova Gorica, Slovenia

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 piece 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 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 fresh and true 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 HeartartaCk, demanding that they interview you.

Push the Limit, Kevin Aen. A. Vermeiren, 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, Hammonont, 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 drumming, 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

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—those vocalist 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 Teer or Countdown to Putsch do it, all the 'zine journalists make a big pretentious deal about the artistic innovations and impli-

128 Inside Front

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Reviews

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And when you're done with this, you'll see that 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 shaking like a machine breaking down. Squeaking 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 insubordinate: “Never too late to keep an eye on the bullshit! Still want you to go play in traffic?” or, in a particular articulate moment, “If you feel like shit, you’re not alone—forced routine, endless drone, argghahahhh!” 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.

Justin, 1222 N. University, Peoria, IL 61606

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.

Eric Bong, Oderstrasse 7, D-41363 Hochneukrich, Germany

Nirdensnehc demo: This 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 much potential to do new things here (and consequently give new ideas to those working in the 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 Bong, Oderstrasse 7, D-41363 Hochneukrich, Germany

CrinmethInc. Special Report

The singer of an unnamed band poses at Gilman street for publicity photo 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 handwriting, 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 prejudge; how to create new ways for us 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 Erno (mainly lamenting the stagnation that eventually plagues any genre), which concludes pretty weakly that for the author, "erno" music is anything that evokes an emotional response, including anything from Spithrow 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 exercise 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, av. Carol, rúa Simão Abreu, 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 Reclain 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 Quintin's Erased, and various other smaller pieces. —b

Mark Omond, 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 #41: 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 (fantastic that, it's Submission Hold)... but there are little, unexpected gems hidden inside too: a reprint from a T'chung 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 politicmente correcta, entrevistas, y medios 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 Indecisión viajó por correo electrónico, y la con Distancia la pregun- tornaron 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.—@ Deformacion Cultural, Capilla Postal 1426 (c1000uas), Buenos Aires, Argentina

Deformación 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 Catharis, 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 "Seeeeeееee 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...

Foul #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 some 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

EBJ, #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 Crimmethinc. tradition of propagandas, 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 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 phone 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 Beardsley: 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!"). This makes it an excellent introduction to the illegalists of early 20th Century France. The end has a few 'zine reviews, even including Anarchy, A Journal of Desire, which 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., PO, 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

Don't Despair: For anyone interested in politics, art, radical ecologies, or radical activism, Outlaw magazine is something new from the world over. This issue is a good source. Three hundred pages, covering many issues, from all over the world, in various depths. It's too much to try to describe this, it's just too much. I've spent so much... everything from a direct action police to war against the United States, and is a window into a group of international, underground, anti-war punk rockers and it's something that needs to be built in 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, PO Box 4964, Louisville, KY 40204-0964

Hazlo Tu Misma: #8: Este zine argentino contiene algunos comentarios de discos bastante breves, pero lo bueno de éstos es que la 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 anarco-punk 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 Mafa, 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 gen en este ‘zine, también. Sólo una prueba del nivel de la Punkritik 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 sí... ¿qué porque no tengo zaparillas Vans old school, ni uso la billetea 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 cuál sea 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 lagatina 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 descuidadamente escritas o un poco desorganizadas. Sin embargo, lo que me molesta más de Hazlo Tú Mismo (ahí habla la persona perfeccionista que me invade cuando leo cualquier texto) es que utilizan los asentos caprichosamente. Lo peor es que no los niegan a usar por completo, sino que los usan, a veces, por razones indescifrables. En general, interesante. —@

Hazard Mismo, CC 213 rue 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 ’80s 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 Bebin’s typically extravagant piece on punk rock filmmaking 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 arasive 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 with which Daniel Quinn turns out to be a little less radical than I’d like him to be...and an awesome piece about toxic levels in tanks) 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 Andrews’ 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 hierarchies. Andrews 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 untrammeled 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 Hegberg, Fjärdingsmångarven 15, 643 32 Vingåker, 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 this 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 Comerbus 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 NNM Chowsky (“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

Intervencja #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 Intervencjaj’s contents, if you aren’t persuaded by its cute name alone...It includes a Catharsis interview, an essay on Chechnya, one on the Chiaspat 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 a line... —@

Marcin Kopeczynski, Chabrowa 12a/15, 44-200 Rybnik 15, Poland

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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.

Mayhap #7: This was written just after the W.T.O. meeting was shut down by the Seattle protesters, 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, hacktivizing 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 t'zines talking about protests, you're 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 (Regression), Ian (Equal Vision records businessman, 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 stand as 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

On the Bank of the Tumid River #2: Hardcore journalism 'zine akin to Hodgepodge or Slave, but with more of a split

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 try 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 surely be one of the very best, because it's already excellent. —n

Simone Marinii / via R Battistini 32 / oo151, Roma, Italy

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 astrovic 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 guy), 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
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 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 Knucklefust, 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 #2: 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 the World”—what the fuck? 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,SEMBAWUNG CLT, Singapore 750321

Rektorat #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 Rektorat 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!!! —Rektorat, clo Tomas Mladec, V krosinach 16/1540, Praha 4 – Branik, 147 00, Czech Republic

Revolt #10: More Eugene anarchy, from some of the same people doing other publications from that horde 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 Bastards!) 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 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 anarchist-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 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) transcribed a tarot card reading of the band… in addition to the more standard (still top notch) band interviews (Los Crucidos, Indecision, Good Clean Fun, an exploration of why Kid Dynamite broke up, and Iwe, who admirably stick 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 “Pachage fame) adds more personality and continuity; he’s present in the 7th reviews, giving sarcastic 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 Rumpshaker 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’s 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 ‘ziners, 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 insipid 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 something more about this than to reprint this passage: We like money, because we can buy it. We like shops, 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

clo Eight-o-five records, flip basement, 707/7 Queen Street, Glasgow, gl 3en, Scotland

Satori #5/6 (P): 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 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 aggressivelyごrovdy 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 on 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 altern-
personality, and you're holding a damn good 'zine. —@

Satori, clo 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, hand-drawn art 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 interviewed (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 Verena, van Mannickiezestraat 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 rants, rants on various topics, lists of ways to be more ecologically responsible, lists of things the editor finds insightful ("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, Zwanenhof 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 parachutes, reading lists (including Pippi Longstocking, by Astrid Lindgren, and HeartattackCk, "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

Wilful 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

Venous Butterfly, 41 Sister Street, Suite 1661, San Francisco, CA 94104

Willy-Nilly in Your Kitchen: Recipes! We here at Krimmich, Kitchens (or is that Kitchens?) 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 unconvincing, 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 Sumpuous 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 wineries aren't heavy enough here to be made more comfortable by a mug of bitter pine resin.

PS. We tried the chill 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 Jeffers Pl. #6, Brooklyn, NY 11238

No Longer Blind/United Fury split zine: 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 zinesters 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 zine 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-economics," 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 Display 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. 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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Reflections Magazine #13. According to most of our readers, this is one of Europe’s best fanzines. Well we’re not sure about that but you could check it out yourself. This issue has interviews with Stretch Arm Strong, Bloodpact, Trial, WHN?, Cable Car Theory, Nate Wilson, Dillinger Escape Plan, Catharsis, Manstrike US Tour and a shitload of columns and reviews.

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continued from page 137

BREW'T in "BREAKUP BLUES"

ALL BRUTE & NO FORCE!

This comic takes why are you breaking up? Don't you want anything else to be? Haven't you worked about broken up? Don't there anything in your life work meaning then ALL BRUTE & NO FORCE (1)

ALL BRUTE and NO FORCE

Watch out for that horrid man!

Watch out for that black man!

ZOOM!

Booo00!

BREW'T goes to Sydney!
ALL BRUTE and NO FORCE
love, Brian and Brian plants

I wish I could own my own.
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 Blu Ridge 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 pitty 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.

Jakub Zoltan, H-2120 Dunakertsi, 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 - anguish'd 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, the 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 anguish and despair. Men are kept naked for hours and are often threatened 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 counterattack. 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 "Spark" and came out on Catalyst Records (www.xcatalysrx.com) from Brazil. Contact the band at: Caixa Postal 4193 Sao Paulo-SP 01061-970 Brazil valovelho@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-parcelling stance became an obstacle for a bigger and better production. Our circuit becomes standardized, and little by little the questioning and interrogation become cliché. A hierarchy of values, that indoctrinate "rebellion" was institutionalized.
Challenge was mechanized, transforming something that was once so intensely visionary, into something dated and pedestrian. If we revise the means that we ourselves limit, we can have a strong instrument for social action. This latest affirmation may be questionable, but applying a little skepticism, in the moment when we expose ourselves, we're socializing our principles. Everything is centered in the scale of absorption, in the number of people reached. And even having a limited scale, we can underline the channels that remain outside corporate entities. Therefore, we must use our means of communication (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.

Newspaper, Rua Junanda 126, 05442-070, São 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 debts 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 bubble 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 eternally 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 created an unskilled, uneeducated 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 Stich, Flat 111, 274 Kilbarnock Road, Glasgow G43 2XS, Scotland, U.K.
Constrito

Permissividade
Forjar os cadeados e prender as escocídas
Suger a energia de seus corpos jovens
extirpando sua inocência
Herdeiras de um legado hipócrita
Patrícias e mães submissas - violadores
demoníacos com tradições arbitrárias
Negação contínua / traumas profundos
/ segredo de família
De seus lares a inundas alcas
Começando em casa, indo para as ruas do
desespero
Sofrer!!
Lidadas na promessa de emprego
Confinadas sob ameaça
Obrigadas a vender-se para sobreviver
Elas sentem a pele em contato com a sua
O fedor do hábito e o suor de corpos
Para quem foge, morte e perseguição
Espancamento para as que voltam
A dor e a terra da vida comum
Sem lamentos ou alguém para se lembrar
A depressão alucinógena cheira álcool
Que os aliadores sejam empalados
De seu sofrer vem meu regozijo.
De no mínimo uma vida salva
Elimine os opressores / liberdade ao correr
o sistema que se alimenta de destruição
Não possa virar, fechar meus olhos e negar
Um grito mudo explode meus ouvidos a cada vida violada
A ferida agudiza o curativo
A estrada da conformidade traz 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 doce cessar / grite de suas entranhas
Com a dor dos corpos delas (altruísmo & a ligação)
Seremos uma voz, um instrumento de justiça.

Permissividade
(to the title is a combination between two words, "permissive" which means permissive and "passive" which 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
Patricians 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 corrodido
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 which needs to be revealed to the public so discussion will take place and solutions will start to appear.

Por falta de espaço e pelo to do dos leitores deste zine dominan o inglês, não colocamos uma explanação em portugês.
Mas para adquirir-la entre em contato com a banda:

constrito@zaz.com.br

7 Cr. Postal 21053 - São Paulo/SP
CEP 04602-970 - Brazil

Thirteen

Inside Peace - 157
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 I'm going 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 assorted 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 Surfia in his living room somewhere in Illinois. Ruination is Andy Dempe, Chris Colohan, Ebro Virumbrales and Mike Haliechuk. You can reach us through +/- Mike is sponsored by Erobicoke track pants and wears exclusively Velcro shoes. Thanks Brian.

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

SPEAK UP!
"Abused Words"

You're always talkin' to me about love
But the only thing 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 to 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

contact: Roman Schmidig, Florian-Geyer-Str. 32, 01307 Dresden, Germany

Since we are forced to hide or deny our real emotions in everyday 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

Phone +49(0)351-4496198
memnoch-hc@gmx.de

158 Inside Front Lucky Number
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, Hunggerstr. 18, CH-8037
Zurich, Switzerland
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-Inauguration 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, adventure, 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 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 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.