

the **Nor'easter**

There's No Government Like Snow Government:

Cold Corporatism in Antarctica

Can You Dig It?

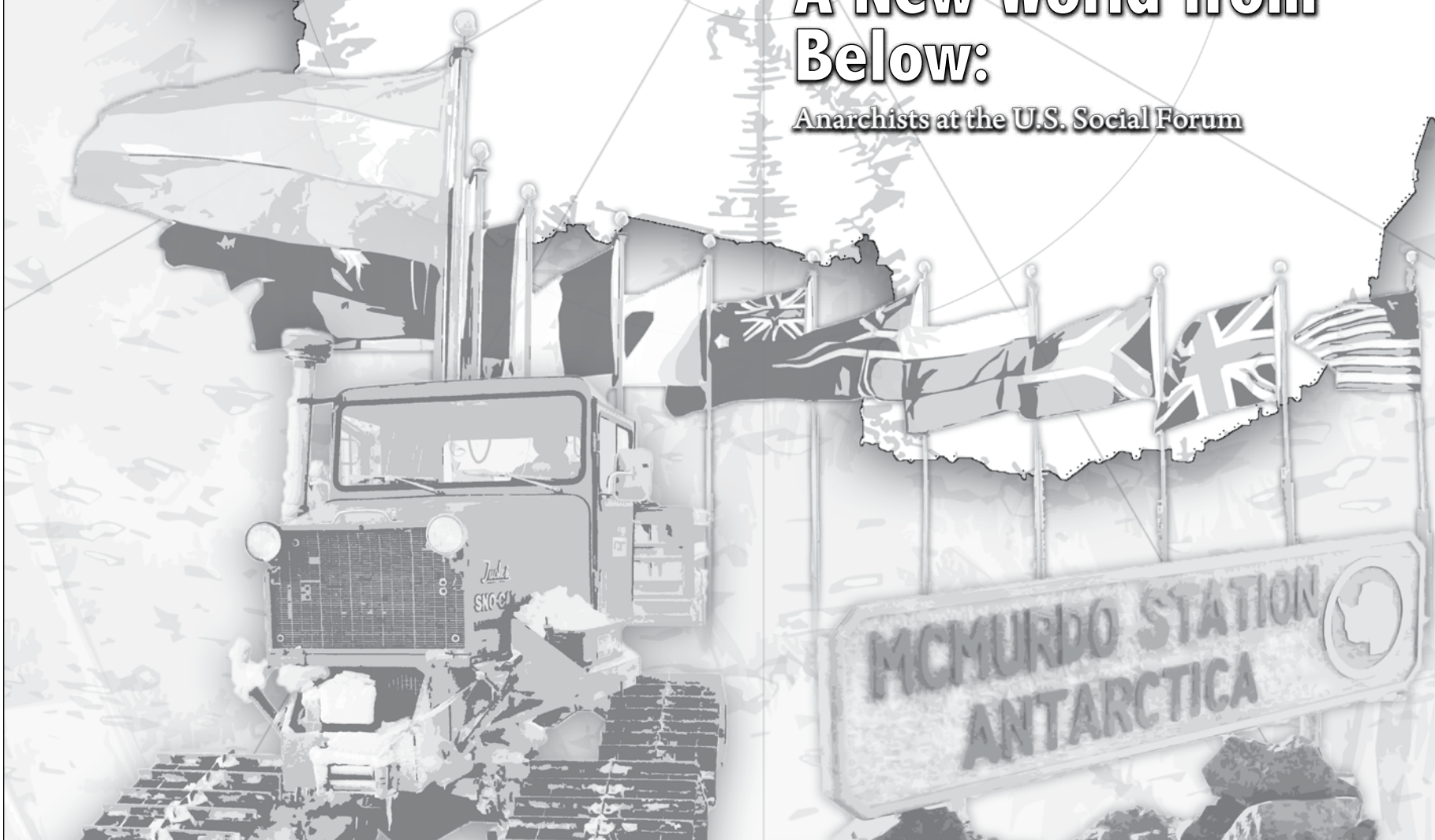
The Diggers and the Roots of Free Projects

The Water's Gone Bad:

The Environmental Dangers of Hydraulic Fracking

A New World from Below:

Anarchists at the U.S. Social Forum



The Northeast Anarchist Network is a regional, horizontal organizing network in the Northeast, striving to link those committed to anti-authoritarian, anti-capitalist and anti-oppressive struggles.

We recognize that the anarchist movement has a diversity of perspectives and priorities. We seek to nurture solidarity and mutual aid among all participants of the Network, especially in the face of repression.

Started in February 2007 by anarchists from across the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic, NEAN has grown through many subsequent meetings around the region. The process of creating this Network has connected many groups and individuals and has been a catalyst for the formation of new groups and projects. We have reason to be optimistic about the future of this Network and region, and we welcome anyone sympathetic to our goals to be part of it. www.NeAnarchist.net

The *Nor'easter* aims to provide an outlet for anarchist-related news and events while simultaneously introducing non-anarchists to anarchism and plugging them into the movement.

Points of Unity:

1. A very clear rejection of capitalism, imperialism and authoritarianism.
2. A rejection of all forms and systems of domination. Embracing the full dignity of all.
3. An attitude of active resistance toward all state, corporate and other oppressive institutions.
4. A call to direct action, support for emancipatory social movements, advocating for the liberation of all, as well as the construction of local alternatives.
5. An organizational philosophy based on decentralization and autonomy.

This network is specifically inclusive of all Anarchist struggles and supports all of them as long as they adhere to these Points of Unity, even though not everyone in the Network might consider a particular struggle a priority. Anarchists must show solidarity with each other's struggles as a principle of revolutionary necessity.

In order to embody these values, we see the need for an Anarchist social revolution.

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For information about how your group can affiliate with NEAN, send an e-mail to affiliation@neanarchist.net.



The Diggers, a 1960s counter-cultural movement, merged art and politics in everyday life and were the precursors to many contemporary radical practices.

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Send all submissions to:

noreaster-submissions@neanarchist.net

Next deadline: September 26, 2010

Have a story idea? Want to get local news out across the region? Contact *Nor'easter* submissions with your pitch. Original photos/graphics are strongly encouraged; please include captions, credits and author information. *Nor'easter* editors are likely to edit submitted articles for basic grammar, punctuation, clarity and length. Articles should be 800–1,600 words; opinion pieces 600 words; and group reports 400 words. If you would like to submit a longer piece, e-mail noreaster-submissions@neanarchist.net with details.

Write to the Editors

Want to give your opinion on one of these articles?

Send a letter to the editors, maximum of 200 words. Letter submissions are assumed to give permission for reprinting unless otherwise noted. Please indicate if you wish for the letter to remain anonymous. Not all letters are guaranteed to print.

letters@neanarchist.net

Send corrections to noreaster@neanarchist.net

Distribution

The *Nor'easter* is published to support the work of groups throughout the Northeast and beyond. If you value independent movement media outlets, please consider supporting the *Nor'easter* by submitting content, buying copies and getting the word out there! Our focus is primarily on bulk distribution to groups, infoshops, distros, and anyone else who wants a good outreach material. Make a one-time order, or sign up as a monthly sustainer and automatically get copies of every new issue!

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If you have some know-how you'd like to put to use for the *Nor'easter*, or if you'd like to learn and help out, e-mail us!

We are also interested in staying in touch with writers, photographers and artists who are interested in contributing to the paper regularly.

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Views expressed in the *Nor'easter* or on the Northeast Anarchist Network Web site do not necessarily represent the ideas or opinions of the *Nor'easter* Collective, Northeast Anarchist Network or affiliated groups. Articles represent the opinions of the author or other persons cited within the text.

Mexican Political Prisoners Released!

On June 30, judges of the First Court of Mexico's High Tribunal ordered the release of 12 political prisoners from the town of Atenco, outside of Mexico City, who had been jailed since 2006. The prisoners were members of the group Popular Front in Defense of the Land and were serving sentences between 31 and 112 years after being convicted of an alleged "organized kidnapping" of police officers. The judges found that there was insufficient proof and that the charges were based on "false premises." According to the court, "The evidence was illegal and insufficient, they were not given due process, and the crime of kidnapping was never proved." Additionally, one judge, Juan Silva Meza, called the case "a disguised form of criminalizing social protest."

The charges stemmed from large and violent demonstrations that occurred in 2006 after vendors at a market in Texcoco were arrested and accused of selling flowers without a permit. In response, thousands of people from the neighboring town of Atenco, who had gained experience and fame for successfully resisting the Mexican state's seizure of their land to build an airport, blocked the highway. Thousands of federal and state police responded to the demonstration with excessive violence, killing two protesters and sexually assaulting at least 26 women. The demonstrators fought back against the police using machetes and petrol bombs.

The campaign to secure the release of the prisoners was international in scope, with demonstrations occurring all over the world. One week prior to the prisoners' release, 11 Nobel Peace Prize winners appealed to Mexican president Felipe Calderon on their behalf. Upon the prisoners' release, the judges ordered them protection prohibiting their arrest. Outside the courthouse, jubilant supporters could barely contain their emotions, after a four-year struggle to secure the release of the activists. Trini, the wife of prisoner and social movement leader Ignacio del Valle, said, "I see tears of happiness in the eyes of my *compañeros* and I would like to say thank you to everyone; thank you to the Mexican people and international solidarity. The federal and state governments are not invincible!"

Rotten Apples in China

On July 8 in San Francisco, Chinese-Americans and Chinese immigrants protested outside of the Apple store in support of workers at the Foxconn factory in southern China, which makes iPods, iPads and iPhones. Foxconn, whose ownership is based in Taiwan, also contracts out to build a variety of other electronics popular in the United States, such as Dell and HP computers, Playstations, Xbox 360s and the Nintendo Wii.

In 2008, Foxconn reported that it had 700,000 workers throughout China, with nearly half of them in the Shenzhen Longhua factory, known as Foxconn City. Foxconn workers are made to endure 80 hours of overtime per month despite the 36-hour-per-month limit set by Chinese law. Talking is prohibited on the production line, where work speed-ups make the already high line speed even more unbearable. Most workers live in huge company-run dormitories, often with 12 people sharing one room.

Wang Yu and Weng Bao, the journalists from *China Business News* who reported these abuses, were sued by Foxconn for almost \$4 million, and a court ruling was filed to have their assets frozen, which succeeded. The ruling was criticized heavily, and after Reporters Without Borders sent a letter to Steve Jobs, CEO of Apple, the asset freeze was withdrawn and Foxconn reduced the lawsuit to a symbolic 1 Yuan.

In 2006, amid allegations of worker mistreatment, Apple ordered an audit of the factory in which they found that some workers were made to stand at attention for extended periods of time as punishment. Junior employees were daily brought to the roof for a "military-style drill." Despite these and several other abuses found in the audit, Apple insisted that conditions in the Foxconn facilities were perfectly fine.

Conditions in the factory have apparently become so abhorrent as to cause a number of workers there to commit suicide. Ten people at the factory have killed themselves in 2010 alone, compared to the five suicides between 2007 and 2009. One worker, named Ah Wei, interviewed in *Business Week* just after a 12-hour overnight shift making cell phones, was quoted as saying, "Life is meaningless. Everyday, I repeat the same thing I did yesterday."

Eviction Blockade: When We Fight, We Win!

By MATTHEW GARELICK

BOSTON — On the morning of Monday, June 7, nearly 50 protesters (many from Vida Urbana/City Life and the Bank Tenant Association) arrived on King St. in Dorchester to block the eviction of Ursula Humes from her home of 17 years. Ms. Humes' dispute with Wells Fargo Bank began when she missed two mortgage payments and Wells Fargo began foreclosure proceedings.

Despite her raising the money to make the overdue mortgage payments as well as the current ones, the bank (a recipient of \$25 billion of taxpayer bailout money) still chose to continue with the eviction. Ms. Humes is now prepared to buy her house back from the bank with the help of Boston Community Capital, but there has been a dispute over the value of the home. Wells Fargo, which has no offices in Massachusetts and little concern about its effect on local communities, refused to allow an inspection to determine the fair market value of the property.

With the constables scheduled to show up around 9 a.m., the protesters arrived early, distributing signs to picketers and passing out fliers to passersby. At the same time,

approximately 15 police arrived to lurk across the street and watch the picket line. A long line of protesters of all ages marched, chanted and sang on the sidewalk in front of 18 King St., while several more prepared to be arrested on the steps of the house rather than allow the constable entry.

Lawyers from Vida Urbana convinced the constable to wait until a Wells Fargo official in California could be reached. It took more than an hour of phone calls, including waiting for a banker three time zones away to get to work, but shortly after 10 a.m., the announcement was made, to much cheering: The bank had seen reason, and Ms. Humes was safe, for now. It still remains to be seen whether a fair price will be agreed upon, but Ms. Humes now has a chance to keep her home.

Eviction blockades have a remarkable record of success in shaming banks and keeping people in their homes. Vida Urbana and the Bank Tenant Association have been at the heart of this fight since the 1970s. Eviction blockades only work because people are willing to stand up and fight back, so you need to do your part! Check out www.clvu.org for information about upcoming blockades, and get out onto the picket lines!

When we fight, we win!

Blurbs

We Are All Oscar Grant; All Cops Are Johannes Mehserle

Johannes Mehserle, the police officer who shot and killed 22-year-old Oscar Grant on New Year's Day 2009, was convicted of involuntary manslaughter on July 8. The conviction on the charge of involuntary manslaughter, as opposed to that of second degree murder, provoked outrage throughout the city and the country. Immediately after the verdict was announced at 4:10 p.m., a protest of an estimated thousand people took place in downtown Oakland before being violently dispersed by police. Riots broke out; the windows of about 30 corporate businesses were smashed, and some stores, such as Foot Locker, were looted. More than 100 people were arrested by the time the rioting ended later that night, a few facing felony arson charges.

Nineteen months earlier, Mehserle, who is white, shot Grant, a young black man, execution style on a BART train platform in Oakland, Calif., after responding to reports of BART patrons fighting. At least five eyewitnesses caught the incident on video: Grant is seen lying on his stomach, restrained by another officer, while Mehserle, who had been holding Grant down, stands up, draws his gun and shoots Grant in the back. The incident triggered massive protests

and continued riots throughout Oakland that became known as the January Rebellion.

Throughout the trial, Mehserle claimed that Grant had been resisting arrest. He also maintained that he had shot Grant accidentally, intending to draw his Taser but mistakenly grabbing his gun, which is the most likely reason for his reduced charge.

The most common Taser used by police is the X26 model, which weighs about seven ounces, compared to the weight of a fully loaded Glock .22 pistol, also commonly used by police, which is just over two pounds. Tasers have been known to cause death themselves in many cases and are a highly controversial "non-lethal" weapon that is increasingly used by law enforcement.

California has a long history of racially charged violence as well as police brutality. Some have compared the Mehserle verdict to that of the Rodney King beating in L.A. in 1991, in which all four officers were acquitted. Mehserle's similarly minimal charge of involuntary manslaughter is indicative of the current system's tendency toward authoritarian sympathy and is a frightening signal for every person living in the United States today.



Street art commemorating Oscar Grant, the 22-year-old Oakland man shot in the back by a cop on New Year's Day 2009.

Anarchists at U.S. Social Forum 2010

By CHARLENE OBERNAUER

Amid the thousands of activists who gathered together for the U.S. Social Forum (USSE), hundreds of anarchists established a deliberate presence. The New World from Below anarchist convergence presented a highlighted track of anarchist and anti-authoritarian workshops included in the main USSE schedule: a convergence space that included Food Not Bombs-catered food every morning and evening, facilitated discussions about anarchist tactics and ideologies, and hosted live music!

The New World from Below organizing collectives started working together several months before the convergence. The collectives included members of the Institute for Anarchist Studies, Solidarity and Defense, Midnight Special Law Collective, Team Colors Collective, Manifesta Musicians' Collective, Justseeds Artists' Cooperative, the Trumbleplex, City from Below, Red Emma's and AK Press.

The day before the convergence began, a call went out for space volunteers to come to

a general meeting. Nearly 50 activists gathered in the back room of a local bar and spoke about what they wanted the convergence space to become. While the Organizing Collectives already knew some of the events that would take place during the week, the facilitated discussions and autonomously organized workshops were up to everyone to create.

The convergence itself included workshops organized by a variety of collectives and organizations from Picture the Homeless to Pittsburgh Organizing Group. After each day of workshops, free food was served at the convergence space and facilitated discussions occurred. On Thursday night, nearly a thousand people packed the convergence space with a hip-hop show and fund-raiser for the Student Farmworker Alliance, a student-led organization that acts in solidarity with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers.

The convergence finally concluded with a folk punk show, which celebrated an anarchism that brings people together as organizers, intellectuals, strategists and insurrectionists alike with the same pre-figurative vision: a New World from Below.

The Water's Gone Bad:

The Environmental Dangers of Hydraulic Fracturing

By SARA LEE
for *Pennsylvania from Below*

Carter Road, in Dimock, Susquehanna County, has earned the nickname "ground zero," as it gains fame in the natural gas controversy of Pennsylvania. Residents of Carter Road organized to file suit against Cabot Oil and Gas after 14 wells used for drinking water became undrinkable. While Cabot denies that deep-rock fracturing caused the water contamination, the company was heavily fined by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and later forced to plug three wells in Dimock.

Lawyer Ken Komoroski represents Cabot Oil and Gas in public forums and recently appeared at a gathering organized by the League of Women Voters in Susquehanna County. He attempts to reassure the residents of Dimock that Cabot is taking care of their water problems, but someone interrupts, "Why doesn't Pat have water!"

The Pat in question is Pat Farnelli, mother of eight and resident of Carter Road. Pat was convinced for months that the illness plaguing her family was a simple bug being passed between children and parents. Mostly, her children complained of stomach cramps and extreme nausea. Pat didn't understand, though, why her children felt fine all day at school but would double over in pain, vomiting, shortly after arriving home in the afternoon. Now she knows that her water is saturated with 12 percent methane and unacceptable amounts of barium.

Farnelli began to put the pieces together after a conversation with her neighbor Jean Carter.

"Jean's my closest neighbor," Farnelli explained. "She leaned over to me and said, 'Pat, I think our water well's gone bad.' I asked her what she meant. They'd been drilling for two months. She said, 'I'm not sure what I mean... but the water's gone bad. It smells strange, and it just doesn't taste right. After I drink it, I just don't feel right.'"

“Jokingly, her husband suggested they light it on fire. The water in their bathtub burned for 11 full minutes.”



Hydrofracking drilling rig in Susquehanna County. Photo by Sara Lee

Farnelli's other neighbor had drawn herself a bath and noticed sediment at the bottom of the tub. Her husband assured her it was probably just dirt, which sometimes collects in certain weather in their well. At his direction, she continued to let the water run until it cleared. It never did.

As the water ran, it began to change colors until it appeared orange. Jokingly, her husband suggested they light it on fire. The water in their bathtub burned for 11 full minutes.

Another resident was fortunate enough to be out of her home when methane built up so much in her well house that it exploded, propelling a concrete wall across her property.

Cabot has been responsible for the contamination of 14 water supplies in Dimock alone, according to the DEP at press time. Komoroski acknowledges the water contamination in Dimock but maintains that, to date, there have been no reports of groundwater contamination due to hydraulic fracturing activity in the Marcellus Shale.

He argues that the methane in the water on Carter Road migrated from a shallower formation through natural fractures in the ground.

One anonymous Dimock resident argues that this excuse amounts to a cover-up. He found research claiming the methane was tested and the results were inconclusive; it could be from shallow formations or it could be from the Marcellus Shale. Cabot and the DEP exchanged e-mails during testing, with Cabot asking the DEP to be "sensitive" to the potential for scandal if the methane was found to be from the Marcellus Shale.

By making it public that the methane was from a shallow formation, the oil and gas industry shifts the blame for the incident to an accident or individual operator. However, if the methane was found to be from the Marcellus Shale, public perception of "safe" drilling would drastically change, as people would begin to realize that the danger doesn't lie with individuals or with circumstance, but with an inherently unsafe process.

Komoroski makes the case that surface spills are the issue to worry about, admitting "that is where we have the potential for contamination." Several area residents interviewed expressed concern that surface spills are another red herring mentioned in order to draw attention to the many measures used to prevent the spills. Their fear is that if the general public is analyzing the potential for surface spills, it is not inquiring about the potential for gas leaks deep underground or other dangerous and more likely situations.

Living with Fracking: Road Damage, Air/Noise/Light Pollution, Forest Fragmentation

The drilling picks up in the late spring, after the ground is softened by the annual thaw. The spring thaw also brings annual destruction to the roads in and around Dimock. This year, however, the terrible condition of the roads cannot be blamed on mother nature alone. One resident, Lynn Senick, tells us she "can't remember seeing them this bad before." As our group drove, we saw holes the size of small sedans in the road. At one point, we were directed through a one-lane passage as a crew frantically used a backhoe to try to fill in one of these cavernous ditches with gravel to at least make it passable. The edges of practically every road are shredded to jagged bits.

Natural gas extraction even threatens the ozone and the air of Pennsylvania. Compression stations in particular give off high levels of both nitrogen and oxides, which combine to create toxic results. The mayor of Dish, Texas, Calvin Tillman, travels around the country speaking to areas with natural gas drilling to warn them of the air pollution his town suffered after fracking was used to infiltrate the Barnett Shale.

Stadium lights are used to keep drill sites active around the clock. Residents near these sites complain that sleeping is nearly impossible at night. Many have given up and spent their personal money on heavy-duty curtains guaranteed to keep light out.

Senick describes the experience of owning a home near drill sites as "living next to a carnival...but without the rides or prizes." Low-level noise from machinery hums around the clock, punctuated by the occasional blast. "It's getting to the point where I think we're getting hearing loss. It's just so constant," Farnelli said.

The construction of drill pads damages the state's remarkable forests. Even if trees are spared, the direct axe, the digging associated with drill pad construction causes root damage, which can kill or weaken trees. Weakened trees are most susceptible to pests, boring beetles in particular. Opening the canopy to create a pad in the middle of a stand of trees puts extra stress on the trees at the edge, and they become more susceptible to damage by cold, wind, water or sun. Access roads built for trucks also cause fragmentation of natural ecosystems. Komoroski himself admitted, "It is a disruptive process...it is."

The official stance of the landmen and what they tell the people whose land they lease is that the land will be left as it was after the drilling (eventually) commences. "They say, 'we're gonna put everything the way it was'...What are you, a magician?" Vera Scroggins asked. She described how a company will replant a pad with grass where there was once a vital, thriving forest ecosystem.

In the end, it is clear to residents and visitors alike that this land is not what it once was. "This year they're putting in 73 more horizontal wells and 10 vertical wells, all in a nine-square-mile radius. This is my neighborhood now," Switzer said.

Scroggins, too, notices the changes. "I moved to the country because I wanted to have a country life, and it's being changed. It's like we're being sacrificed so the world can have more fuel...Think of something else. They're pumping billions into this...[They should] pump it into other technologies, ones that don't change the ecosystems of our country."



Dimock resident Craig Sautner displays his ruined drinking water at a Susquehanna County meeting on water quality. Sautner lives on Carter Road, gas drilling's "ground zero."

Flowback: The Process' Poison

The surface spills Komoroski mentions are likely from what the industry nicknames "flowback." After any given frack, 15-30 percent of the fluid returns to the surface as flowback. This fluid contains chemicals originally used in the fracking, "NORM" (naturally occurring radioactive material), salts and heavy minerals. The flowback is stored in containers on site. (See Web site for link about flowback catching fire.) After it is collected and stored, the companies assure the public that it is taken to qualified treatment centers or reused.

When the flowback initially returns to the surface, it cannot be immediately contained. The incident is called a blowout. "A blowout turns out to be this drilling water mess coming up after all the pressure," Vera Scroggins said. She visited a local drill site after hearing about the blowout. "The guys were all working to clean up the mess, trying to pump it into a pit." She stresses that it's hard to see things happening because the area is marked with no-trespassing signs. "By the time you ask for permission [to visit the site], whatever's happening is done." After the blowout, the rest of the flowback leaves the ground in a more orderly and manageable fashion.

"You would not believe how gross the pits are," Farnelli told us. The flowback used to be stored in pits that would collect litter like cigarette butts, coffee cups, even dead animals. The smell is "a mix of blue fish and diesel fuel. It's enough to make you barf," Farnelli said.

The gas companies assure Pennsylvanians that only .5 percent of the fluid used to frack is additives. However, .5 percent of four million gallons is still 20,000 gallons of chemicals, which need to be trucked in from around the country and stored before they are used.

In Dunkard Creek, Greene County, in the southwest region of the state, massive numbers of fish and other aquatic life died after a bloom of golden algae. Golden algae thrive best in waters with low flow and high amounts of dissolved solids. The most obvious source of dissolved solids is waste water from gas drilling. Many believe that undisclosed dumping of the fracking fluid into the creek is responsible.

Though the permits used by the gas industry regulate how much water can be taken from waterways, environmentalists still raise concern about the hundreds of thousands of gallons being withdrawn daily. Residents argue that the massive quantities of water are "stolen" from them.

Last year, the DEP received a call in McNett Township in Lycoming County; a woman noticed bubbles were coming up in a local stream, and she didn't know what to do about it. The entire town was evacuated due to the high methane levels. The Pennsylvania state police closed roads to the public. The situation, which the drilling company claimed was caused by a faulty string of casing, took several days to repair.

Continued on page 11

Grand Jury Targets Activists in Connection with AETA

By LAYNE
for *The Defenestrator*

On Nov. 17, 2009, Minneapolis activists Carrie Feldman and Scott DeMuth were jailed for refusing to cooperate with a federal grand jury in Davenport, Iowa. The Davenport grand jury was likely an attempt to generate indictments for an unsolved Animal Liberation Front action in 2004 at the University of Iowa. There is a long history of grand juries being used to target radical movements, including Black liberation, anti-colonial struggles, white anti-imperialist movements, and Earth and animal liberation movements. Grand juries are used to generate indictments but do not have to be related to a specific "crime," and the prosecutor is under no obligation to disclose what they are investigating. The jurors are not screened for bias, the prosecutor runs the proceedings—which happen in secret—and the people subpoenaed are not allowed to have a lawyer present in the courtroom. In the past decade alone, grand juries have targeted former Black Panthers (the San Francisco 8, in 2005), the Puerto Rican Independence movement (three New York activists, in 2007), and several Muslim activists and Earth liberation activists. Many of these activists served time in jail rather than cooperate with this corrupt proceeding. Like them, Feldman refused to testify, and was incarcerated for over four months even though she was never accused of committing any crime. She was only released when the prosecutor decided her testimony was "no longer needed."

DeMuth also refused to testify and was taken to jail, but two days later, he was charged

with conspiracy under the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act (AETA). If convicted, he faces three to five years in prison. He was released on Nov. 30 pending trial (set to begin on Sept. 13, 2010).

AETA was signed into law in late 2006 after being pushed through Congress by influential biomedical and agribusiness industry groups. The law essentially criminalizes and defines as "terrorist" any activity that interferes with an animal enterprise's ability to turn a profit. Passed in the context of the post-9/11 "war on terror," it broadens the definition of terrorism and is a clear example of an industry using the legal system to protect its financial interests.

There is no substantive evidence connecting DeMuth or Feldman to the 2004 action. (At the time, Feldman was only 15 years old and DeMuth only 17; both resided in the Twin Cities.) Instead, the prosecution is targeting them for their political beliefs and the work they do in their communities.

Feldman has been involved in many activist projects in the Twin Cities, including Coldsnap Legal Collective, the Jack Pine Community Center (JPCC) and Earth Warriors Are OK! (EWOK!)—a collective committed to supporting political prisoners, particularly those targeted by the Green Scare.

DeMuth has been involved in the Anarchist Black Cross, the JPCC and EWOK!, as well as the Anpao Duta (Red Dawn) Collective—a Dakota community journal building awareness of growing Dakota decolonization struggles. He is also a part of Oyate Nipi Kte (The People Shall Live)—a collective working to acquire land to establish liberated space for traditional Dakota language, cultural, spiritual and community

immersion in order to plant the seeds of political self-determination and sovereignty.

DuMuth and Feldman's incarceration and the subsequent terrorism charges against DeMuth are indicative of the length to which the state will go to stifle dissent and create a chilling effect on movements for social justice. While only a handful of people so far have been charged under the AETA and its predecessor, the ACPA, it sets a dangerous precedent. The continual expansion of what is defined as "terrorism" is intended to scare people away from social justice movements and has already resulted in the detention and incarceration of hundreds of Muslims living in the United States, as well as increased repression, harassment and isolation of already incarcerated political prisoners. And, of course, if the animal enterprise lobby can get a law criminalizing the animal rights movement, other industry groups could easily follow suit. The AETA is harmful to more than just the animal rights movement: Activists like Scott DeMuth and Carrie Feldman have to spend months fighting bogus charges while their communities face increased scrutiny and harassment from law enforcement—which paves the way for laws further criminalizing communities whose interests come up against corporate profit and power.

The State uses repression to undermine resistance and to grow the prison industrial complex, minimizing threats to its own stability and feeding the need for an ever growing prison population in one fell swoop. The Davenport affair is no exception. As is clear in this case, and in thousands of others, the State intends to use politically motivated legislation and prosecution to destroy our movements. And equally clear



Scott DeMuth and Carrie Feldman refused to face a Grand Jury

is that, once again, the State has misjudged the strength of our convictions and our capacity for solidarity with each other. Feldman spent four months in jail rather than testify to a grand jury, and DeMuth faces years in prison.

In the Twin Cities, Iowa and across the country, many people stand with them. As the State continues its relentless push to lock up millions of people, stifle resistance and criminalize dissent, we can and will continue to come together to fight these bogus charges, the criminalization of our movements and the prison industrial complex itself.

For more information and to find out what you can do, check out davenportgrandjury.wordpress.com.

Questions about this article? E-mail neRNCsupport@riseup.net.

Reportback from the Anticapitalathon Games

By ANONYMOUS

On the weekend of April 23-25, the Anticapitalathon Games were held in Washington, D.C., to protest the International Monetary Fund (IMF)/World Bank spring meetings. The "games" were organized by the Self Described Anarchist Collective (<http://selfdescribed.org>), a regional anti-authoritarian group. While this year's protest was smaller than those in years past, all who took part demonstrated tremendous energy and enthusiasm.

The IMF and neoliberalism in general have fallen on hard times since the height of the Washington Consensus in the late 90s. Latin America managed to decrease their debt to the IMF by 98 percent by 2007, as noted in David Graeber's essay *The Shock of Victory*, but only by defaulting on their loans and ignoring the IMF's recommendations for neoliberal economic restructuring. The Free Trade Area of the Americas never got off the ground. The Doha round of World Trade Organization talks collapsed in failure in 2006, and, despite pledges to revive it by the G-20 group of nations last September, it has shown no signs of life since. Recently, however, the financial collapse has provided the ruling class with an excuse to attempt to resuscitate neoliberalism. The G-20 at their London meeting last year promised \$1.1 trillion in financing to the IMF. But that money has not gone toward re-exercising control over the Global South. Countries such as China, India, Argentina and Brazil have shown no inclination to return to IMF-enforced-debt peonage.

Instead, the IMF has had to focus on propping up the European Union. In order to keep the Greek government from defaulting on its loans, which could well have sparked an E.U.-wide financial panic, the IMF contributed about

a third of a \$143 billion bailout package (with the rest coming from other E.U. nations, particularly Germany). Per the IMF's usual practice, that money is being loaned to the Greek government to pay off existing debt under the condition that they impose austerity measures on the Greek public. Similar to the "poverty reduction programs" forced on previous recipients of IMF and World Bank loans, the austerity measures include layoffs, salary reductions and pension cuts for government employees, as well as an increase in the regressive Value Added Tax. On Saturday, April 24, Greek anarchists, leftists and workers held a massive rally in Athens against the IMF, although most Anticapitalathon protesters didn't hear about it until later.

Back in D.C., the Anticapitalathon Games began on Friday, April 23, with the Run on the Bank, a permitted 5K run featuring a banner and a sound system, as well as a heavy police escort. Despite some difficulties with the sound system (which included the cops drowning it out with their sirens when it was finally working), the run was a success. One runner was briefly detained by the cops but was not arrested, after placing a brick wrapped in Monopoly money in front of a bank. The run was followed by a rally with speakers in front of the IMF's headquarters.

Next on the schedule was the Walking Tour, a guided tour of downtown D.C., highlighting sites of interest to radicals, including hotels where IMF delegates stay, lobbyists' offices and condos that were formerly homeless shelters. Police presence was once again heavy, with riot cops lining the sidewalk and closing businesses as the tour passed. The World Bank "infoshop," a stop on last year's tour, was reportedly closed for the day.

Friday evening was the "Soccer Game," an unpermitted night march with a soccer theme. Marchers carried soccer balls and

banners on poles to the Concordia Hotel, which is the official hotel of the IMF and which exclusively houses delegates during meetings. The banners were reassembled into soccer goals, and participants played soccer, chanted and harassed delegates entering the hotel. Several confrontations occurred when the cops confiscated noisemakers and drums; protesters linked arms to protect their comrades.

After about four hours in front of the Concordia, the march continued to Washington Circle, where several protesters went into the Washington Circle Hotel, which also houses IMF personnel during meetings. Capt. Jeffrey Herold, the D.C. cop in charge at the scene, immediately ordered the arrests of everyone who had gone in. A scuffle ensued in which eight protesters were arrested, not all of whom had actually entered the hotel. Charges included unlawful entry, failure to disperse, and assault on a police officer, as well as one unfortunate protester who was charged with possession of unregistered ammunition. The arrestees were all released on their own recognizance the next day. The arrests were unusual for D.C., where protesters who go into hotels are customarily kicked back out rather than arrested.

Saturday began with the Scavenger Hunt, in which participants traveled around D.C., collecting various items related to gentrification, neoliberalism and D.C. local issues. Items included ornaments from city councilors' lawns, souvenirs from the lobbies of delegate hotels, and rubbings from the D.C.'s law enforcement memorial. The idea was to provide a fun and relatively risk-free setting for educating scavengers about D.C. geography and politics in preparation for future demos.

The Scavenger Hunt was supposed to have been followed by a baseball game in which the security perimeter around the meetings would have served as the home-run fence, but this was canceled due to rain. The next event was a brisk game of Capture the Flag, followed by the Closing Ceremony and Procession of Athletes: another night march. In contrast to the previous night's soccer game, police presence was minimal, and Capt. Herold, normally a fixture at unpermitted protests in D.C., was

nowhere to be seen. This allowed marchers to take the streets, where they stayed for about 45 minutes, moving toward the Columbia Heights neighborhood, before the cops could muster enough reinforcements to move them onto the sidewalk. From there, marchers continued for another hour or so, making lots of noise and attracting considerable attention from locals before the march broke up a little after midnight.

Despite the low number of athletes, the Anticapitalathon was a successful demo but with room for improvement. While the medical and legal workshops were informative and well presented, several other planned workshops were canceled due to presenters not showing up or being in jail.

Logistics, likewise, were spotty: Organizers did cover the basics of housing, food, convergence space and legal and medical support, but food was sometimes late or not enough to feed everyone, and the mass housing was extremely cramped Friday night. A communication infrastructure was basically nonexistent. A Twitter channel was set up, but no announcements were sent over it. This led to unnecessary confusion when events and workshops were canceled and when the closing ceremony starting point was changed at the last minute.

What is more worrisome, the protester turnout was only about half what it was at the April Uprising, the anti-IMF protest last year that in turn drew only about half as many protesters as did the October Rebellion in 2007. The Anticapitalathon was designed more to inform participants about neoliberalism and D.C. issues, as well as to recruit organizers for October, than it was to create a massive demo to shut down the meetings. While that might have convinced some to wait for the fall IMF meetings, the overall attendance trend is still disturbing.

Sunday was reserved for a consulta to discuss the fall meetings, scheduled for Oct. 9-11 in D.C. Participants decided to form a working group to plan for October (with a name to be determined later), seek endorsements from interested groups, and held another consulta in Philadelphia in early June.

Digging for the Diggers:

An Excavation at No Cost

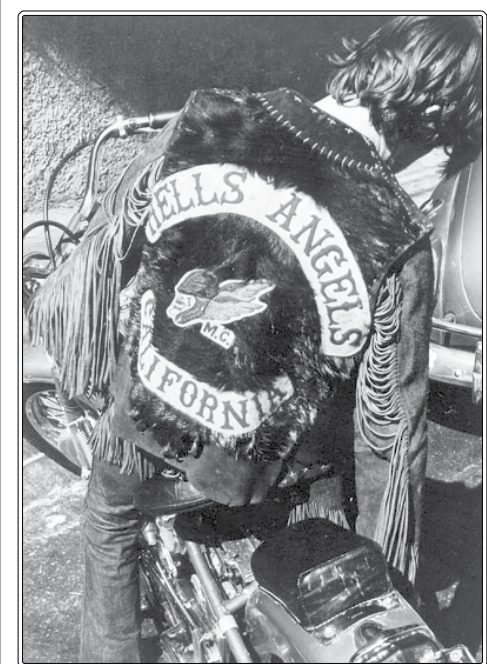
By ERICK LYLE
for S.F. Art and Politics

Perhaps no idea from the 1960s counterculture has continued to have such a powerful hold on the imagination of the radical Left up until today as the San Francisco Diggers' idea of "Free." The Diggers merged art and politics into everyday life, practicing mutual aid and guerilla theater in tactics that have inspired movements like Food Not Bombs and Reclaim the Streets, as well as ongoing happenings like Critical Mass. Their utopian vision of a money-free economy, acted out in their legendary food giveaways and Free Stores, has been a North Star for anarchists ever since. But were the Diggers living out a serious, viable alternative to capitalism, or were they just a hippie art project? In the fall of 2008, as the worldwide economy went into total collapse, I went looking for the surviving Diggers themselves to look back at their efforts and to find traces of their movement in the world today.

The Diggers operated for a brief but explosive two-year period starting in 1966 in the Haight District of San Francisco, and much of their activity went undocumented at the time. So the search for the Diggers is in some ways a literary search. The legend of the Diggers and their quest for Free comes down to us today in *Ringolevio* (reissued by New York Review of Books Classics, 2008), the classic criminal memoir of self-mythologizing Digger founder Emmett Grogan. In Grogan's book, the Diggers dress not like barefoot hippies, but like bikers, riding Harleys and hanging out with Hell's Angels. They rob the rich to give to the poor and they outwit the cops, all while living by a morally pure outlaw code. The Diggers were also artists. Their freely distributed anonymous papers, posters and handbills – by Grogan's account – represented the true conscience of the streets.

Not surprisingly, Grogan's grandiose and factually dubious account of the Diggers at times strains belief. Was Grogan really a Park Ave. jewel thief and Italian film star before heading west to San Francisco? Peter Coyote says today, "I love Emmett. I wouldn't take much of his book as a source text but he gets the flavor of the times."

Grogan's writing infuses the bare facts of the Diggers' existence with the romantic glow of outlaw myth. It is, of course, a known fact that the Diggers served free food in Panhandle Park to hundreds of people for nearly two years. But in Grogan's account, these quotidian feedings that were the Diggers' first actions were also something more: an inspired bit of criminal revenge following the September 1966 shooting and killing of an unarmed black teen by a white cop in Hunter's Point. After riots broke out across the city, Grogan writes that he watched the National Guard parade down Fillmore St. from his roof with his childhood friend, Billy Murcott, and the two former Brooklyn street hoods and incipient Diggers hatched a new kind of criminal caper.



With a plan of action that still serves as the blueprint for Food Not Bombs chapters across the world to this day, the two went to the produce district and begged up discarded vegetables from produce vendors for soup. They passed out fliers on Haight St. announcing free food every day at 4 p.m. in Panhandle Park. "It's free because it's yours!" proclaimed the flier – perhaps the birth of the concept of Free. By the end of the week, they were feeding hundreds of people a day, and the daily feedings went on for nearly two years. This may have been the Diggers' greatest accomplishment, but in *Ringolevio*, Grogan clearly relishes more describing how he would steal meat for the soup from butcher shops in the Mission District every morning after they begged up the free vegetables.

Similarly, Grogan adds to the myth of the Diggers' Free Stores. While I had always imagined the Free Store as probably being a somewhat outsized version of the disorganized and often neglected punk-house free box, Grogan wrote that the true purpose of the Free Store was to serve not only as a place to get free stuff, but also as a place where deserting members of the U.S. military could come and quickly acquire a whole new wardrobe and a fake ID.

Grogan was found dead by heroin overdose in 1978 on the last stop of the F train at Conej Island in Brooklyn. His death has added to the inscrutability of Digger myth. Yet, whatever the true facts, Grogan's larger than life portrayal of himself and of the Diggers is fitting for a group of actors whose origins were in theater.

The core members who would found the Diggers met as part of the San Francisco Mime Troupe. The Mime Troupe was then, as now, known for bringing political theater directly to the people in plays performed in public parks. In 1965, the group director R.G. Davis had a showdown with SF Parks and Recreation Commission when the Troupe was denied a permit to perform in Lafayette Square Park on grounds of "obscenity." Davis and company went ahead with the illegal performance and were busted. The troupe's victory in their subsequent trial would establish the right for artists to perform freely in San Francisco parks.

Peter Berg – called "The Hun" in Grogan's book – was writing and directing for the Mime Troupe at that time. Berg, a founding Digger, would later be credited with coining the term *guerilla theater*. He told me, "The Mime Troupe was not just radical activist theater; the Mime Troupe was the place for new art of that period to become public. The benefit for the bust in the park was the birth of guerilla theater."

The point of the Diggers was to eliminate the separation between art and daily life. Life itself could be theater. Famously, the Diggers would even make theater out of serving food. In the park, an enormous wooden picture frame painted gold was placed between two oaks – the so-called "Free Frame of Reference." Eager hippies would have to pass through the frame to the other side in order to receive their food – a symbolic crossing over to a different way of life based not on money but instead on cooperation and participation. When eaters tried to donate money to the Diggers, they would burn the dollar bills right in front of them.

On Halloween, just weeks after its first feeding, the group, led by Berg, carried out its first street theater action to reclaim the streets of the Haight. The Free Frame of Reference was brought to the corner of Haight and Ashbury where two nine-foot-tall puppets

Top Right: The San Francisco Diggers were one of the first incarnations of what is now Food Not Bombs. Their daily food giveaways also inspired other groups to start their own feedings, including the Black Panthers' famous Free Breakfast Program.

Bottom Right: After the Summer of Love, many Diggers moved outside of the city to start sustainable collectives and communes. Some members moved around the country, connecting with other groups interested in intentional communities.

Left: The Diggers frequently associated with the Hell's Angels motorcycle gang, relieving them of hippie branding. Photos by Chuck Gould.

“How could such a people be so invisible to history? I don't think there are any traces of the Diggers left except in some experiments that have taken off, and no one can trace them back to us.”

—Actor and former Digger, Peter Coyote

operated by Diggers took turns arguing about “the ins and outs of being on either side of the Frame of Reference.” According to *Ringolevio*, five hundred people were soon blocking the intersection and watching the show. When the cops tried to break it up, no one moved, so, incredibly and to the great amusement of the crowd, the cops turned to the *puppets* and told them they were obstructing traffic. When the cops finally tried to arrest the puppets, guerilla theater was born.

Perhaps the most successful synthesis of art, life and a utopian dream of life without money was the Digger Free Store started by Peter Berg. The Free Store was a storefront full of items that were free for the taking. Berg says, “The store was called the Trip Without a Ticket. The name invited you to think about getting things for nothing.”

Peter Coyote remembers, “In the Free Store, we had TV sets, clothing...even *skis*. We simply began to collect the detritus of mid-twentieth century civilization. It's the money that is scarce, not the stuff, and once you see that, it empowers you. Our feeling was that if the technology existed to build a TV. for everyone, then it was money that created scarcity. Money was a herding pen to shepherd you into work. We wanted to short-circuit that relationship.”

Though the group existed at the height of the era of protest against the Vietnam War, this determination to act out a vision of a different world set them apart from the anti-war protester of the day. The Diggers acted on what they were for, rather than what they were against.

The Diggers did not march. Yet, the Diggers' example of community self-determination and mutual aid was extremely influential to the politics of the era. In his book *This Side of Glory*, the chief of staff of the Black Panther Party, David Hilliard, credits the Diggers' feedings as the inspiration for the famed Black Panther free breakfast programs.



Besides the daily feedings, the Diggers organized legal aid and healthcare for the massive influx of teen runaways that came to the Haight for 1967's mainstream media spectacle, the Summer of Love. Their efforts to find hip doctors who would offer free care to the hippies helped lead to the formation of what is today the Haight Ashbury Free Clinic. Soon, such self-organization to meet basic needs was the norm in Left activism.

The 1969 campaign to Free los Siete de la Raza in San Francisco was based not just on awareness about their trial, but also on a free breakfast program, a free newspaper, free legal services for Latino immigrants and free healthcare programs in the Mission District that the campaign modeled after Black Panther programs. In 1969, Native American activists began a 19-month occupation of the island of Alcatraz in San Francisco Bay and self-organized ways to feed and care for the occupiers.

In October 1967, after the Death of Hippie and the Summer of Love hype, the Diggers gave away the last thing they owned: their name. Eric Noble of the indispensable Digger online archive, Diggers.org, writes, “The name ‘Diggers’ had become so widely used that it was like a ripple wave in a pond.” The group was reborn as Free City Collective. Efforts were made to branch out to all neighborhoods in San Francisco, distributing food not in the streets but to communal houses citywide.

In August 1968, the former Diggers asserted their new vision with the publication of *The Digger Papers*, featuring Peter Berg's guerilla theater manifesto, “The Trip Without a Ticket,” and Emmett Grogan's call to arms. “The Post-Competitive, Comparative Game of a Free City,”

And there, my literary search comes to a dead end. The Diggers had vanished, “like ripples in a pond.” Eric Noble on Diggers.org writes simply, “The glaring onslaught of media attention drove the movement underground again.”

As the worldwide economy started to collapse in late 2008 and as institutions like schools and hospitals began to be decimated by budget cuts, I was haunted by the vision of a lost Free City. Had a money-free barter economy existed between several thousand people in the Bay Area as recently as 35 years ago and then simply disappeared? More to the point, had the time come again for the Digger model of community self-determination? Was it time for People's Clinics and Free Schools again? Could communities come together to meet their basic needs without money? Was a barter economy possible? Was Free City a plan or just a dream?

The former Diggers I talked to were skeptical of the economic viability of their own efforts. “I always felt the Diggers were a heightened art project and never a serious economic alternative,” says Coyote today. “The Diggers were just trying to expose how society works: you can be a consumer or a producer. The most remote knowledge of interdependency tells you that nothing is really free.”

Judy Goldhaft, today co-director with Peter Berg of the ecology awareness group Planet Drum, sees the Diggers' efforts not as an alternative to capitalism, but instead as a byproduct of its waste. “At the time, the surplus of the larger society was unbelievable. When we opened the Free Store, people left us clothes and appliances, but also cars, *land*. All you had to do was think of something and it would show up.”

In *Ringolevio*, however, Grogan insists that the Diggers were no art project. Of the free feedings in the park, Grogan wrote, “Free Food every day in the park was a popular act, but [the Diggers] didn't intend it solely as a symbol. No, they were hungry and so were a lot of others, and they were going to keep the Free Food going every day, in spite of everything and for nothing.” Another Digger veteran I talked to, Vicki Pollack, agreed: “To me it wasn't just an art project; it was a way of life. *I did* believe we were saving the world.”

For Pollack, the Diggers pointed toward a way in which society could be constructively reorganized. “Having lived communally, I know that if you put 20 people together who want to work, you'll find everyone wants to do different things. That's the way the world works. In the Diggers, everybody had different roles, but they chose them. The world could be like that.”

Coyote hopes the Digger idea will have more reliance in a post-economic collapse world: “I think there's a potential positive side to this economic collapse. So what could come out of this is barter, trade networks, more homemade stuff, which I look forward to.”

The Diggers' influence on the counterculture was so great that in some ways, by the time I was getting into punk rock and activism, their ideas had become the underground's infrastructure; a foundation ever present but as taken for granted as highways or bridges or the system that brings water to our faucets.

When I first started doing a zine about stealing, living for free and illegal art in the

streets, those ideas were already in the air and part of punk rock. When I traveled the country in bands, every punk house had a free box – a direct descendent of the Free Store – but I could not yet chart the lineage from the ethics of bands like Crass and the politics of the Dead Kennedys back to the Diggers. When the cops shut down all the Mission punk clubs in the late '90s, I started booking illegal generator shows on Mission St. without any knowledge of the Diggers' free concerts in the Haight. I had become vaguely aware of the Diggers' exploits by the time I was involved in the 949 Market squat, probably the most realized version of an autonomous utopia I have ever been involved with.

In 2001, I was one of a large group of artists and activists who transformed an abandoned pool hall at 949 Market St. in downtown San Francisco into an illegally squatted art gallery, performance space, punk venue, community space and free breakfast program for three glorious free months. For most of us involved, the squat forever altered our conception of the possibilities of art and politics and of how the borders between them can disappear. It wasn't until I read *Ringolevio*, at last, several years later that I felt the shock of recognition across time and space. In the squat we had been trying to build something we didn't even have words for – something that did not exist yet. Yet, we had also been unwittingly following in the well-worn footsteps of the Diggers who came before on the trail of the same vision of Free.

So where are the traces of the Diggers today? Eric Noble, who has compiled all of the Diggers written history into the thorough Web site Diggers.org, told me that he got a copy of the *Digger Papers* when it came out, and he hitchhiked across the country to San Francisco shortly thereafter with the copy in his back pocket. Noble maintains that the place that the Diggers' idea of Free has had the most influence in the world today is in the structure of the Internet. San Francisco programmers exposed to Diggers' ideas in counterculture tech scenes were the people responsible at its formation for the idea that the Internet has to be free.

Today, one might realistically conclude that the Diggers' idea of Free has been co-opted by the mega corporations like Google and Yahoo that have persuaded us that all art and writing and music should be freely distributed so that these companies themselves can make enormous profits. Yet, the money-free economy and art happenings of early Burning Man that would later spring from the unique Bay Area cultural fusion of cyber connectivity and Digger idea of Free reflected the utopian spirit of the early days of the Internet.

Berg and Goldhaft formed the ecology awareness group Planet Drum in 1973 as a reaction to the first U.N. Environment Conference in 1972. Planet Drum today is involved in efforts to create green and sustainable cities, but Berg says the group was an outgrowth of the Diggers. “In the course of getting there, there was a caravan of Diggers from West Coast



The Diggers' free food servings have now expanded into an internationally recognized movement called Food Not Bombs, which has autonomous chapters all over the world. This photo is from a Food Not Bombs serving in Poland.

to the East Coast – kind of a reverse wagon train of homemade trucks. Our point of origin was Black Bear Ranch, but other people were at San Geronimo Valley, or Olema, or other rural places. The radical ecology movement became a network in that period. During that trip across the country we collected names and contacts of other communal groups and we kept them in touch to receive the first Planet Drum publications. There was no charge. It was very much an anarchist outgrowth, but an eco anarchist growth.”

Vicki Pollack today runs the Children's Book Project in San Francisco, a non-profit run on a concept that most closely resembles the Digger Free Store. The project is simply a warehouse on Napoleon St. where anyone can come and take whatever children's books they want, free of charge.

Food Not Bombs is the political group that is the most direct descendent of the Diggers. They adopted both the Diggers' tactic of using the daily serving of food as a way to establish community and the Diggers' street theater tactics. When Food Not Bombs in San Francisco was under attack from police in the early 1990s for serving food without a permit, it was the widely distributed photos of SFPD “arresting” boxes of bagels that perhaps more than anything spread the idea of Food Not Bombs to activists around the world. The group's ability to get the cops to act out the absurdity of their own position was classic guerilla theater.

Critical Mass, another movement that caught fire in the early 1990s, similarly relied on theater. Since it is legal to ride a bike in the street, what would happen if everyone rode their bike in the street at the same time? Comedy – and heavy-handed police absurdity – ensues!

The Diggers' battles with what they called the Hip Establishment, and their stance that actual underground youth should have control over underground youth culture, have had a tremendous influence on the DIY culture that

chief, George Nelson: “Due to a reduction in manning, age of equipment, limited training and lack of personnel, serious doubt exists that [we] would be able to contain and clean up effectively a medium or large size oil spill.”

BP sought to bury this report and blackmail its author. As investigative journalist Greg Palast reported, “Alyeska showed Capt. Woodle a file of his marital infidelities (all bogus). It then offered him payouts on condition that he leave the state within days, promising never to return.”

Palast added, “Charles Hamel of Washington, D.C., shaken by evidence he received from Alyeska employees, warn[ed] BP executives in London about scandalous goings-on at Valdez.” BP thanked him. “Then a secret campaign was launched to hound him out of the industry. A CIA expert was hired to wiretap Hamel's phone lines, smuggle microphones into his home, intercept his mail and try to entrap him with young women. The industrial espionage caper was personally ordered and controlled by BP executive James Hermiller, President of Alyeska. A U.S. federal judge later told Alyeska this conduct was ‘reminiscent of Nazi Germany.’”

Only in 2009–20 years after the oil spill– did Exxon start paying up. It has spent this time battling Alaskan coastal communities

is strong to this day. The editor of the punk bible *Maximum RocknRoll*, Tim Yohannon, was himself a 1960s holdover, and his magazine's watchdog role over bands who sold out to major labels and shady corporate promoters extended, for better or worse, the Diggers' non-profit vision of rock and roll indefinitely into the future. The international network of bands and promoters and travelers who book shows for each other for free and the idea that a punk show should cost \$5 until the end of time can both be traced back to the Diggers.

In short, today the Diggers are everywhere and nowhere. While the influence of Free has been tremendous, many of the true facts surrounding the Diggers remain frustratingly unverifiable. Did the heroic Diggers of *Ringolevio* really exist, or was it just Emmett Grogan's junkie nod-out dream? Did a network of 300 communes across San Francisco really exist, or was it just a twinkle in Irving Rosenthal's eye? On the trail of Free, I dug and dug like a radical archaeologist, hoping to bring proof of the existence of the lost Free City back to the surface as inspiration to those struggling today. Instead, I found depressing accounts that the utopian free network failed because no one could give up fancy cheese.

The Free Stores and feedings had really happened, yet, the Diggers themselves claimed it was all just art. Perhaps none of the Digger myth had existed in the way I'd always dreamed it. Perhaps the reality is that the myth is all we have – but it is in this ongoing search that Free exists. While the Diggers themselves have disappeared, their idea of Free has remained as an irreducible element at the core of countless other radical experiments.

Whatever happened to that lost Free City? I think of 949 Market – a Free place in which I once stood that seemed to vanish like a mirage almost as soon as I arrived in it. It seemed to vanish yet at the same time has remained always flickering in and out of focus just up ahead. 🍌

Lessons Learned:

Exxon Valdez vs. Gulf Oil Spill

By NATTERJACK PRESS

The Yup'ik saw this. They saw thousands of sea otters die. They saw hundreds of thousands of seabirds die. They saw billions of salmon and herring die. This wasn't a dream; it was a very real nightmare. You may have heard of it—it was called the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill.

It all began on March 24, 1989, when the Exxon Valdez oil tanker grounded on a reef in Prince William Sound, 40 miles off the Alaskan coast. It spilled 11 million gallons of crude oil into the sea, contaminating about 1,300 miles of coastline. But for the Yup'ik and other southern Alaskans, the nightmare was just beginning.

“We had suicides, domestic violence, child abuse, alcohol and drug abuse, divorces, and we lost people in the community who went elsewhere,” said Patience Andersen Faulkner, a Yup'ik from the Chugach people, on a recent visit to Louisiana coastal communities.

The sentiments of snowballing loss experienced by disaster survivors is echoed by social scientists.

J. Steven Picou, Professor of Sociology at the University of South Alabama, has for 30 years researched the impacts of disasters on communities. “These empirical findings are consistent with smaller studies of survivors of Three-Mile Island, Bhopal and Chernobyl,” he said, referring to the repercussions of past disasters.

These days, public anger is directed at BP, which had nothing to do with the Exxon Valdez spill... did it?

Actually, it did. BP was in up to its neck: It was in charge of the botched response to the spill. It was the major player in the Alyeska Pipeline Service Co., which controls oil production in Alaska. Exxon, despite having its name on the ship, was a junior partner. Capt. James Woodle, who was then the Alyeska's Valdez port commander, stated that four years before the disaster, he reported the following to BP's Alaska

Cold-Hearted:

Antarctica in the 21st Century

Antarctica is a wilderness that contradicts our ideas of wilderness. All the identifying markers of any wild place on Earth (animals, plants, birds, bugs) are notably absent. Yet, Antarctica has felt a human presence for over 150 years. In that short period, major milestones have ranged from the first steps on the continent in 1821 to an irrevocant SUV race to the South Pole in 2005.

The landmass is colonized by a handful of nations, just like any other place on Earth – the only difference being that it is not an actual country. And because only countries have governments, someone else necessarily writes the laws that govern the people who live and work in Antarctica. In this case, it is a corporation that makes the rules, and their workers subsequently lose all federal human rights upon entering Antarctica.

This arrangement can be described as corporatism, a term coined by Benito Mussolini and originally used to describe fascism. According to Mussolini, both fascism and corporatism merge state and corporate power, as appears to be the case in Antarctica. After all, the only way to get to the continent is through a private expedition corporation (requiring mounds of capital) or through the U.S. government and military.

The United States, however, does not actually have a plot on the continent. (Plots are divided among New Zealand, Australia, Britain, France, Norway, Argentina and Chile.) According to the Antarctic Treaty, the United States, among a handful of other countries, is to be consulted during group decisions and reserves the right to make a claim on land in the future. In the meantime, U.S. scientists, with the approval of the United States' National Science Foundation (NSF), can occupy space at the South Pole or often at McMurdo Base on the southern coast of the island.

McMurdo Base is part small town, part mining camp, part construction zone and part scientific research base. It is bustling with the spectrum of humanity – from artists and world travelers to confirmed Mormons and former police chiefs – in addition to researchers. Occasional announcements trumpet the successes and failures of scientists in the region, but the public rarely hears from other residents on the island.

To better understand their perspective, the Nor'easter talked with a former employee of Raytheon Polar Services Company (RPSC), the corporation contracted to run logistics on the continent. By talking to the media about what happens in Antarctica, Raytheon employees risk losing their jobs. So this worker continues a tradition of talking through pseudonyms based on the names of Antarctic explorers. This worker will be known in this interview as Birdie Byrd.

The Nor'easter: Because there is no government-run logistical infrastructure in Antarctica, the NSF signs 10-year contracts with corporations to run the logistics of life there for scientists. Raytheon Polar Services, however, keeps getting extensions due to the current "economic crisis" and has been under contract for 13 years. What was it like working for this company and living in the stations?

Birdie Byrd: The stations themselves are like tiny towns made of pre-fab buildings from the military, which gives them a ramshackle appearance despite being totally uniform. I was one of the people who did the necessary work of keeping the town running: everything from cleaning the toilets or checking out field equipment to servicing engines or cleaning boilers that heat the buildings. Just like society in the rest of the world, Antarctic towns are one-third specialists and two-thirds grunt workers who know how everything works and enable those specialists to do their tasks. We work 10 hours a day, six days a week, with a few two-day weekends around major holidays like Christmas, but no overtime pay. Life is very communal, with everyone working, living and eating together, so that's cool. But employees can be fired without notice or severance pay. Talking about unionization can result in termination, and employees also sign over any "reasonable expectation of privacy" when they agree to accept the job. In a sense, Raytheon employees are always at work, because all of their space and time on the island is under the jurisdiction of Raytheon.

NE: Is it true that a Human Resources Department handles legal matters like some cross between a cop and a boss? And that individuals don't break laws; they break codes of conduct?

BB: We don't have any police, obviously, so the rules of the company become the laws. Unfortunately, unlike real courts, the Human Resources Department doesn't allow for fair hearings, trials by your peers or any sort of appeals. The company has the authority and ability to control your access to the continent, regulate what activities are allowed to happen and what kinds of things (such as alcohol and cigarettes) you can have on station just by deciding not to reorder them as supplies. And they don't like criticism. I know from my own experience that several people were asked to remove stuff from their blogs by the station manager, under orders from headquarters in Denver. They don't want anyone to say anything that sounds critical of their policies or of how the U.S. Antarctic Program operates. They can do that very easily by firing, or just not re-hiring, a worker for the next season.

NE: I know that workers can lose their jobs just for making negative comments on the Web, through e-mail or even in person, as all Internet activity is monitored and overheard comments can warrant an employee review. So, does Freedom of Speech not translate to Antarctic work? It is, after all, an American company that you're working for – wouldn't they still be required to adhere to U.S. law?

BB: The first amendment only applies to what the government can censure you for using criminal proceedings, not why companies can hire or fire you. That's totally up to them. Unless you can prove you're being discriminated against for one of the federally protected statuses like race or gender, or if you try to build a case as a whistle-blower, then you're probably out of luck. People in the past have faced a lot of anti-union bias and general harassment, but what can you do?

NE: There is no "government," as we know the term, in Antarctica. But with so many countries vying for control in the region, how is land and power distributed?

BB: It's true that Antarctica is not a nation and has no government, which is, of course, a huge part of its romantic appeal for the imaginative anarchist. However, it does have some territorial boundaries. The continent is sliced like a pie out from the South Pole into "zones of interest" that roughly correspond to where each country's expeditions landed in the early days of Antarctic exploration. The U.S. doesn't have a slice of the pie. Instead, we operate the base at the South Pole. We also have one base in New Zealand's slice and one in the contested area of the peninsula. Argentina and England are arguing over the land that has the most bases on it, and we happen to operate one of them. Guess whose side of that argument we're on? Ha!

All countries with either territories or a considered interest in the continent came together in 1959 to create an amazing piece of international law called the Antarctic Treaty System. It's a series of agreements that govern operations on the continent in a dynamic way – not just one decision but actually how to make all future decisions. Its biggest, most significant accomplishment is reserving the continent for "peace and science" by banning all military or commercial activities from the entire area, including the Southern Ocean.



Top: A sign along one of the recreational trails warns hikers to stay out of a specially protected area as designated by the National Science Foundation. Most people in Antarctica respect these signs and other environmental protection protocols.
Bottom Left: A view of McMurdo Station, a former naval station that now serves as the continent's largest research base. Every austral summer season, hundreds of scientific expeditions launch out of the station. About 500 or 600 contract workers provide logistical support, bringing the total population to about one thousand people during the summer. Each fall, the population drops to about 100–150 for the long, dark Antarctica winter.
Bottom Right: A Delta, fitted for cargo transport with tires about five feet tall. A small fleet of Deltas to move both cargo and personnel has operated on the Ice for nearly 30 years. They more than make up in durability what they lack in speed or good looks!

NE: Currently, according to the treaty, no military or commercial activity is permitted on the continent (with the exception of "adventure" tourism); that is, no fishing, mining or other activities that may significantly tamper with the natural environment. But what kind of environmental conservation can there be in a place with seemingly so little life to conserve?

BB: This is one of the most important misunderstandings about Antarctica that I want to clear up for people. Antarctica is just as rich and diverse as the Galapagos Islands or the Amazon, just not in the super obvious ways that people relate to instinctively. Instead of giant tortoises and unusual birds, we have an array of microorganisms and bacterium that don't exist anywhere else on Earth and really show the extreme limits of what we understand about biology in general. Trashing that up would be as big a loss as losing creatures from the African savannah, even though most people wouldn't even notice. The entire continent is a challenge to the human-centered understanding of the environment and its value because, honestly, the place is pretty hostile to mammalian life! I find it disturbing that people ask me again and again to make a case for conservation of wilderness areas as if they need to prove worthy of not being obliterated before we can curb our destructive appetites. Someone should make the case for humans-uber-alles to me for a change.

NE: In Alaska and the Arctic Circle, indigenous tribes have done as much – if not more – major conservation work than have environmental non-profits. Obviously, those kinds of alliances can't exist on Antarctica, as there are no indigenous cultures.

BB: Right. Antarctica broke off from the other continents millions of years before humans' ancestors even evolved. It was totally uninhabited, unlike the Arctic Circle, and that means no one could claim the land before explorers and early whalers started to get interested in the place just over a century ago. Many tribes have organized to defend their land from capitalists in the North and that's probably saved huge tracts of wilderness. Antarctica doesn't have defenders with cultural history on the land, and that means it's up to us.

NE: What are the biggest threats to the continent right now? Global warming? Pollution?

BB: Both of these are threats. Pollution is a funny situation because very few sources of pollution exist on continent. I mean, it's not like we have plastics factories or eight-lane super highways to the South Pole...yet! But no, it's the rest of the world's pollution that affects Antarctica. The way wind and ocean currents converge around it as a massive heat sink means that ridiculous amounts of chemicals and particulates concentrate over the continent. Of course the atmospheric pollutants eventually come down as snow or just settle out, honestly. And yeah, global warming – although people underestimate how much ice is really down there: about 70 percent of the world's fresh water is frozen in its glaciers. It's going to take a long time to melt, even with the predicted temperature spikes. People might disagree, but I'd say the biggest threats to Antarctica's health are also the biggest threats to your local environment: all the nasty by-products of industrial capitalism. Currently, I mean. The future might be different.

NE: Are you talking about the possibility of mining in the future?

BB: Yeah. Antarctica is the last landmass that hasn't been ravaged by the pursuit of nonrenewable resources (like copper, gold, oil, coal). It certainly has them, and their approximate locations are pretty well mapped out under the Ice. A primordial forest complete with dinosaurs and megafauna once covered the entire continent, and it has many, many volcanoes. We know it must have large reserves of oil, metals and other goodies waiting for someone rich enough or desperate enough to think that mining through all that ice and then somehow transporting the loot back to the regular world is worth the effort. It's a cost-benefit analysis that so far has been too costly. If that changes, and if the world becomes ever more frantic in pursuing nonrenewable resources, I think we'd see mining operations and their host governments get interested in solving those engineering problems. So much for Peace and Science, right?

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Opinion

Bakunin's Simple Point: An Appeal to Our Sincere Socialist and Communist Friends

By JAKE CARMAN

"... There are those who still insist in telling us that the conquest of powers in the State, by the people, will suffice to accomplish the social revolution—that the old machine, the old organization, slowly developed in the course of history to crush freedom, to crush the individual, to establish oppression on a legal basis, to create monopolists, to lead minds astray by accustoming them to servitude—will lend itself perfectly to its new functions: that it will become the instrument, the framework for the germination of a new life, to found freedom and equality on economic bases, the destruction of monopolies, the awakening of society and towards the achievement of a future of freedom and equality!"
—Peter Kropotkin, "The State: Its Historic Role," 1896

Fewer than 150 years ago, we who today identify with various factions, including modern socialists, anarchists, Marxists, Trotskyists and so on, were all socialists. While these divisions originated from a disagreement on how to achieve socialism, today our ideological chasms seem insurmountable because the word socialism no longer means what it once did.

Early socialists of all stripes sought a classless, stateless society, where individuals would be producing and distributing based on their ability, consuming based on their need, and living in cooperative, self-governing communities. Socialism, thus, was the ultimate victory of the united workers and of the oppressed: freedom (political and social liberty of individuals and groups) and equality (classlessness: equal access to necessities and opportunities, and voice in political decisions).

The Toronto Model

Police Repression at the G-20 Protests

By SUBLETT

Early reports from the recent G-20 summit in Toronto make it clear that it was the worst case of state repression of a protest since the FTAA Ministerial in Miami in 2003.

After anarchists burned four cop cars and smashed numerous windows, the Toronto cops employed rubber bullets, beatings, pepper spray, Tasers and random searches to attack nearly anybody they encountered, protester or not. Conditions at the temporary jail were Guantanamo-esque, featuring many of the same techniques used to torture prisoners in Afghanistan and Iraq. These included freezing temperatures, withholding of food and water, sexual assault and threats of rape, beatings and "pain compliance techniques." Many prisoners were denied phone calls for the entire duration of their stay, which was sometimes days.

There were 1,090 arrests – more than there were at the 2008 Republican National Convention, an event that lasted twice as long. In line with the Miami model, police conducted a campaign of pre-event repression by demonizing anarchists in the media, arresting several protest "leaders" the night before the meetings, and even falsely claiming to have passed a new law allowing the cops to arrest any individuals within five meters of the security fence if they refused to show ID.

Around 1872, the First International split along two ideas advocating different tactics to achieve socialism. Marx led those who believed that a central political party could, either by seizing power in revolt or through elections, create a "workers' government," or a "dictatorship of the proletariat." They thought the working class needed this government to build the new society and that government would wither away, leaving autonomous communities to live and work cooperatively.

Mikhail Bakunin, a veteran of many early republican and socialist uprisings, allied himself with the second tendency, which pointed out the fundamental flaw in Marx's logic: *power corrupts*. This fact has been apparent for as long as the few have wielded power over the many. In 1887, Lord Acton wrote, "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." This statement does not except the "dictatorship of the proletariat."

Bakunin and others were skeptical that a workers' "dictatorship" could dissolve itself, and they were soon known as anarchists for their belief that socialism should come, not from a government or a party, but from a mass movement of people building the new world as they tore down the old one. Any government, they argued, even an alleged workers' one, favors a higher class of people who hold political power. Regardless of their previous employment, these people become nothing more than professional politicians and bureaucrats; they become authorities. As Bakunin correctly pointed out, those in power will fight to preserve it. Government has been perpetuated and defended on this basis for thousands of years of poverty, war and suffering.

Soon after this point was raised, Marx proved it. His power as ideological leader of the International was threatened by an idea with more merit. He used his power to preserve his power: He expelled Bakunin and the other anarchists.

Since that day, Bakunin's simple point has been proven time and again, each time a communist or socialist party gains governmental power. From Russia to Vietnam, Venezuela, Cuba and North Korea, no government claiming socialism as its goal has made concrete steps toward true socialism. Most take symbolic steps—nationalizing certain industries, equalizing pay, providing healthcare, and sometimes

At first glance, this all might seem fairly routine. Summits and conventions are usually an excuse to declare de facto martial law in the host city, and embarrassed cops can generally be counted on to stage a police riot when all their expensive toys fail to contain a handful of kids in black. A similar pattern was seen at the Pittsburgh G-20 and at the 2008 RNC in St. Paul, Minn. What set Toronto apart from those demos was the sheer size of the operation.

The Canadian government budgeted a reported \$1.2 billion for the meetings – a world record for summit spending. Pittsburgh, by contrast, only got \$20 million for their G-20, and they had to fight the Secret Service to get it. London only spent \$10 million on theirs. Toronto brought in 19,000 cops for the summit, compared with Pittsburgh's 4,000. In hindsight, such an enormous investment in "security" virtually guaranteed repression on a similarly massive scale if for no other reason than justifying the expense. From a public relations point of view, the Toronto cops have cut off their nose to spite their face.

The fake law regarding ID checks near the security fence is a prime example. The "new law" first came to light the day before the meetings started, when a man was arrested near the fence for refusing to show ID. At the time, the police claimed that the law had been passed and entered into Canada's official legal database but not announced publicly. A secret law (and one that egregiously violated Canada's Charter, at that) would have been bad enough, but this turned out to be a secret law that had essentially been invented by the cops with no legislative involvement whatsoever. (Technically, the law was a temporary addition to an existing Ontario regulation protecting public works, but it applied only *inside* the fence and did not allow arrests.)

Toronto Police Chief Bill Blair admitted after the G-20 that the law did not mean what he had claimed, saying, "I was trying to keep the

coercing people into inorganic, state-mandated communes—but the working class forces the best of these on the government during the days of rebellion, only to have them stripped away by the state later.

Socialist authorities have changed the definition of the term socialism in order to preserve their power, because a state surrenders power and renders itself irrelevant when it takes steps toward true socialism. Thus, no self-proclaimed socialist or communist government has ever allowed self-governing, autonomous communes, nor given industry to worker self-management, nor taken any other steps toward dissolution. Conversely, during anarchist and other horizontal uprisings, workers have abolished money and property, collectivized workplaces and land, and redistributed political power to people's popular assemblies. When workers demand these things of socialist governments or take them for themselves, the state brands the workers as counterrevolutionaries, state brands and *petit bourgeois*, and it heaps a host of lies upon them. Socialist states have slandered, attacked and killed some of the finest figures in the history of our struggles because, like all rulers, they were more concerned with preserving their power than with creating a better world. The Bolsheviks were first to illustrate this point, rounding up anarchists and other socialists, sending them to the gulags, deceiving and betraying autonomous revolutionary movements in Southern Ukraine and Siberia, and obliterating the sailors of Kronstadt. From China to Spain to Mexico, the evidence is written in blood.

Socialist governments move in the opposite direction of socialism: increased centralization of industry, resources and decision-making power—and consequently, hierarchy and loss of freedom. These governments, never moving toward Marx's idea of dissolution, only strengthen and consolidate power at every chance. Irrespective of their intentions, socialists in power behave so badly that "socialism" no longer retains its original meaning.

Today, socialism is known as a system with a strong centralized government that may nationalize industries and provide increased social services but that will still participate in global capitalism and reproduce capitalist structures by maintaining distinctions between workers,

managers, owners, politicians and subjects. We should consider those who desire such a system to be socialists as much as we consider anarcho-capitalists to be anarchists—which is to say, not at all. Hierarchy, as inherent to government as it is to capitalism, is contradictory to socialism with its pillars of Freedom and Equality. Hierarchy is their antithesis and must be combated like the plague, for it is a contagious disease not easily cured.

Perhaps if Marx were alive today, he would look at the last 100 years and admit that he was wrong, recognizing that the best steps taken toward socialism were indeed taken by the masses in struggle and revolt to win freedom for themselves, and that the worst, most damaging actions taken to the detriment of socialism have been taken by the socialists in power.

Marx, however, is not here; he is dead, and the future of the movement is up to you, sisters and brothers. Your task is to reclaim the original meaning of socialism and to evaluate our historical failures and victories. If we want to win, we must struggle from within the class and not from in front of or above it. We should abandon the misguided attempts to create a socialist government; it has never come close to granting us true socialism, and it never will.

This is not an appeal to proclaim yourselves *anarchists*, for the word anarchism has been almost as stigmatized and twisted as has the word *socialism*. Instead, this is a call to bring socialism to life by uniting together within the viable strategy of anti-authoritarian and horizontal movement-building. Our obligations to the past settled, we can be the same again—communists, socialists and anarchists—ready to make true the worst fears of Otto Von Bismark, who said at the splitting of the First International: "The International is dead; but woe be to the crowned heads of Europe should red and black ever be reunited."

If we are to accomplish this, our ultimate goal must be the original socialism of equality and freedom—not the socialism proclaimed by those who see the state as both the means and the ends and who wish to preserve the unnatural hierarchy of overseer over worker and party bureaucrat over person. Those gripped by the insurgent global trend of anti-authoritarianism will not lend their energies to the establishment of any government.

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criminals out." Blair's flippancy aside, it's hard to see what the point of the fake law was, especially since his forces had no problem illegally searching hundreds of people who were nowhere close to the fence. It's tempting to conclude that the only purpose of the exercise was to demonstrate the complete impunity with which the cops operate.

To drive home the point that public opinion meant nothing to them, the cops also refused to allow reporters to embed with them. Members of the corporate media were forced to fend for themselves on the streets, where they were treated little better than the protesters with whom they mingled. This is a substantial departure from normal practice, to put it mildly.

To give one example, at the Pittsburgh G-20, a man in a cow suit allowed a group of protesters to make their getaway by doing a dance in the middle of the road. The pursuing cops had to stop to avoid trampling the mainstream media photographers who had run out into the street to snap close-ups. The dancing cow guy probably wouldn't have had much luck with that stunt in Toronto, where *Guardian* reporter Jesse Rosenfeld was beaten up by three cops and arrested for merely not having his official credentials. This occurred in full view of Rosenfeld's colleagues in the corporate press, one of whom was upset enough to actually report the incident. A number of other corporate journalists were also arrested or detained, including two photographers from the *National Post*, a right-wing rag known for supporting the police.

Other examples of unnecessarily self-defeating aggression abound, including arresting and charging a deaf man for being unable to hear orders from the cops, and rousting entire apartment buildings in the course of preemptively arresting protest organizers. The result was a tidal wave of criticism aimed at the government and the police. Even in the mainstream media, the decision to host the G-20 in Toronto was vilified almost as much as was

the black bloc. On the Internet, stories about police brutality were still hitting the front page of Reddit.com, a social media site, over a week after the summit. Comments on those stories took on an increasingly anti-cop tone as more information about police behavior trickled out during the week. Toronto's civilian police review board, in a reversal of their earlier decision, decided to launch an "independent public inquiry" into police conduct during the G-20. While this will undoubtedly be a whitewash aimed at exonerating the cops, the fact that the board felt a whitewash was necessary is a clear indicator of the political pressure they are under.

All this raises one obvious question: What were they thinking? Canadian officials could have easily protected the meetings without alienating their natural allies in the corporate media and Canada's white liberal middle class. Humane jail conditions and basic media relations skills would have gone a long way toward selling the myth that all those self-described world leaders just wanted what's best for everyone, but somehow nobody in Toronto could be bothered.

It's quite possible, of course, that they weren't thinking anything. It's never a good idea to read too much intent into the random thrashings of giant bureaucracies. Like the dinosaurs to which they are so often compared, their brains are very small and communicate poorly with their appendages. But the final statement from the G-20 itself hints at another possibility: The G-20 agreed to cut their economies' respective national deficits in half by 2013, a decision that will require draconian cuts in welfare, education and other social services. Canada's vaunted healthcare system stands to be a prime target. Such cuts are likely to lead to widespread unrest – something that will have occurred to even the dimmest cop. Instead of being an aberration (as is currently being claimed by Canada's liberal apologists), the Toronto Model may be a harbinger of what's to come. 🐘

Silent City Distro

If you've seen our distro, you've probably noticed that we have a wide variety of materials. You might have noticed that we focus a lot on gender dynamics, relationships, and community health and support. We also focus on a lot of direct action, and we publicize and celebrate militant resistance to capitalism. Different ends of the spectrum? Not really. Here's why:

To build an effective resistance, we need healthy communities. Seems like an easy thing to say, but how does this play out? We can start by nurturing our own mental health, our friendships and our group awareness. To engage in a resistance movement is serious and dangerous. There's so much at stake! And even more is at stake if we just give in to our personal struggles!

It's absolutely important to be confident, to know ourselves and to be able to think critically and effectively about our strengths and weak points. It's important to know how to support a friend through a crisis and to be able to pull our own weight in a collective house by doing our chores or whatever else. This is also an important part of security culture. We have to be able to offer reflection to our friends and to receive important criticisms. This builds trust and thus, stronger resistance! Acting on our insecurities can expose weaknesses to be exploited by our enemies. We're not creating a subculture; we're joining and carrying on a counter-culture of resistance and autonomy!

So anyway, we're making more zines about this stuff. Stay tuned.

www.silentcitydistro.org

(A)TTACK! Collective

Over the past few months, (A)TTACK! Collective has undergone some turnover in the midst of an almost frantic period of action. Since we last checked in, there have been a series of members who have announced that they are leaving the area, but a few new faces have been coming around as we prepare for the G-20 in Toronto. Members of the group have been working on the growing Food Not Bombs, the Prisoner Support Network and a fledgling Copwatch movement in the Binghamton area, as well as a campaign against the state budget cuts to the university system. These include "furloughs," in which workers will only be paid for working through Thursday every week, effectively cutting their pay by 20 percent. We have also been branching out and are now part of the growing campaign of resistance to the natural gas drilling under the Marcellus Shale shelf in New York, Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

The Big Idea Bookstore

The Big Idea is undergoing some changes. To begin, we're presently stretching our legs after recently reorganizing the store to discover that we had a bit more space than we thought! So if you were bored with its old, cramped look, you should probably come in and check out our store's makeover. It's sexy.

Also, we are experimenting with longer summer hours. We are now open every day from 12 to 10 p.m. (except for Sundays, which is still 12 to 5 p.m.). With the summer's longer daylight hours, we felt like we needed to keep up.

Furthermore, we're now hosting a monthly radical discussion series. If you're interested in joining, e-mail thebigidea@gmail.com for more information!

Beyond that, we are still serving the Pittsburgh area with radical literature and copious amounts of cheap used books just like we have been since 2001. In fact, to celebrate our profusion of used books, they are all 25 percent off during the month of July!

Workers Solidarity Alliance of Connecticut

By MATT

The Workers Solidarity Alliance (WSA) of Connecticut has been busy this second year of our existence as a local of WSA, a coast-to-coast social anarchist organization. We continued some of our ongoing work with Queers Without Borders (QWB), a group that serves as a space for radicals to discuss issues in the LGBfakeT movement and build up a more working class-centric base. We also held a discussion on reproductive freedom—a social anarchist concept contrasted with the idea of reproductive "rights" as something that the state grants us.

We organized a successful International Workers' Day festival in Hartford this year, with musicians Taina y la Banda Rebelde

and Broadcast Live, a puppet show about the 1912 Lawrence IWW textile strike, and a radical walking tour of downtown Hartford. It was very well attended, benefiting from group collaboration and proximity to other well-attended events that day, including an immigrant rights march. We reached a large number of folks and built up some local cred for our group.

Since attending the Class Struggle Anarchist Conference in October of last year, we have been looking to engage in common work with other like-minded anarchists elsewhere in North America. In Seattle, Boston, Buffalo and elsewhere, anarchists have been doing housing justice organizing and building real popular power and influence, and so we've begun talking to community activists in our

area to see where we can plug in. Already, our roots here in the Hartford area have paid off, and we'll shortly begin working with a long-standing informal committee of women of color tenants in the city's North End to improve building conditions. Our aim is to become oriented toward grassroots organizing that has a direct impact on the lives of the members of our class, and to make our ideas relevant to as many working class folks as possible.

Finally, we trekked out to the U.S. Social Forum in Detroit, where we networked with groups similar to QWB and learned from grassroots housing justice organizations. We also participated in the New World from Below convergence center, organized by Solidarity and Defense as a social anarchist space within this massive gathering of social movements.

Pittsburgh Organizing Group

This spring, Pittsburgh Organizing Group (POG) picked up a few new members after holding a "POGluck"—an occasional meet-'n-greet orientation that allows folks who are interested in getting involved with the group to learn about its history, philosophies, activities and member expectations, while sharing food and getting to know each other. The annual Anarchist Ball, "Month of May Masquerade," proved to be an enchanted evening. Attendees danced the night away behind creative masks of all sorts. We raised about \$1,000, which will aid in the continued publication of the *Steel City Revolt!*, our local anarchist magazine.

In June, POG members held a workshop called "Are We Addicting to Rioting?" at the United States Social Forum in Detroit. As part of the anarchist and anti-authoritarian "New World from Below" track, POG presents engaged social movement participants in discussion around the importance of a diversity of efforts, delving into ways that both community organizing and confrontational tactics are necessary to help catalyze resistance. On July 3, POG held its annual Anarchist Picnic to reclaim radical traditions with history trivia, music, food, a game of "mutual aid molotovs," water balloons and an agent-of-the-state-themed piñata. Later in July, POG members headed out into the woods for a retreat to reflect, evaluate, brainstorm and strategize. For more information, or to get involved, contact us at our brand new e-mail address: info@organizepittsburgh.org

Justseeds Collective

By SHAUN SLIFER

The distribution headquarters for the Justseeds Artists' Cooperative (justseeds.org) moved in May from cramped quarters in a basement in Portland, Ore., to an overly spacious second-floor office in the Lawrenceville neighborhood of Pittsburgh, Pa. Justseeds is a worker-owned cooperative of 25 socially and politically engaged artists working in the United States, Mexico and Canada.

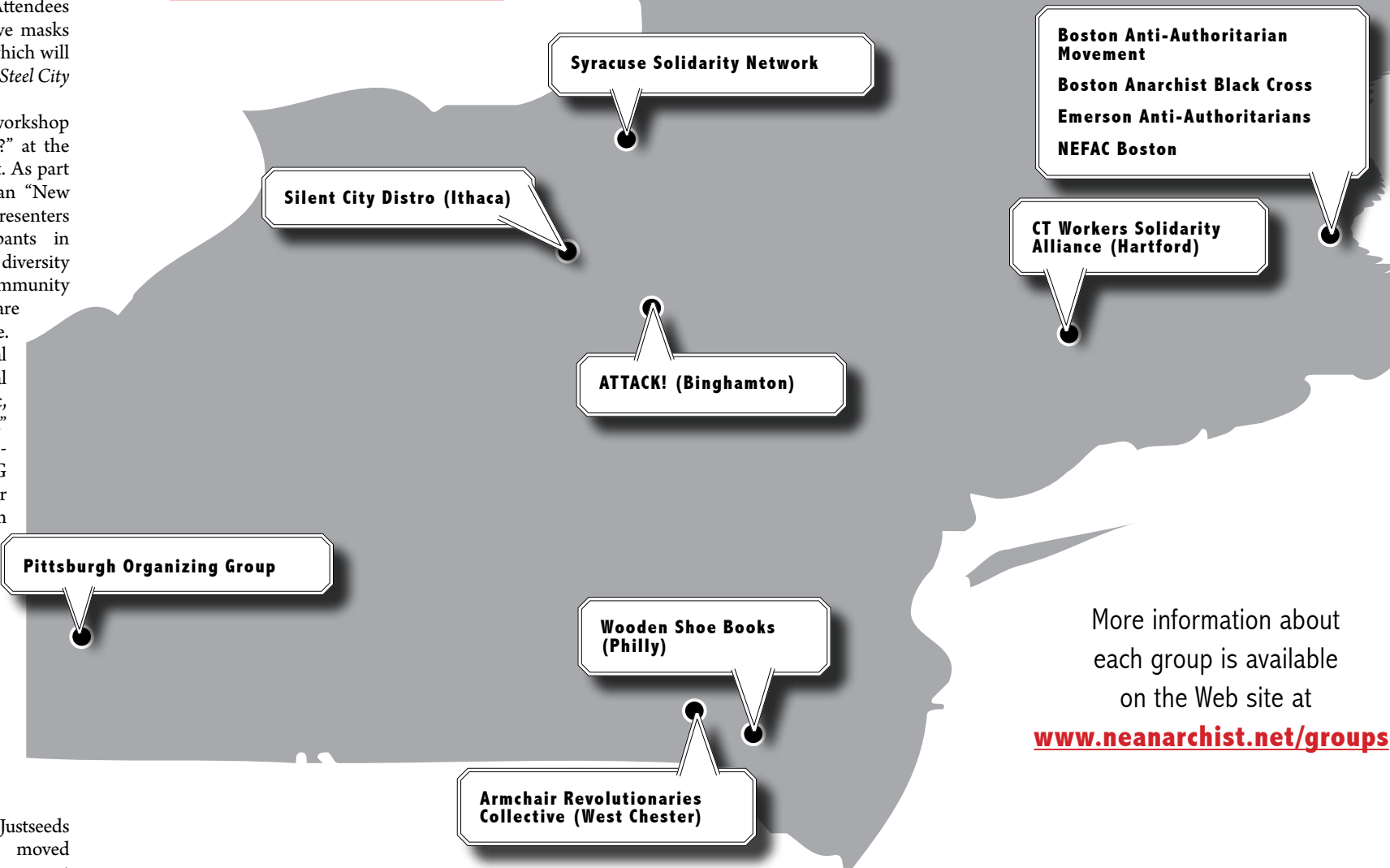
As well as being a new shipping center, the Pittsburgh contingent of Justseeds (who share the building with local bike/ped activist powerhouse Bike PGH) hopes to draw people in to the new space for regular exhibits of new work by co-op members, for guest speakers, for films and for whatever else they dream up. Keep an eye on the blog (justseeds.org/blog) for info on upcoming events, or e-mail store@justseeds.org to find a time when you can drop in if you're passing through Pittsburgh. Also, keep an eye out for the new Microcosm-released Justseeds book called *Firebrands* and for the massive Paper Politics printmaking exhibit curated by Justseeds member Josh MacPhee at SPACE in downtown Pittsburgh this August.

Join the Network!

For information about how your group can affiliate with NEAN, send an e-mail to affiliation@neanarchist.net

or visit the Web site at

www.neanarchist.net.



NEFAC Boston

This spring, NEFAC (North East Federation of Anarcho-Communists) Boston held a few of our ongoing reading discussion groups and sent members down to the NEFAC Conference in Baltimore. We held fundraisers for the May Day marches in Everett, Chelsea and East Boston, and for those fighting against the anti-immigrant law in Arizona. We also hosted a presentation and discussion on direct action organizing around housing, labor and immigration issues.

Our members were heavily involved in the planning of the aforementioned May Day march, and we made up a Housing Justice contingent in the march. Our members continue to work with City Life/Vida Urbana, North Side Bank Tenants Association, Bread of Life food pantry in Malden and various anarchist and other radical organizations.

The beginning of the summer has been slow, as we've had folks out of town, but we're gearing up for a summer of struggle and building.

Map of NEAN Affiliated Groups

[See page 2 for group contacts.](#)

Boston Anarchist Black Cross

The Boston Anarchist Black Cross is still defending radical movements and supporting prisoners! We continue to correspond with, do research for, and send free literature to prisoners, and we're keeping up our monthly contribution to Jericho Boston's commissary fund, which goes toward meeting the material needs of political prisoners. Our medium-term literature project is progressing nicely; we're cleaning up old titles and adding new titles to the literature we both table with and send to prisoners for free. And that Know Your Rights presentation we did at Emerson College in February earned us \$200 worth of photocopies!

March saw our most spectacular, not to mention most lucrative, fundraiser to date! The Self-Styled Anarchist Fashion and Craft Show on March 13 exhibited and sold fashionable and functional designs made and modeled by local radicals. Some friends from elsewhere in the Northeast joined the dance-tastic fabulosity to thrill our audience and keep funds pumping into our war chest. We later hosted an Easter Sundae Vegan Ice Cream Social for people to hang with us, learn about our work and find ways to plug in. We could still use more humans, though, particularly since much of the core of our collective is relocating elsewhere this summer—although we do have a few new people who have taken on many tasks.

More information about each group is available on the Web site at

www.neanarchist.net/groups.

Bad Water from page 4

The Snake in the Grass: Natural Gas Pipelines

The Marcellus Shale also has extra appeal for oil and gas companies: its vicinity to the vast and demanding markets along the East Coast. To get natural gas from Vicky Switzer's back yard to Philadelphia, however, requires massive lengths of pipeline. These pipelines reach thousands of miles across the state, crossing over both private property and pristine forest.

In Pennsylvania, energy companies are allowed to claim eminent domain in order to lay transmission pipeline. These pipes can leak, reducing the oxygen available in soil. The pipelines themselves form a physical barrier and

can cause fragmentation of natural ecosystems. Lynda Farrell of Chester County is building a network for residents who want to be involved in pipeline safety issues. Her model is based on the Pipeline Safety Trust of Washington State, which formed after three boys died due to a pipeline accident. The first boy was overcome by fumes from a leaking pipe as he fly fished in a stream, leading to his drowning. The second two were setting off firecrackers further downstream, when the water caught fire and killed them.

Farrell worries about closer to home, as she has a pipeline running across her property. In Appomattox, Va., a pipeline exploded due to corrosion. The pipeline had undergone testing using SmartPeg technology to detect any potentially troublesome corrosion in early summer. It exploded before anyone had gotten around to checking the results of the testing.

Boston Anti-Authoritarian Movement

It is generally agreed that the Boston Anti-Authoritarian Movement (BAAM), having existed in some form or another since 2001, functions best as a propaganda group and a means of plugging new people into projects that best suit their inclinations and strengths, as well as a means of generating successful, ongoing, autonomous projects. We continue producing and distributing our monthly publication. At this writing, we are working on Issue #34. You can check out current and archived issues at our Web site: baamboston.org/baam-newsletter.

Perhaps you listen to podcasts? On both iTunes and our site, anotherworldispossible.soup.io, we have thus far recorded over 30 hours of anarchist and revolutionary material that has been downloaded and subscribed to by an astounding number of Internetsians.

We have kept our Greek comrades up to date on our Greek solidarity work. At their invitation, BAAM has recently affiliated with the Greek Anti-Authoritarian Movement, AK. The affiliation statement and more information can be found in Issue #34 of our newsletter.

Another invitation to participate came from the No Layoffs Campaign (NLC), a project of Harvard's Union of Clerical and Technical Workers. The world's richest university is manifesting its cartoonish greed with waves of vicious layoffs, frequently targeting the few people of color on the job. While BAAM members have been known to support labor

at our introspective mini-retreat in January, we resolved to be more vocal and explicit about our intersectional analysis. We are finding ways to more actively combat the stereotype of heterosexist, masculinist prisoner support work. Beyond revising our selection of literature, a frightening local case quickly arose when one of our friends inside a prison in Boston asked us to advocate for her and the other women in the South Bay House of Corrections. Faced with flooded cells, outrageously inadequate healthcare, and food contaminated with maggots and rat shit, the women in the Tower declared that he did not agree with the guilty finding (based on bogus police testimony) and ordered a retrial for the assault charges. Alex was required to pay a court fee of \$100, which Boston ABC and BAAM teamed up to send her. If you do not regularly come in contact with our fine collective members, we are pleased to announce that we can now electronically accept your money via PayPal at bostonabc@riseup.net. Needless to say, we still accept cash and blank checks (Boston ABC does not have a bank account, though we're closer to setting one up since last you heard from us) at:

Boston ABC
P.O. Box 230182
Boston, MA 02123

prisoners! Trying to explain to 8 to 10-year-olds why the state imprisons us for fighting for a better world does much to reveal the absurdity of it all. Together we drew pictures and sent messages of encouragement to incarcerated comrades. And they invited us to return!

Several years ago, cops arrested and severely beat our Providence comrade Alex Svoboda at an IWW rally. Courts initially found her guilty last month of her three simple assault charges and resisting arrest (the assault charges had been lowered from assault and battery on a police officer). However, shortly afterward, the judge declared that he did not agree with the guilty finding (based on bogus police testimony) and ordered a retrial for the assault charges. Alex was required to pay a court fee of \$100, which Boston ABC and BAAM teamed up to send her.

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actions as individuals, NLC organizers encourage us to come as BAAM, to bring our black flags and bandanas, and to distribute fliers explaining who anarchists are and why we care about Harvard workers.

BAAM helped organize the festive and theatrical red-and-black contingent on May Day, celebrating our history, mourning our dead and fighting for the living with the Bread and Puppet collective from Vermont—now home to a treasured former BAAM member! As their brass band played anarchist anthems, we carried banners, flags and the magnificent puppets of the Haymarket martyrs and of our local anarchist martyrs, Sacco and Vanzetti. We marked the 124th anniversary of the Haymarket bombing on the Common by setting up a soap box and doing dramatic, filmed readings of the Haymarket martyrs' final speeches to the court after condemnation.

Speaking of Sacco and Vanzetti, August 23 will mark the 83rd anniversary of their execution by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Check saccoandvanzetti.org to stay abreast of related events, which BAAM and the Sacco and Vanzetti Commemoration Society (a BAAM-generated project!) have been organizing annually since 2006.

Because BAAM strives to unite anarchists working on a variety of projects, BAAM's members are themselves involved in a variety of other efforts, engaging in activities as diverse as Food Not Bombs, bicycle repair, prisoner support, the Papercut Zine Library and Indymedia. Summers can be kind of slow in Boston, given the annual exodus of a huge chunk of the city's college-age population, but we always look forward to the fall!

Our generation of revolutionary workers will not be duped into lifting rulers up onto our shoulders and into seats of power in the name of equality as we have in the past. Bakunin's simple point must be taken into account if we are to reach the final stage of socialism, because, as he said, "Freedom without Socialism is privilege and injustice, and Socialism without freedom is slavery and brutality."

We must base our movements on daily practice because the ends always have and always will reflect the means. In other words, purporting to build socialism through a dictatorship will give us a dictatorship, just as building socialism through a horizontal movement of comrades, free and equal, will get us what all socialists avowedly want.

Bakunin from page 9

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Justseeds new headquarters in Pittsburgh.



Readings for an Anarchist Summer Vacation



By JESSE HARASTA

In solidarity with all of the students released from their institutions these precious few summer months, I have chosen to review two works about slavery and liberation for summer reading. I found these two books, *Four Ways to Forgiveness* by Ursula K. Le Guin and *Mistborn* by Brandon Sanderson, at my small local branch library, so hopefully they're easy enough for you to pick up.

Four Ways to Forgiveness

Ursula K. Le Guin is perhaps the best known writer of anarchist fiction alive today, particularly for *The Dispossessed* (1974)—her science fiction description of an anarchist society—and *Left Hand of Darkness* (1969), which describes a world of genderless human beings. *Four Ways to Forgiveness* (1994) is not as well known, though it exists in the same science fiction universe as the other two. The book is a collection of four densely interconnected novellas, and each section can be read independently (perhaps while in a hammock) though a full understanding of the work cannot be achieved without reading all four.

Four Ways is set in a solar system with two inhabited worlds: Werel and Yeowe. For millennia, society on Werel was divided into two groups, the Owners and the Assets, the former owning the latter as chattel slaves. More recently, the Owners of Werel have settled Yeowe with massive plantations of Assets who, over time, develop a distinctive society that rebels against its oppressors. The book opens in the wake of this generations-long revolution, as the Assets of Yeowe have thrown off their oppressors and begun rebuilding their communities and constructing a new society.

The primary themes of the book are, of course, slavery and liberation, though Le Guin, per her usual, takes them to deeper levels than one first expects. Underlying the text is the fact that despite the liberation of male Assets on Yeowe, the women of the planet remain under the oppressive thumbs of the men. Both freedom and forgiveness take many forms in the text as she explores the war and its aftermath from numerous points of view: a disgraced revolutionary leader, an enslaved woman growing in political consciousness and organizing resistance to her condition, a historian visiting from an outside world, an androgynous performer seeking to find a new niche, and a soldier who realizes he was on the wrong side and has been betrayed by the society he fought so hard to defend.

As always, where Le Guin shines is in her incredible attention to the details of the cultures of the people she has created. In *Four Ways*, she creates a society that captures many of the dynamics of post-colonial and post-slavery societies around the globe. One can feel the lives of the people she describes through her book—and not just their feelings, but also the cultural contexts in which they have grown up.

If *Four Ways* has any great weakness as summer reading, it's that it is perhaps too slow and contemplative at points. This may be right up your alley, but for those seeking a summer escape from life-as-it-is, *Four Ways* may actually hit too close to home for comfort.

Mistborn

I have to say, I began *Mistborn* (2006) with considerable suspicions. The author, Brandon Sanderson, teaches at Brigham Young University and was highly recommended by arch-conservative Mormon novelist Orson Scott Card. I was, however, pleasantly surprised by the work, which is the first of three novels detailing a slave revolt and the building of a new society in a fantasy world.

Mistborn combines elements from classic swords-and-sorcery fantasy (like J.R.R. Tolkien), heist films (such as *Sneakers* or *Oceans 11*) and graceful wuxia kung-fu (like *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*). The combination is clever and leads to a fast-paced, action-filled romp that kept me turning the pages long after I should have gone to sleep.

The setting of *Mistborn* is a grim one, as its central premise is that the Dark Lord (a common feature in the genre) has won and has ground the world under his thumb. This world-spanning dominion is called the Final Empire and is continually bathed in a rain of ash from innumerable volcanoes. The groaning masses of serfs—called Skaa—constantly slave just to brush their crops free of the ash. Above the Skaa are the feuding, cruel noblemen, themselves ruled by the theocratic Obligators and the demonic Inquisitors. The text is set primarily in the capital city and captures much of the oppressiveness of the Dickensian sprawl.

The book follows Vin, a Skaa street urchin girl who possesses a strange power she calls the Luck, which has allowed her to survive against all odds. She is recruited into a gang of thieves for what she thinks is the greatest heist of all time, but she soon realizes that the gang is the forward team for a revolutionary army of Skaa. As Vin finds herself trained to mimic noblewomen in order to infiltrate their circles, she is torn by the conflicting images of genteel society and the violence she knows underlies it.

Mistborn deals with a number of important topics: the dangers of messianic leaders, the ability of the powerful to recreate themselves into gods, the paradoxes of revolutionary violence, and the continual debate among the oppressed between collective action for liberation and self-centered survival. While the book has a number of problems from an anarchist perspective, including a simplistic understanding of social movements and disappointing elements in the final scenes, it is overall worth the read. Also, if you're into *Mistborn*, it is good to know that the author has a chapter-by-chapter commentary and "deleted scenes" on his Web site in a manner similar to DVD special features. 🐾

Antarctica from page 8

NE: Are there any oppositional groups who are preparing or maybe already fighting for the Antarctic environment? I know there's a TV reality show about the Greenpeace ship that chases Japanese whalers around the Southern Ocean. Are they doing anything in Antarctica?

BB: Usually Greenpeace gets on my nerves, but you have to admit they did good things for Antarctica with their typical publicity-oriented, quasi-direct actions. The Treaty didn't have any wide-scope environmental protocols before they did their World Park Camp thingy in the '90s. It had specific protections for seals and penguins, but nothing comprehensive. Greenpeace managed to push that through because they had the money to support a direct action camp on the continent — a very, very, very expensive thing to do! I also really appreciate Krillcount.org, first for its work but secondly because it represents the kind of bottom-up environmental thinking that we need, not just in Antarctica, but all over the world. To my knowledge, that project is primarily run by one dedicated, tenacious man who networks with some of the other Southern Ocean and Antarctic conservation groups.



A late-night view of Snow Mound City, the site of the emergency survival boot camp where workers learn to build shelters and operate long-range radios in case they find themselves stranded on the ice shelf.

NE: So, most people don't have the money for very, very, very expensive quasi-direct actions on a huge boat or in an ice camp. What can ordinary people do to help Antarctic conservation? Should they try to go down there to increase the number of activists?

BB: Stay where you are and stay in the fight — that's my analysis. It may sound hypocritical, but I don't believe many people should go to Antarctica; any human presence is damaging because we can't seem to stop acting irresponsibly when we get together in large groups. It's better to understand the collusion of corporate and governmental malfeasance already at work in your back yard and shut them down before they have a chance to get to Antarctica.

NE: All in all, Antarctica is starting to sound like kind of a bummer. You have scary, evil bosses, the place is continually under threat of imminent environmental destruction, and it's always really, really cold. But it can't be all bad. What did you do for fun? How did you pass time in four months of darkness?

BB: I guess it depends on the person, right, but I always had fun. There are a lot of parties and group activities like movie nights. McMurdo

Station has an actual two-lane bowling alley with a manual pin-setter machine. People take turns setting the pins for each other. People also do travelogues of places they've visited off-Ice, because many folks who go down repeatedly are world travelers. We have recreation trails to hike around the base, marked by flags by the Search and Rescue Team. You have to stay on them or risk falling in a crevasse! Some people have died going off-trail in the past. But if you're not too dumb or too dull, there's plenty to do. We have a lot of bands, including a few punk bands. And disco. Lots and lots of disco. 🐾

Events

July 17

Worcester, Mass. — Worcester Peace Festival. An afternoon of music, spoken word performances, games, job fair, health fair, arts and crafts and fun. 12–8 p.m. YMCA Park. Murray Ave., Worcester, Mass.

July 21

Toronto — Rally: Stop the Special Diet Cut, Raise Welfare/ODSP Rates Now! By the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty. Wed., July 21, 12 p.m. 900 Bay St. @ Wellesley, ministry of community and social services.

July 23

Minneapolis — National Day of Solidarity with Scott DeMuth potluck in Powderhorn Park. 5–7 p.m. for food and games; 7 p.m. for the Conspiracy Tour kickoff event.

July 26

Chicago — Cradle to Prison Pipeline: Criminalization of Youth. Chicago Freedom School, 719 S. State St. Contact Hilda at hilda@chicagofreedomschool.org or (312) 435-1201.

July 28

Philadelphia — Science Fiction Reading Group: *The City and the City* by China Mieville. 7:30–8:30 p.m. At Wooden Shoe Books, 704 South St., Philadelphia, Pa.

July 30

Everywhere — Critical Mass!

July 31

Chicago — Representing the Pipeline: An Art-Making Event. Alternatives, Inc. 4730 N. Sheridan Rd. 12–4 p.m.

Aug. 1

Philadelphia — People's Movie Night. 7:30 p.m.–9 p.m. At Wooden Shoe Books, 704 South St., Philadelphia, Pa.

Aug. 3

Philadelphia — RNC 8 Conspiracy Tour. 7–8:30 p.m. At Wooden Shoe Books, 704 South St., Philadelphia, Pa.

Aug. 6–8

Washington, D.C. — The Self-Described Anarchist Collective is having their second Anarchy Summer Camp in the D.C. area. Campers are asked to register at <http://selfdescribed.org>. The exact location will be e-mailed to registered campers about a week before camp starts.

Aug. 14

Providence, R.I. — 2010 Providence Anarchist Bookfair. 12 p.m.–1 a.m. At AS220, 115 Empire St., Providence, R.I. www.as220.org/bookfair/bookfair.htm.

Aug. 11–15

Paraguay — Americas Social Forum.

Aug. 22

Boston — Annual Sacco and Vanzetti march. 2 p.m. in Copley Square. saccoandvanzetti.org.

Aug. 27

Everywhere — Critical Mass!

Sept. 11–12

Victoria, B.C. — 2010 Annual Victoria Anarchist Bookfair. The events include book and information tables, workshops, readings, films, presentations, music and much more. More info at www.victoriaanarchistbookfair.ca.

Sept. 24

Everywhere — Critical Mass!

Oct. 9–11

Washington, D.C. — Call To Resist the International Monetary Fund and World Bank Annual Meetings. www.imfresistance.org.

Get the word out!

The Nor'easter hopes to provide a venue for groups throughout the region to share news, events, analysis and organizing efforts. Any and all events are welcome, from local to global; from meetings, demonstrations and workshops, to conferences, parties and anything else that may be going on!

Send events to noreaster@neanarchist.net.

Events can also be posted on the Northeast Anarchist Network Web site. For more information, event listings or to post events, visit www.neanarchist.net/event.