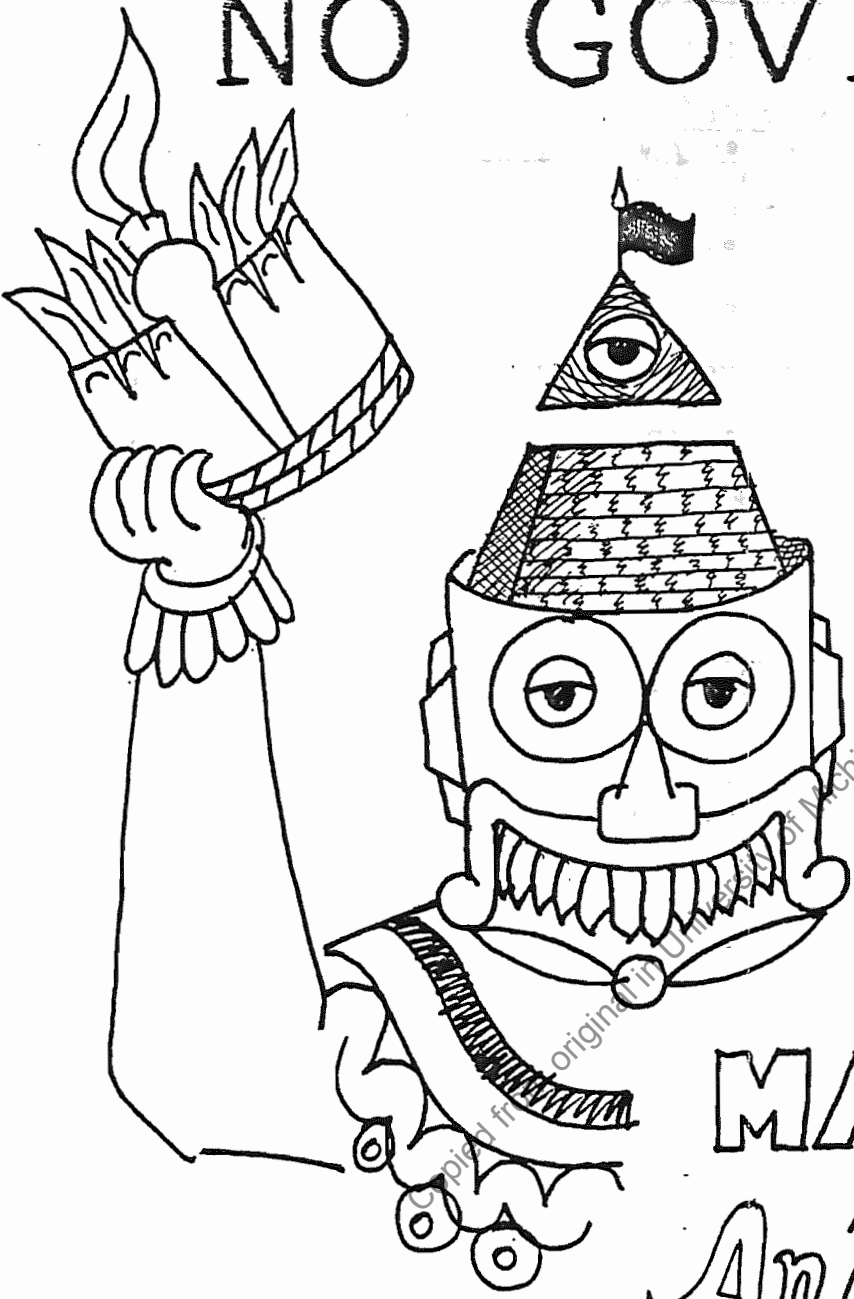


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NO GOVERNOR

NUMBER 5
OCTOBER, 1987



WAS
MARX
 AN
Anarchist?

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 HOW TO STUDY  
 MYSTICISM

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NO GOVERNOR

Ideas for Individuals

Issue # 5. Incorporating Tlaloc Grinned, The Universal Instructor in All Arts and Sciences and Pennsylvania Gazette, The Scene, and all other perished predecessor periodicals published by this person. A Green & Pleasant publication by Robert Shea, P.O. Box 319, Glencoe, Illinois 60022.

"There is no governor present anywhere."--Chuang Tzu

"Gort, Klaatu verrada nikto."

"Nov shmoz kapop."

-NG-

BORN AGAIN

Welcome to the revived No Governor, a zine which last saw the light of day in 1979. It has taken me a long time to get my act together, and I owe it all to those wonderful folks at Golden APA, who got me hooked on doing a publication of my own after a long hiatus--Tlaloc Grinned--which got me thinking, "If I can do this every couple of months, why not start doing No Governor again?"

If you have seen the previous issues of No Governor you'll find that this new version will be quite different. It will incorporate ideas and material developed for Tlaloc Grinned, which was a highly personal Illuminatus!/SF fanzine designed for the members of Golden APA, and it will also be a continuation of the earlier No Governor--a journal of anarchist ideas. This new zine will carry a lot of the personal natter and thought-fragments that I've been doing for Tlaloc Grinned as well as the odd little drawings I've been sprinkling over its pages. It will deal with the broad range of topics that have arisen in Golden APA. It will also contain articles discussing anarchist ideas as the earlier No Governor did. In fact I have a backlog of articles on hand which I'd accepted for No Governor, and I am running

them in this and future issues.

I'm most anxious to receive articles and essays relevant to anarchism, libertarianism and related subjects. Articles need not be limited to those topics. If you think it would fit, send it in. I promise that my response will be prompt and constructive. For obvious physical reasons I'd prefer submissions to be short, under 3000 words. Being such a small-circulation zine, No Governor should not, I feel, pay for articles. But I will give anyone whose work is published herein a subscription lasting as long

as the life of the zine. I'd also like to publish poetry, reviews of books, movies, music and libertarian periodicals. Even, once in a while, fiction.

I'd also be grateful for artwork, particularly small spot illustrations. And clippings, boxtops and religious tracts found in public toilets.

I care a great deal about letters to the editor and I want to publish lots of them. I care so much that anyone who sends me a letter of comment on an issue will get the next issue free.

Just how long No Governor's life will be, and what it will be like, I have no idea. Trying to combine two publications with such sharply different personalities as No Governor and Tlaloc Grinned may result in a schizophrenic critter that pleases nobody. I just hope I can continue my very pleasant participation in Golden APA and at the same time reach out to a wider audience. How No Governor evolves from this point on will depend on the interaction that develops among the editor, the contributors and the various readerships. All I know is I never feel quite fulfilled unless I'm dinking around with a magazine, and I've been this way since before I could read and write, and therefore there will probably always be some sort of periodical coming from this quarter.

Nuts and Bolts

There will be two editions of No Governor, one

for Golden APA, which will carry mailing comments on the zines produced by other Golden APAs. The other will be a general edition which will carry everything but the mailing comments.

I will send the next six issues of the general edition to everyone who is on the old No Governor subscription list. Most of these people have paid for subscriptions, and that's the least I can do for them, since they've waited patiently for five years to get the next issue.

New readers can get the general edition by sending me \$2 for one issue or \$10 for the next six issues (make checks payable to Robert Shea) or by trading their publication for mine. Or they can get the next issue free by sending me a letter of comment on the current issue. If you are a paying subscriber and send me a letter of comment I'll extend your subscription accordingly.

In This Issue

The articles in this issue may seem to have come out of a time capsule. Please don't blame the writers. It's my fault, for having sat on them so long.

Jim Bumpas, author of "Libertarian Marxists," was the first editor of the SRAF Bulletin, which he and his wife Linda published for ten years. One doesn't ordinarily associate anarchism with reasonableness (I wonder why), but Jim is undoubtedly one of the most rational and intelligent anarchists I've ever met. The issue of whether libertarian Marxists

and anarchists really had much in common was a lively one in 1977, the year I first intended to publish this article. There are still people around today, however, who claim to find a democrat or even an anarchist in Marx, and Marxism's compatibility with other isms is the basis of the current debate over the theology of liberation. Jim's article is also an excellent short summation of the anarchist case against Marxism in general.

Balthazar Brandon is a fictitious character from an unpublished novel, but he seems to be a fairly interesting writer in spite of that.

Arlene Meyers was a dedicated anarchist and feminist for many years, feeling that the two positions were indispensable to each other: as long as there was authoritarianism, there would be oppression of women; until anarchists addressed the oppression of women, they would never overcome authoritarianism, either overt in the world or covert in their own movement. As a founder of Solidarity Bookstore, the Lincoln Avenue Gutter-Trash Society and the Women's Caucus at Truman College, and as a member of the Nameless Anarchist Horde and the Siren Collective--and one of the most reliable and active members of each of these groups--Arlene was all at once angry, depressed, optimistic and determined to do something about the human condition. She was well-known in Chicago's radical community in the 60s and 70s as a gadfly, quick to point out how such vices as cliquishness,

laziness and unrealistic expectations were crippling the anarchist movement. She was a determined foe of conscious and unconscious sexism and of the unreasoning advocacy of violence or its own sake. She never lost hope, either for anarchism or humanity, and she used her sense of humor to sustain herself and her friends.

Arlene died suddenly and unexpectedly of a heart attack on February 10, 1981. She had contributed two pieces to previous issues of No Governor: "The Anarchist

Movement--Dead or Alive?" in the first issue, and a poem, "Ode to Amazon Nation" in the third issue. I was always begging her for material, and she reluctantly gave me the editorial published in this issue some time in the mid-1970s. She had originally intended it to be a valedictory piece for the final issue of Siren, an anarcha-feminist newsletter which was chiefly her creation. She decided not to publish that last issue and gave the editorial to No Governor instead. I didn't use it sooner because she and I agreed that it needed some additional material for the reader not familiar with the problems of the Siren Collective. But there will be nothing more coming from Arlene's typewriter, so I'm publishing the essay as it stands. I miss her.

From the vantage point of hindsight, Arlene's rather jaundiced view of what we used to call "the Movement" seems even more justified than it did when she wrote it.

-NG-

Jim Bumpas

"Libertarian Marxists"

Not to be outdone by the so-called anarcho-capitalists, marxists too have tried to cash in on the attractiveness of anarchist perspectives and anarchist activity. They call themselves libertarian marxists, but they are not interested in the Libertarian Party. I'll abbreviate reference to them here with LM. These marxists are expending a lot of energy telling us how much they are influenced by anarchism. They tell us the "true" Marx is not at all what his present followers say he is. LMs have set for themselves the project of reclaiming their vision of Marx from all the leninists, stalinists and maoists (among others) of the world. LMs purport to feel there are many points of unity with anarchists which should lead us to join together in organization. Of course, only "good" anarchists need apply. To define the anarchist they want, they dig up the dusty old polemic between Marx and Bakunin. Somehow, they feel this debate is of central importance to present-day relations between marxists and anarchists.

Marx a Libertarian?

To start with, most LMs reject nearly all in marxism since Marx: Lenin, Stalin, Mao, Castro and all the present-day marxism which is practiced upon two thirds of the world's population. But they don't reject Marx; they "transcend" him and follow him at the same time. Out of all the history and practical experience of marxism, they can only look with some favor upon a very few: Luxemburg, Gramsci, Lukacs, Marcuse (can

you name one or two more?). Sadly, none of these have had any practical influence upon the practice of any marxist society. Like a calvinist against the Pope, LMs go back to the "ancient texts" trying to show how Marx himself (!) was really a libertarian. Ulli Diemer in Root & Branch # 7 has baldly asserted: "Marx is without dispute (?) the central figure in the development of libertarianism...." LMs believe it is not possible to create a libertarian praxis or a libertarian world without Marx. They dismiss as irrelevant the fact that marxism today is one of the most authoritarian dogmas ever to afflict humanity. I've yet to see anything attributed to Marx which justifies his importance to anarchists. I, for one, could ignore Marx in a libertarian world.

My Brother Can Whip Your

### Brother!

LMS note the failure of anarchists to create a serious historical alternative. If by this they mean anarchists have failed to produce a viable experiment or society in the history of the world, the record of the anarchists is certainly superior to that of the LMs. At least we have the history of the Spanish Revolution, the peasant movement in the Ukraine, the various small-scale utopian communities.

### Bored When it Suits You?

In spite of the LM effort to find points of unity with anarchism, they complain anarchism is crippled by the patchwork of conflicting insights which frustrates critical sympathizers (meaning themselves). Some LMs purport to be bored by what they call "re-fighting the Spanish Civil War," which we call the Spanish Revolution) "re-fighting Kronstadt and trashing marxist-leninists." For many LMs these three items totally encompass all they know of present-day anarchism. In spite of the ease with which LMs become bored, they must reject most of the practice and interpretation of Marx reached by 99 percent of all other marxists the world has seen (and this 99 percent is further divided into 56 other varieties, all scrabbling in competition with each other). This leaves LMs only with six words uttered by Luxemburg about Lenin's barracks discipline and some novel interpretations of the "original" Marx. Not much

there to keep a normal non-marxist from becoming bored.

### Who's the Idealist?

LMS are really idealists of the ancient Greek school: There is a perfect marxist toward which all true marxists aspire. But all the real marxists in the world are as yet imperfect. In spite of his, some LMs claim the central conflict in the Bakunin-Marx debate is between the idealism of Bakunin and the materialism of Marx. They plaintively complain that anarchists are unfair in that the marxism we attack has little to do with Marx. Even if this were so, why should our criticism of marxism have anything more to do with Marx than marxism has to do with Marx? If we analyze society as it is today, then we must criticize marxism as it is today. Marxism today is a art of contemporary culture everywhere in the world, as much as freudianism and capitalism. So any analysis of society or discussion of strategy must develop with the possibility that marxism will be included. Now, if we are reviewing the development of capitalism from feudalism, a discussion of Marx may be relevant. But the twentieth century has seen no feudal societies, even if a particular society might exhibit one or two symptoms of what is sometimes called feudalism (especially by marxists trying to re-live Marx).

LMS, as much as they'd like to, can't have it both ways: they can't complain anarchism has no valid

historical alternative to show and then complain of descriptions and analyses of the Spanish Revolution. They are bored by such things (which gives them something to feel at least, in view of their own sterility in this area), presumably preferring to contemplate the "New Man" and how the millennium (read "The Capitalist Crisis") is due. Christians have been waiting for 2000 years. I hope LMs won't match that record! They have "Found It" in Marx, and through Him they will be reborn into New Men. Good luck!

LMS are correct, though, in their assertion that we anarchists often criticize marxism, leninism, stalinism and maoism as though they were identical. In fact, I wouldn't stop there: Many of those elements we criticize are also contained in other governing doctrines. The identity we see rests precisely upon those elements which are identical or similar in those tendencies.

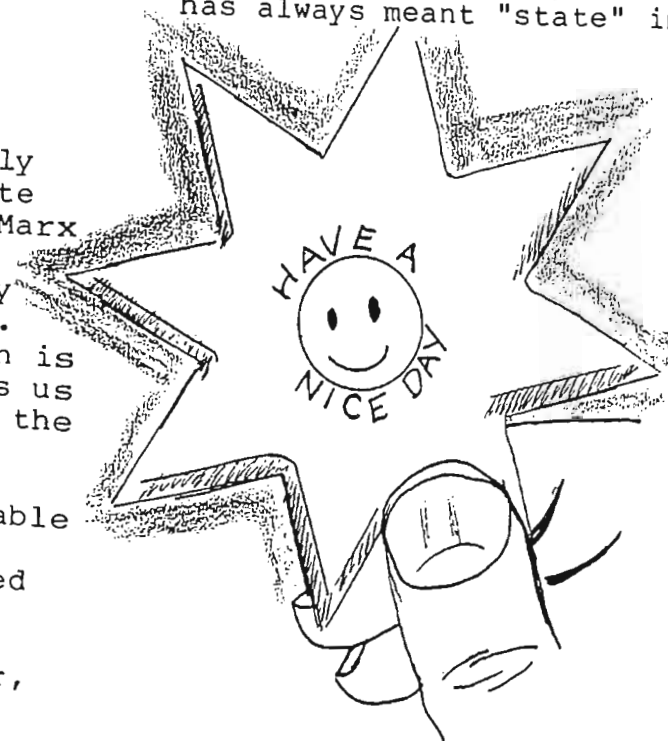
### The Great Debate

Let's deal specifically with the Bakunin-Marx debate which so fascinates LMs. Marx seems to have debated violently with nearly every contemporary revolutionary. But his debate with Bakunin is the one which most concerns us here and the one which has the most relevance to modern society. The fact of its relevance is more attributable to Bakunin than to Marx, however, because Marx failed to foresee the monster the state would become. The extreme pyramiding of power,

the ideological monolithism, the separation between ruler and ruled, the destruction of the most basic freedoms and rights all combine to give Bakunin's warnings in his polemic with Marx a prophetic character. marxists, failing to take into account Bakunin's warnings, have everywhere created the opposite of the paradise predicted by Marx.

### The State

LMS complain Bakunin deliberately fabricated the accusation that Marx proposed a "People's State." Is it only accidental that 99 percent of all marxists in the world have taken their cue from Bakunin's "fabrication" rather than from the "true" Marx himself, as they build their marxist states? LMS must admit Marx called upon the proletariat to use the state apparatus. Squirm as one might, "state apparatus" has always meant "state" in



marxist practice. The anarchist analysis of power, based upon written history of several thousand years, shows few instances of "state apparatus" being put aside once assumed. Show me a marxist revolution which has even the most tentative of plans to put aside the state apparatus, much less ever having done so!

### The Dictatorship of the Proletariat

LMS try to pretty up "dictatorship of the proletariat" with three paragraphs by Rosa Luxemburg tortuously trying to show how a "dictatorship" is really some form of "pure democracy." Why analyze it as a "dictatorship?" What is the significance of the use of the term? A mere accident by Marx? Sloppy thinking on Marx's part? Faulty translation? Did "dictatorship" mean something other than dictatorship in those bygone days? Is marxist analytical power so great that they see something in dictatorship the rest of us miss? Or does it show confusion of thought on the part of marxists? Again, we need to deal with the historical reality and not with the LMs' ideal of perfection.

### Economic Determinism

LMS excuse the confused and sloppy thinking of Marx by asserting (usually by a quote from Engels and not Marx at all) that Marx did not mean "economic determinism" when he

spoke of the production of daily life as the determining element in history. No quote from Marx can be found to explain why his followers should not have full justification for their "crude materialism." I guess it's only another accident that most marxists are economic determinists.

### Expulsion of Anarchists from the First International

LMS mention Bakunin's secret organization as the justification for the expulsion of all anarchists (not just Bakunin and the circle of which he was a part) from the First International. They usually fail to mention that the anarchists complied with every demand made upon the International Alliance, indeed, even reducing it to an open, individual section of the International. After the anarchists complied with every Marxian demand and Marx still could not provoke the anarchists to walk out, Marx convened the next meeting in Belgium, which he knew had closed its borders to most Latin revolutionaries. Switzerland was the usual place for such meetings, both for its more central location and because its borders were more open to radicals of all types. Even so, the Belgian meeting did not reach the decision to expel anarchists easily. Marx was so unsure of the lasting effects of his "victory" that he sent the headquarters of the International to the United States, where it died a quiet death. Marx later objected to every attempt to revive an

international workers' organization.

### Violence

LMS feel there is a dark and nasty thread running through anarchist thought: an infatuation with violence and destruction. The delicate sensibilities of the LMS prevent them from being too close to such nastiness. I assert that anarchists are no more violent than people in general, though we may be more honest about it. Anarchists are certainly responsible for no more violence than a more general demographic average would show. Governments and religions (including marxists in both categories) are responsible for most of the violence and destruction recorded by history. Come on--do you really want to push this any further?

### Adulation

As a final Parthian shot, I pose the question: Why do marxists, even LMS, describe themselves as followers of a particular human being? A dead one, at that! To me it seems humiliating and disgusting to identify oneself as a follower of (especially) a dead man. How does one deal with all the adulation such a fact entails? How does it differ from those who call themselves christians, jesuits, leninists, maoists, stalinists, etc.? Why is it one almost never finds anarchists calling themselves bakuninists or kropotkinists?

### Conclusion

In conclusion, I do not believe there are sufficient points of unity to justify anarchists joining together with LMS in one organization. The fact that we all fight against many of the same things only indicates we might cooperate on specific projects from time to time. To unite with us, LMS would have to jettison too much of the precious dependency upon a man who long ago rotted in the ground. Most of Marx's ideas aren't worth the trouble of reclaiming from the present-day corruption of most of his followers. Besides, there's just enough ambiguity in Marx to justify most of the positions held by those "corrupt" marxists. Even if this weren't the case, the LM project to reclaim Marx from his "impure" followers has little or no relevance to today's social revolutionary context. Today, to be a marxist means one is a Third World nationalist, opposed to imperialism; it means one is a member of a centralized political party ruled by a central committee, which in turn is ruled by a chairman, first citizen, maximum leader, etc.; in other words: a dictator. No room for anarchists there!

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If we want to convince people they shouldn't look to government for help with their problems, we had better show them how to solve their problems themselves.  
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HOW TO STUDY MYSTICISM

Balthazar Brandon

The purpose of life is union with the divine. This is not necessarily a theistic proposition. At least not in the usual sense. If we assume that there is no personal spirit out there somewhere that we can call God, then we humans must have invented God. God exists only as an idea in the minds and hearts of human beings. But an idea is real--as an idea. That which it is an idea of may not exist. I may have an idea of a pink unicorn, even though there are no pink unicorns, but my idea is a real idea of a pink unicorn. In the same way, my idea of God is a real idea of God.

If we can think of God, it means that we, nearly all of us, can envision infinite benevolence, infinite wisdom, infinite power, infinite creativity--indeed the ultimate perfection of all the virtues, of all that we hold dearest--filling up the whole universe and dwelling in it from everlasting to everlasting. It is our own vision. And it is a real vision. It exists within us, we have created it, and it is capable of transforming our lives marvelously if we will let it. For many religions the ultimate bliss is union with God in the Beatific Vision or Samadhi. And we can experience his any time we wish, by giving ourselves over to the inner vision.

It follows from this that there can be no such thing as heresy. We each have our own God, and that God is as true as any other that has ever been conceived. God is whatever each of us envisions as the highest and best. It is our own individual vision, and no one can tell us there is anything wrong with it. At

the same time, I do not have the right to impose any detail of my Beatific Vision on you. It is up to each of us to decide what to believe and what to do.

Amazingly enough, this means that the scientific materialism which is put forward as the ultimate wisdom of the twentieth century offers us a message, not of despair, but of hope and joy. When we thought that God was a vast and mighty spirit out there, infinitely above and beyond us, then we had reason for despair. Then, too, we could not trust our personal vision of the best, because it might be incorrect. But now science tells us that if there is any God at all, it is within. We can therefore possess God utterly and completely in a way that was not possible for past centuries.

There is another reason, however, why modern

materialism has brought many to the brink of despair. Without an objective God, how can there be objective standards of good and evil? How can we know what to do? As an angry Christian once said to me, "If you don't believe in God, how can you know that murder is wrong?" The answer is, of course, that the ideas of right and wrong, like the idea of God, are within me. They are my own creation. Do I have to be told that a sunset is beautiful? That a baby is to be cherished? That it is shameful to lie? Out of our own natural responses we create our standards of behavior. Thus, in the final analysis, there are no objective moral laws. This is what the prehistoric forest sages of India and the old Taoists of China were telling us thousands of years ago. This is what existentialist atheists like Sartre and De Beauvoir have been telling us. That good and evil exist only as our own creations.

Mystics look at the world and at their own lives, at the things they do and the things that happen to them, and they see that nothing is either good or bad. Reality is morally neutral. This is the ultimate mystical vision. And people fear this, because they say, "How will we know right from wrong? How will we know

It is not necessarily true that the best way for a country to achieve a decline in population growth is for it to develop industrially. Sometimes population increases so rapidly that it is impossible for a country to achieve a higher level of development.

what to do? Won't we go around murdering one another?" And the answer is, you'll know what to do the same as you always have. Because God--the objective God of the Ten Commandments, the mighty spirit high above us--isn't dead. He never existed. He was always some human being dressed up in a God costume. We have always had to work out our own ideas of right and wrong. We only imagined they were coming from somewhere else. We don't murder one another because we don't want to.

So we won't run amok or become paralyzed with the discovery that there is no objective right and wrong. We can turn to the source of guidance that has always been there.

Our standards are still valid. We may not be as self-righteously sure of them as we were when we thought they were God-given, objective and eternal, but they are still there. We may not be as ready to impose our rules on others and we may not suffer as much when we ourselves don't follow our own rules. But that's all to the good. We are not without guidance, we have simply discovered the true source of guidance--our own minds and hearts.

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Arlene Meyers

EDITORIAL...SIREN # 11

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I guess what we tried to do with Siren was to express our ideas as satire/theory and nonsense. To our surprise, we found people reacting to our satire as serious stuff and our serious ideas as "male politics." Our own views of the movement lie somewhere between humane ideals, social activity and group therapy. If we were to dramatize the revolution as we experience it, we would characterize it as an animated cartoon strip peopled by human caricatures. Unfortunately, the characters who parade as "revolutionaries" are more skilled at attacking each other than in presenting any real threat to the Establishment.

I just don't have much respect for self-professed revolutionaries who don't integrate their principles with their lives. I'm not impressed by armchair radicals who spout theory and refuse to involve themselves in any real activity, or who close their eyes to sexist and hierarchical relationships, attitudes and behavior, and who refuse to struggle through common problems together.

The "revolution" is populated by hypocrites, neurotics and liberals busily engaged in competitive macho games and role-playing. If any of these creepies ever worked on their own heads, we might make some real progress for a change. The FBI isn't worried about "anarchists." Does anyone fear a gang of militant cockroaches?

There are sincere, hard-working individuals around, but six or seven people aren't enough to make a revolution. They could form an affinity group, perhaps, but anarchists are so strongly individualistic, they

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experience great difficulty in working together collectively to pursue common goals. I guess the failure of anarchism lies in the character of the individual anarchist and his/her inability to translate theory into daily life and activity.

#### What Lies Ahead for Us...

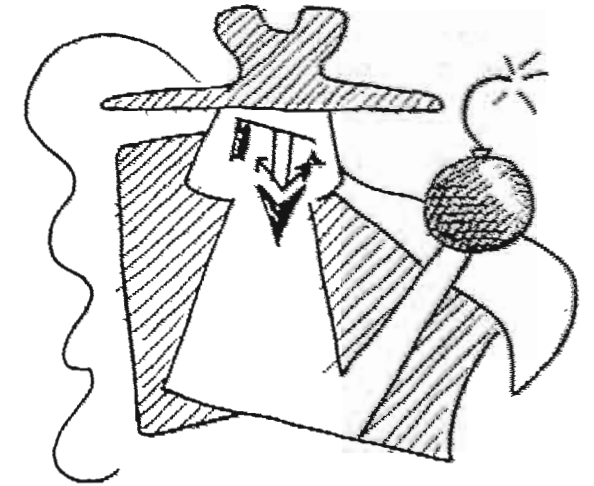
Many marxists talk of creating the "new man and woman" after the revolution. It's obvious there can be no real revolution towards freedom unless women and men begin to change themselves first. Fucked-up people only create fucked-up revolutions.

The stakes are too high for us to keep fooling around with rhetoric about "armed struggle" and separatism as a permanent solution. We can't use the tools of the State (armed force and coercion) to destroy the State. Neither can we turn our backs on the

increasing repression, centralization of power and economic turmoil ahead. We had better learn to use our heads before we use any other weapon. Stupidity and witless actions will probably destroy us sooner than the State, anyway.

Intelligence--rather than brute strength--assures the survival of the species. Unless we realize we are a deeply sick people, severely neurotic and socialized into destructive behavior patterns and relationships, we can't begin to struggle out of the death culture which oppresses all of us. Many people have already begun to accept the fact that we are ruled by irrational forces that have long been out of control. Others realize that only individual thought and action can turn around a mass society headed inevitably towards its own destruction.

Always remember that the



hands on the trigger and the panic buttons are human hands, and human hands are controlled by human minds. The first line of struggle is inside our heads.

See you at the barricades...

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The bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Beirut on September 21 demonstrates again what utter failures government intelligence agencies are at doing what they were ostensibly created to do. The CIA is a ubiquitous agent of oppression in Central and South America, working zealously to overthrow governments that have never raised a hand against the U.S. But is it able to do anything to obstruct organizations like Islamic Jihad, to retaliate against them, or even just to find out what they're up to? Which last, one would assume, is what an "intelligence" agency is created to do. Apparently the CIA is better at making mischief than it is at saving American lives.

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A New York Times editorial on abortion states that the "question of when life begins" is not yet settled. This obfuscates the issue. Of course a fertilized egg is alive, so there is no question about when life begins. The question is, when does it start to have rights? And even that is an imprecise way of stating the issue. The real question is, at what point should we decide to attribute a right to life to a fetus? There can be no scientific or objective answer. People acquire rights by mutual agreement, not by divine or scientific fiat. It's up to us to make the decision.

FOOTNOTES TO AN UNWRITTEN TEXT

Want to do something agin the government but too old to refuse to register and unable to resist paying taxes? Refusing to vote is a form of nonviolent resistance to government. That it disturbs governments is underlined by the fact that it's a crime in Australia, punishable by a \$5 fine. In totalitarian countries, where over 90 percent of the population is routinely dragooned into voting, not voting is even more of an act of resistance. The use of voting by dictators to legitimize their rule may have been started by Napoleon I, who in 1804 had himself elected hereditary Emperor of France by 98 percent of those eligible.

When I first started using a computer for my writing, my first feeling was dread that I'd have to waste a lot of time experimenting with this expensive machine before I got the hang of it, and meanwhile my writing wouldn't get done. After working with a computer for well over a year and a half, and having found it very useful for my writing, I now wish I could spend more time experimenting with it. My attitude at first was, how do I make this thing useful, right away? My attitude now is, let me learn what else I can do with the computer, and it will probably turn out to be useful later. In fact I'm thinking of making exploring the computer a reward or recreational break. Such is the fascination of computers.

After seeing Revenge of the Nerds, which I heartily enjoyed, I started thinking about the last scene, at a pep rally in which the nerds invite everybody who has ever felt like a nerd to come down from the stands and join them. And from what I could see, everybody does. Made me wonder, Is there anybody who does not, in real life, think of him or herself as a nerd? I'll bet even the handsome football players who date the beautiful sorority women--and the beautiful sorority women--think of themselves as nerds in relation to other people still more beautiful, who in turn have even more exquisite beings before whom they feel like nerds. When you get right down to it, nerdity is part of the universal human condition.

That death is the worst thing that can happen to a person is not an objective fact. It is a truth only for those who believe it. And nobody lives as if they fully believe it, because nearly all of us risk death every day. We do it because one can't lead a normal life without some risk, so most of us value what we consider to be a normal life over an indefinitely prolonged life. Between the person who says, "I would rather run the risk of death than give up traveling on airplanes," and the rebel against tyranny who says, "I would rather risk death than give up my freedom," the difference seems to me only one of degree.

I don't like a system that tries to base what we ought to do on what it presumes is. Because it will falsify one or the other, what is or what should be. It will say dirty politics is

okay because that's what is. Or else it will insist that dirty politics will inevitably disappear, because that's what should happen.

When I use the term ego in connection with Asian mysticism, I don't mean self-awareness. That I take to be a given of experience. I mean rather the social identity that is imposed on us by our families and our culture, and that we come to think of in an illusory way as being "really" us.

Teen-age girls are giggling again. When I was a windy boy and a bit, one of the serious irritations of life was the tendency of adolescent females to burst into shrill cackles on all sorts of occasions for no apparent reason. This was especially upsetting when it occurred a few seconds after a group of young ladies had walked past me on the street. Some time in the 60s, it seemed to me, this phenomenon abated. Teen-age girls seemed more quiet, purposeful, rational. They no longer giggled. I assumed this was a result of the greening of America, the counterculture, the sexual revolution. Young American women no longer suffered from the kind of repressions that could only be relieved by outbursts of uncontrollable laughter. Well, guess what? Just lately I've been hearing those giggles again. Another sign that the cultural pendulum has not yet stopped its rightward swing.

Each level of life that we examine seems to have its own level of purpose, which is not particularly relevant to other levels. On the level of molecular biology organisms are collections of molecules whose workings are governed by the laws of probability, and everything including the workings of human intelligence can be explained as the inevitable result of the functioning of these molecules. But that need not cause us to change our psychological, philosophical or religious views in any way. Tell me I'm nothing but a collection of molecules looking to replicate themselves and I'll still enjoy Beethoven's Ninth as much. Our minds can impose our own meanings on our lives and the world. In between the level of molecule and the level of mind are many other levels. The way living things act as organisms is a bridge between the molecular and the mental. A tiger pursuing its prey has imposed a kind of non-molecular meaning on its universe. The universe in general may have no purpose, but nothing can take our purposes away from us.

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Every day is a good day.

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HAIL ERIS \* October 23, 1984

ALL HAIL DISCORDIA