Various Authors
Essays from Willful Disobedience Volume 1–2

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also the adventure of discovering the world for oneself, of creating a life that, for its own pleasure, acts to destroy all authority and every social constraint. So if you speak to me of your beliefs, expect to be doubted, questioned, probed and mocked, because that within you which still needs to believe is that within you that still needs a master.

activities. Certainly. observation and experimentation are essential tools in the development of ways of thinking that are one's own. But science does not apply these methods freely to the exploration of self-determined living, but uses them in a system of beliefs. Stephan Jay Gould is a firm believer in science; he is also unusually honest about it. In one of his books, I found a discussion of the basis of science. He states clearly that the basis of science is not, as is popularly thought, the so-called "scientific method" (i.e., empirical observation and experimentation), but rather the **belief** that there are universal laws by which nature has consistently operated. Gould points out that the empirical method only becomes science when applied within the context of this belief. The scientific rationalists are glad to apply their skepticism to belief in fairies or magic, but won't even consider applying it to the belief in scientific laws. In this, they are acting like the christian who scoffs at hinduism. Anarchists are wise to reject this rigid and authoritarian worldview.

But when the rejection of scientific rationalism becomes the embrace of gullibility, authority has been successful in its training. The ruling order is far less interested in what we believe than in guaranteeing that we continue to **believe** rather than beginning to **think**, beginning to try to understand the world we encounter outside of any of the belief systems we've been given to view it through. As long as we are focused on muons or fairies, quasars or goddesses, thermodynamics or astral-projection, we won't be asking any of the essential questions, because we'll already have answers, answers that we've come to believe in, answers that transform nothing. The hard road of doubt, which cannot (tolerate) the easy answers of either the scientist or the mystic, is the only road that begins from the individual's desire for self-determination. Real thinking is based in hard and probing questions the first of which are: why is my life so far from what I desire, and how do I transform it? When one leaps too quickly to an answer based upon belief, one has lost one's life and embraced slavery.

Skepticism is an essential tool for all who want to destroy authority. In order to learn how to explore, experiment and probe — that is, to **think** for oneself — one must refuse to **believe**. Of course, it is a struggle, often painful, without the comfort of easy answers; but it is

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Belief: The Enemy of Thinking

It is not uncommon in american anarchist circles to hear someone say, "I believe in fairies", "I believe in magic", "I believe in ghosts" or the like. Only rarely do these believers claim a direct experience of the phenomena they claim to believe in. Much more often it is a friend, a relative or that standard favorite, "someone I met" who supposedly had the experience. When there is a direct experience, a little bit of questioning usually reveals that the actual experience has, at best, a very tenuous connection to the belief it is used to support. Yet if one dares to point this out, one may be accused of denying the believer's experience and of being a cold-hearted rationalist.

Neo-paganism and mysticism have penetrated deeply into the american anarchist scene, undermining a healthy skepticism that seems so essential to the battle against authority. We were all well-trained to *believe* — to accept various ideas as true without examination and to interpret our experiences based on these beliefs. Since we were taught how to believe, not how to think, when we reject the beliefs of the mainstream, it is much easier to embrace an alternative belief system than to begin the struggle of learning to think for ourselves. When this rejection includes a critique of civilization, one can even justify the embrace of mystical beliefs as a return to the animism or earth religion attributed to non-civilized people. But some of us have no interest in belief systems. Since we want to think for ourselves, and such thinking has nothing in common with belief of any sort.

Probably one of the reasons american anarchists shy away from skepticism — other than that belief is easier — is that scientific rationalists have claimed to be skeptics while pushing a plainly authoritarian belief system. Magazines such as *the Skeptical Inquirer* have done much of worth in debunking new age bullshit, mystical claims and even such socially significant beliefs as the "satanic abuse" myth, but they have failed to turn the same mystical eye on the mainstream beliefs of established science. For a long time, science has been able to hide behind the fact that it uses some fairly reliable methods in its

The Paltry Ideal of Democracy

In recent years, the ideal of democracy has achieved global dominance. Organizations from the U.S. government to the EZLN to the United Nations call for more democracy on both the local and the global scale, and many revolutionaries let themselves be drawn into this chorus of bleating sheep and calling shepherds. A mythology develops in which the goddess Democracy is flanked on the one side by Liberty and on the other by Justice and together, it is said they will bring peace and prosperity to the world.

Reality, of course, never lives up to the myths by which it justifies itself. The ideas, perspectives and social systems promoted by the rulers of the present society are those that serve to maintain and expand their power. In this light, those who seek the destruction of the social order would do well to look at democracy with a cruel and penetrating eye in order to examine its real nature. I think we'd find this "goddess" to be, in fact, a shabby deceiver, wooing us into our enslavement, wed to the masters of power.

To understand democracy as it actually exists in the world, one must understand the nature of state power in its current form. In recent years, state power has decentralized itself. By this I do not mean that real power has spread into the hands of more and more people. Rather the administration of power has been spreading itself across the social territory through the development of an increasingly diffuse and complex techno-bureaucratic apparatus. This apparatus is the social and physical body of the democratic state.

Democracy is the political form best suited to the needs of capitalism. Capitalism needs a populace that is, at the same time, under control and voluntarily participatory. After all, these are the traits of the perfect consumer. So it should be no surprise that the actualization of capital's global project is going hand in hand with attempts to enforce the creation of democratic states throughout most of the world.

The fact that democratic systems serve power becomes more obvious when we examine the nature of democratic participation.

Democracy starts with the assumption that the "good of all" (or "the greatest good for the greatest number") takes precedence over the needs and desires of the individual. This collectivist assumption dates back to the early days of capitalism when it was worked out in the writings of utilitarian philosophers such as John Stuart Mills and Jeremy Bentham. Thus, apolitical decision-making process that separates decision from action becomes necessary. Decision and execution of the decision must be separated in order to guarantee that "the good of all" is, indeed what is carried out.

But what is this "good of all"? In practise, it could just as readily be called "the good of none". Within the democratic system, the method for finding the "common good" is to bring all sides or their representatives together to negotiate and come to a compromise. But what really is the nature of compromise? Each gives up a little of this, renounces a little of that, sacrifices a bit of the other thing (leaving aside the fact that a few are in a position to be able to sacrifice much less than most), until whatever they may have first desired has disappeared in the haze of the democratic "good of all". Here then is democratic equality: Each leaves the table of negotiation equally disappointed, equally resentful, equally taking solace in the fact that, at least, the others lost as much as oneself. In the end it is only the two-headed hydra of power, the state and capital, that wins from this process.

The separation of decision from action and the consequent process of negotiation and compromise have the effect of flattening ideas. When ideas cannot be lived in practise, grappled with on the terrain of one's actual existence, the vitality drains out of them. When, in addition, They must always be put into a form aimed not at real discussion or debate, but at negotiation, at finding common ground, they flatten into a two dimensional form of thinking that fits well into a binary logic. Thus, democratic opinion is born, the massified world views that can be measured in opinion polls and voted for in elections. Such flattened ideas are, in fact, just another form of commodity in the capitalist marketplace. And it is only within this context that democratic dialogue exists, this context in which we have really been deprived of the ability to express anything real, anything living, anything with depth or passion. No wonder the

they rarely make it past the front yard gate before they run back cowering to the safety of their master's house; then they learn to bark and snarl at the wild dogs who dare to live outside the fence and, in exchange for a milkbone, lick the hands that keep them on the leash. I would rather be among the wild dogs howling out my scorn for every master, prepared to bite any hand that tries to tame. I reject the sarcastic despair that passes as cynicism today, in order to grasp as a weapon the untamed cynicism which dares to tell authority, "You're standing in my sun. Get out of the way!"

which ironic hyper-conformity is presented as a viable revolutionary strategy. With a straight face (or just the trace of a smirk), the most radical of the post-modern philosophers tell us that we need only push the logic of capitalism to its own "schizophrenic" extreme and it will break down on its own. For these present-day "radical" cynics, attempts to attack and destroy this society are foolish and ineffective, and attempts to create one's own life in opposition to this society is attachment to an out-dated individualism. Of course, these mostly french philosophers are rarely read. Like mainstream "cynicism", post-modern "cynicism" needs it hip popularizers — and they certainly have appeared. Sarcastically tearing down every significant insurgent idea or activity of the past century while promoting pathetic liberal eclecticism and ridiculous art or mystical movements as "revolutionary" or "iconoclastic", these alternative yuppies — who often claim to reject individuality — mainly just to promote themselves and their own pathetic projects. One needs only to notice Steward Home's Mona Lisa smirk to realize he is just Jay Leno with a shaved head and a pair of Docs.

Perhaps the worst effect of the post-modern penetration into anarchist circles is its reinforcement of a tendency to reject theory. any attempts to understand society in its totality in order to fight it more effectively are either called dogmatic or are seen as proof that those who make such attempts are hopelessly naive with no understanding of the complexity of "post-modern" post-industrial society. Of course, the "understanding" these oh-so-wise(-ass) anti-theorists have is smply their faith in the impossibility of analysis, a faith which allows them to continue their ritual of piecemeal activism which has long since proven ineffective for anything other than occasionally pushing the social system into making changes necessary for its own continued reproduction. Those who continue to make insurgent theory are accused by the self-proclaimed activists of sitting in ivory towers, regardless of how much this insurgence is put into practise.

When one considers the original greek cycnics, one is averse to using the same term for their modern namesakes. Yet the present-day "cynics" are much more like the dogs we are familiar with — pathetic, dependent, domesticated pets. Like well-trained puppies,

democratic state so readily grants the right to "free expression", it has already made the reality impossible.

From the beginning, the capitalist, democratic state has tended to flatten ideas in this manner, but the development of mass media on a large scale has provided the technology necessary for universalizing this process. As life itself is flattened by work and commodity consumption, as the activities people go through every day become increasingly standardized and meaningless from any personal perspective, the media becomes our source of information about what is significant, what is "really happening", what there is to do, say and think. Here, we find the separation between decision and action in its completeness. We read about this policy, see scenes from that war on television, hear of some corporate misconduct on National Public Radio; and we all have our opinions that we can express in the numberless polls and surveys, in letters to editors or congress people, in elections. But these opinions will never lead us to take real action that puts our lives at risk. After all, they are based on stories from the newspaper, from television, from the media, tales from which the life has been drained before we ever heard them about events quite distant and unreal. Meanwhile our own lives tick by as always in the tedious repetition of work and pay.

Opinion, the idea flattened and separated from real life, gives us the illusion of freedom. After all, can't I express my opinion? Can't I have my say? This is the supposed beauty of democracy. The entire process by which opinion develops, this process of separating ideas from life and flattening them into the basis for pub talk and opinion polls is the basis for the general consensus by which democracy justifies itself. It presents itself as the one political system that, unlike other political systems, allows the free discussion about all political systems. That such a construction determines the outcome of any such discussion in advance should be obvious. What is less obvious is the option that is left out: the refusal of every political system.

It should be clear from all this that there is an agenda behind democracy. The "common good" that it works for is actually the good of the present social order. What else do we really have in common beyond the fact that we are all exploited and dominated by

this order? So the "common good", in fact, means that which is good for the continuation of exploitation and domination. By drawing us into the process of fictitious participation outlined above, democracy becomes the most truly totalitarian political system that has ever existed. Our lives come to be defined in terms of its processes in ways that no other political system could accomplish. This is why democracy is the state structure best suited to the needs of capital. Capital needs to permeate every moment of life, to define it terms of the economy. To do so requires a transformation in the nature of human beings, the transformation of living individuals into producer-consumers. Democracy, by transforming the self-creating individual into a citizen of the state, that is into a cog in the social machine, in fact helps capital to accomplish this project.

So, in reality, this is what democracy looks: an empty existence devoid of vitality, given to the endless repetition of the same activities not of our choosing, compensated with the right to chatter on and on about that on which we cannot act. To wed revolution to this pathetic ideal would create a meager revolution. To wed anarchism to it would rain the life from all our finest passions and leave a stunted caricature for the amusement of academics and cultural theorists. Our revolution can't grow from such paltry ideals; it must spring from the great dreams of those who will not compromise their lives.

The Wild Dog Howls

A story is told of Diogenes, probably the best known of the ancient greek cynics: It is said that one day, as he was sunning himself in the bathtub he called home, Alexander the "great" came to speak with him. This emperor of many nations said, " I am Alexander, prince of Macedonia and the world. I have heard you are a great philosopher. Do you have any words of wisdom for me?" Annoyed at such a petty disturbance of his calm, Diogenes answered, "Yes, you're standing in my sun. Get out of the way." Though this story is most likely fictional, it reflects the scorn in which cynics held all authority and their boldness in expressing this scorn. These self-proclaimed "dogs" (wild dogs, of course) rejected hierarchy, social restraints and the alleged need for laws and greeted these with sarcastic mockery.

How utterly different this ancient cynicism was from what now goes by that name. Several years ago, a radical group in England called the Pleasure Tendency published a pamphlet entitled "Theses Against Cynicism". In this pamphlet, they criticize an attitude of hip detachment, of shallow, sarcastic despair — and particularly the penetration of this attitude into anti-authoritarian and revolutionary circles.

The proponents of this present-day "cynicism" are everywhere. The hip, sarcastic comedy of Saturday Night Live or the Comedy Channel presents no real challenge to the ruling powers. In fact, this smirking know-it-all-ism is the yuppie attitude *par excellence*. It has nothing to do with a real understanding of what's going on, but is rather a justification for conformity. "Yes, we know what the politicians and corporate executives are up to. We know it's all a dirty game. But there's nothing we can do about it, so we're gonna get our piece of the action". There's nothing we can do about it — that is the message of this modern cynicism — not disdain for authority, but disdain for those who still dare to challenge it rather than joining in its game with a knowing smirk.

This attitude has entered the circles of so-called revolutionaries and anarchists through the back-door of post-modern philosophy in

an act of insurrection. In order to maintain social control, the lives of individuals have to be stolen away. In their place, we received economic survival, the tedious existence of work and pay. We cannot buy our lives back, nor can we beg them back. Our lives will only be our own when we **steal** them back — and that means taking what we want without asking permission.

The Absurdity of Borders

Changes in the methods of exploitation have forced increasing numbers of people, particularly from the poorer countries, to take the path of immigration. Though useful to capital as a source of cheap labor, the numbers of such refugees has become so large as to present a significant problem of control for the states of those countries they enter. In an effort to maintain some level of control over this flood, the various states have created systems of detention centers, prisons for undocumented foreigners whose only crime is that of seeking refuge from poverty and in some cases political oppression without the proper papers. Even if these centers were built for the comfort of the inmates, taking their emotional and intellectual, as well as basic physical, needs into account, they would still be stealing away the lives of those individuals interned in the camps, placing their fate into the hands of bureaucrats whose priorities are the maintenance of power, profit and social control. But, for obvious reasons, these centers are not built for the comfort of the inmates. They are prisons with all the horror that implies. It is no surprise then that they are subject to frequent revolts, the healthy response of those whose dignity has been pressed beyond endurance, those whom the state, in its need to control every interaction, has pushed to the breaking point.

Australia is a destiny for many refugees from Asia and eastern Africa. These refugees arrive on the Australian shores to find themselves interned in these prisons without criminal charges. In June, seven hundred internees from three detention centers in Woomera, Port Hedland and Curtin escaped in order to go to town centers to protest their condition. More recently, on the weekend beginning August 25 and going through the 28th , a number of actions against the centers took place in Australia.

Protests at the Woomera center began on the 25th with chanting and some damage to the center. On the 26th, there were several demonstrations at various centers and one in Sydney in solidarity with these . At Marbinong, two hundred anarchists, socialists and

other supporters met with immigrants who were not in the camps to protest outside the center there. Arrangements were made for the people in the camp to send out messages over the fences with balloons. As people came to the fence with these messages, some began to shake it. A high-ranking cop ordered people away from the fence. In response, they shook it harder and almost knocked it over. Horse cops were brought in to protect it. People began chanting such things as "No more cages", but the words were less significant than the fact that the noise of the chants made it impossible for the cops to coordinate their activities.

In the wake of the demonstrations by sympathizers at Marbinong and in Sydney, on the 27th, the protests at Woomera escalated as some inmates attempted to dismantle the detention center there. Inmates had been stoning the staff since Friday night. The authorities sprayed tear gas in an attempt to quell the uprising. The rioting inmates set fire to recreational buildings, a dining room, a school and the cleaning facilities. An administration building was also attacked, with stones. The authorities used water cannons against rioting inmates and attempted to build a secondary fence to keep them in. However, the rioters tore this fence down as fast as it was put up. By August 28th, they were using the pickets as spears against the guards as they attempted to escape through holes in the fence.

These detention centers, the states "rational" response to the problem of control, are further evidence of the absurdity of borders and of the states that invent them. But the reality that has forced the refugees to take the road of immigration is pushing increasing numbers of people in every part of the world into landlessness, homelessness, the lack of any place to be. Thus, all of us who are among the excluded of this society find ourselves pushed into a precariousness in which we are all potential refugees. Our struggle against this situation must escape the logic of capital and the state. To do so requires that this struggle not be merely a struggle for survival, but a struggle for the fullness of life. Capital is forcing an equality of conditions upon us — in impoverishment and precariousness. It is necessary to reject this false mathematical equality that turns us into ciphers. There is beauty in difference, and borders, like all institutions of control, seeks to suppress our experience of that difference in order to

Steal Back Your Life

Economy — the domination of survival over life — is essential for the maintenance of all other forms of domination. Without the threat of scarcity, it would be difficult to coerce people into obedience to the daily routine of work and pay. We were born into an economized world. The social institution of property has made scarcity a daily threat. Property, whether private or communal, separates the individual from the world, creating a situation in which, rather than simply taking what one wants or needs, one is supposed to ask permission, a permission generally only granted in the form of economic exchange. In this way, different levels of poverty are guaranteed to everyone, even the rich, because under the rule of social property what one is not permitted to have far exceeds what one is permitted to have. The domination of survival over life is maintained.

Those of us who desire to create our lives as our own recognize that this domination, so essential to the maintenance of society, is an enemy we must attack and destroy. With this understanding, theft and squatting can take on significance as part of an insurgent life project. Welfare scamming, eating at charity feeds, dumpster diving and begging may allow one to survive without a regular job, but they do not in any way attack the economy; they are within the economy. Theft and squatting are also often merely survival tactics. Squatters who demand the "right to a home" or try to legalize their squats, thieves who work their "jobs" like any other worker, only in order to accumulate more worthless commodities — these people have no interest in destroying the economy . . . they merely want a fair share of its goods. But those who squat and steal as part of an insurgent life, do so in defiance of the logic of economic property. Refusing to accept the scarcity imposed by this logic or to bow to the demands of a world they did not create, such insurgents take what they desire without asking anyone's permission whenever the possibility arises. In this defiance of society's economic rule, one takes back the abundance of the world as one's own — and this is

reinforce the false unities based on imposed identities. Only where differences can intermingle freely can that which is unique and truly individual in them come to the fore, that which constitutes the real human wealth that is beyond every economic consideration. It is this beautiful idea that can give our struggle to tear down every fence, every prison every border, every state and the whole social order of capital and power the ferocity to push on against.

recognition of the singularity of each individual, a recognition which embraces the actual conflicts that exist between individuals, regardless of how ferocious they may be, as part of the amazing wealth of interactions that the world has to offer us once we rid ourselves of the social system which has stolen our lives and our interactions from us.

immense chasm to mere semantics is an attempt to deny a very real conflict and the singularity of the individuals involved.

The denial of conflict and of the singularity of individuals may reflect a fetish for unity that stems from residual leftism or collectivism. Unity has always been highly valued by the left. Since most anarchists, despite their attempts to separate themselves from the left, are merely anti-state leftists, they are convinced that only a united front can destroy this society which perpetually forces us into unities not of our choosing, and that we must, therefore, overcome our differences and join together to support the "common cause". But when we give give ourselves to the "common cause", we are forced to accept the lowest common denominator of understanding and struggle. The unities that are created in this way are false unities which thrive only by suppressing the unique desires and passions of the individuals involved, transforming them into a mass. Such unities are no different from the forming of labor that keeps a factory functioning or the unity of social consensus which keeps the authorities in power and people in line. Mass unity, because it is based on the reduction of the individual to a unit in a generality, can never be a basis for the destruction of authority, only for its support in one form or another. Since we want to destroy authority, we must start from a different basis.

For me, that basis is myself — my life with all of its passions and dreams, its desires, projects and encounters. From this basis, I make "common cause" with no one, but may frequently encounter individuals with whom I have an affinity. It may well be that your desires and passions, your dreams and projects coincide with mine. Accompanied by an insistence upon realizing these in opposition to every form of authority, such affinity is a basis for a genuine unity between singular, insurgent individuals which lasts only as long as these individuals desire. Certainly, the desire for the destruction of authority and society can move us to strive for an insurrectional unity that becomes large-scale, but never as a mass movement; instead it would need to be a coinciding of affinities between individuals who insist on making their lives their own. This sort of insurrection cannot come about through a reduction of our ideas to a lowest common denominator with which everyone can agree, but only through the

What Have We Demonstrated?

The events that occurred during the anti-WTO demonstrations last year caught nearly everyone by surprise surprise. The forty to fifty thousand participants, the ability of demonstrators to significantly delay the proceedings,the extent of the property damage and the severity of the police response were all unexpected and seemed to leave many in a haze. Unfortunately this limited the level of real significant critical discussion about the event. The months that have followed have seen several attempts to repeat "Seattle" — in Washington D.C., in Philadelphia, in Los Angeles (I choose to write about events in the United States, because the "movement" here is the one I understand most clearly). In light of this, I think it is time to raise deeper questions about these events and their usefulness to an insurrectional anarchist project.

Unquestionably, during the demonstrations in Seattle, real acts of revolt occurred. Rage against domination expressed itself frequently and fiercely enough to cause significant damage. On the other hand, it must be recognized that the demonstrations in Seattle were essentially part of a political movement of dissent aimed at reforming capital, not a social movement of revolt. Were there ways to transform these events, to take them out of the hands of leftist politicians and out of the submissive logic of reform? Arguably, those who attacked property did transform things to limited extent and in a haphazard manner, but the shrewder of the leftist and labor movement leaders were quick to recuperate this for the political realm by pointing out that without these attacks the media would have paid scant attention to the protest and their own political message would not have gotten out. However, the best opportunities for opening things up into social revolt came when property destruction attracted people from poor, black neighborhoods. Anarchists were not really prepared for this and lost the opportunity for communication with others of the exploited. On the other hand, the activist politicians were prepared, and recognizing people who did not share their political agenda, they responded accordingly. They banded

together to block access to a Nike store to these local black youth, thus blocking any potential for breaking out of the limits of politics, thus further indicating how little the left has in common with the exploited in this country In the large demonstrations since Seattle, the political organizers have attempted to better coordinate events with the authorities in order to keep everything under control, to maintain social peace against both anarchists and unruly "outside elements" — angry local exploited youth for example.

The "anti-globalization" movement in the United States is not a social movement. It is a political movement, a movement of ideologues and activists, not of the exploited. There is no large-scale visible social movement of revolt in this country right now. Where such movements have existed, demonstrations have always played a part in the ongoing struggle, but as an outgrowth of that struggle, not as a political imposition upon it. The demonstrations of Seattle, D.C., Philadelphia and Los Angeles, being essentially political, were intended to demand that power act in a certain way. They were not — except in those specific incidents when some individuals broke out of the official framework — expressions of our ability to act for ourselves.

So questions remain. Since an insurrectional anarchist project involves the refusal of politics, since one of its central aims and methods is self-activity, since our strength is that of the exploited and not that of "radical" politicians, is it really in our interest to keep putting so much energy into and emphasis on these political demonstrations with times and locations determined power? Though there is not a large-scale, visible social movement here, mostly invisible and often unconscious revolt does exist. So then, wouldn't we do well to develop our own daily struggles against the exploitation we experience and, in the process, maybe discover other hidden wells of revolt among the exploited who are being excluded from this society and its political games? Clarifying our anarchist projects in this way, we can consider whether there are ways that we can intervene in these demonstrations that will open the situation up to revolt and the destruction of politics, to the self-activity of the exploited rising up against their exploitation and beginning to take back their lives. There are many questions to be discussed and explored along these

Fear of Conflict

> "Truly it is not a failing in you that you stiffen yourself against me and assert your distinctness or peculiarity: you need not give way or renounce yourself" — Max Stirner

Whenever more than a few anarchists get together, there are arguments. This is no surprise, since the word "anarchist" is used to describe a broad range of often contradictory ideas and practices. The only common denominator is the desire to be rid of authority, and anarchists do not even agree on what authority is, let alone the question of what methods are appropriate for eliminating it. These questions raise many others, and so arguments are inevitable.

The arguments do not bother me. What bothers me is the focus on trying to come to an agreement. It is assumed that "because we are all anarchists", we must all really want the same thing; our apparent conflicts must merely be misunderstandings which we can talk out, finding a common ground. When someone refuses to talk things out and insists on maintaining their distinctness, they are considered dogmatic. This insistence on finding a common ground may be one of the most significant sources of the endless dialogue that so frequently takes place of acting to create our lives on our own terms. This attempt to find a common ground involves a denial of very real conflicts.

One strategy frequently used to deny conflict is to claim that an argument is merely a disagreement over words and their meanings. As if the words one uses and how one chooses to use them have no connection to one's ideas, dreams and desires. I am convinced that there are very few arguments that are **merely** about words and their meanings. These few could be easily resolved if the individuals involved would clearly and precisely explain what they mean. When individuals cannot even come to an agreement about what words to use and how to use them, it indicates that their dreams, desires and ways of thinking are so far apart that even within a single language, they cannot find a common tongue. The attempt to reduce such an

inform us that there were no major problems: the planes kept flying, the ATMs continued spilling out cash, production and consumption carried on apace. It was business as usual. Indeed.

Over and over, the media brought the same message home: Technology and capital have once again overcome a crisis (which, of course, they themselves created). The world is getting better everyday. And everyone who is in their right mind is happy with the present social order.

But in these same events, and even in the images used to portray them, I see something different. Whatever arbitrary change has occurred on the calendar, existence itself has not changed — not in any fundamental sense. States still launch bombs — and this is "non-reportable", of no real concern, certainly nothing that should upset our celebration. Capital continues to implement technological systems of social and biological control increasingly eroding the bases of individual freedom and self-determination. And the technological monster lumbers on never quite under anyone's control, not even that of its supposed state and capitalist masters. Thus, we are kept perpetually in crises which have no element of adventure, on the edge of disasters too banal and pathetic to call forth any sort of heroism.

The Y2K story served the powers that be well. It kept people's minds focused on one particular possible disaster, on one glitch in the system. But the most significant disaster of this social order, the one we all live through every day, is not a glitch, a mere malfunction in dating. It is the fact that we have all been made dependent on an enormous, lumbering juggernaut that none of us can control, and that every day it destroys more life and erodes more freedom. In such a situation, those who want to create lives based on their own self-determined desires and passions can find no joy in any future based on the continued development of the present reality. Rather our joy is found in the struggle to destroy this present reality and, in the process, to create new ways of being in which individuals can make their own lives freely as they desire.

lines. But this much is certain: anarchists cannot continue to simply tag along in the leftist politicians' spectacular displays; otherwise, we will become nothing more than the most inept of the politicians. Instead, however we choose to act, we must act projectually, with purpose, fully aware that the schemes of the left are sad and pathetic compared to the dreams of the exploited when they rise up in revolt discovering their most dangerous passions.

Millenial Bullshit: Y2K and the Creation of Social Consensus

As 1999 faded into historical oblivion and the year 2000 came on stage in this arbitrary game of measured time, anyone observing the media spectacle of the official millennium celebrations was witness to a vulgar display of self-congratulatory smugness. The technological infrastructure and the social consensus of faith in this infrastructure had held. Everyone was happy, looking with joy and hope to the next millennium and the new "wonders" that it would bring. Or so the plastic faces on the television, the monotonously insincere voices on the radio and the empty phrases in the press told us.

Of course, there were moments of tension. When it was announced that three missiles had been launched in Russia, Sam Donaldson's face expressed something faintly reminiscent of mild concern. Fortunately, a military expert reassured us that these missile launchings were "non-reportable", because they had traveled less than 500 kilometers. And furthermore, these were scud missiles that Russia had launched quite intentionally at Chechnya. So all is well — except for those Chechens caught in the cross hairs of these missiles.

It was shortly thereafter that blackouts hit several neighborhoods in Los Angeles including downtown L.A., South Central, East L.A., Silver Lake and the neighborhood where I was staying. A battery operated radio kept my friends and I informed of the smoothness of the Y2K transition. These blackouts, like those in Philadelphia were apparently caused by foul weather, which also affected the communication between the various radio personnel. So though technology was breaking down on small levels here and there, all was well. The Y2K bug had been averted.

These were just the normal crises of this cumbersome system.

When the electricity came back on the television presented images of the first ATM user in New Zealand (one of the first nations to "enter the new millennium", starting its new year many hours before Los Angeles) to show the triumph of technological banality. And the announcers regularly contacted the Y2K emergency center to

Insurrectionary Anarchist Practice

The development of an insurrectional anarchist practise on a projectual basis requires the ability to look at what one has done critically. When one's aims are sufficiently clear and one begins to develop more precise ideas of how to accomplish these aims in practise with others, the arm of critique becomes a most useful weapon in the concrete reality of struggle. However, in this realm, it cannot be reduced to simplistic acceptance or rejection, to the binary logic of "yes" and "no". Rather it must involve a careful examination of the actions we have chosen to take in light of our aim of destroying the social order through an insurrectional process. If we find that a particular type of action has taken us down a wrong path, then we start over without regret. The ability to recognize mistakes and start over from scratch if necessary reflects the creative imagination and passionate intelligence that any healthy insurrectional movement — no matter how small — would have. Unfortunately, history — including that which we ourselves have lived — is usually treated as mythology, that is to say, as a higher reality to be venerated or as a theology to be examined only on a doctrinal level to find the true account. Anarchists, in particular, have tended to create tales of great moments out of their past. This mythologizing approach turns our history into a series of "glorious defeats" rather than an ongoing struggle in which many mistakes were made and in which many amazing projects were accomplished. Defined as a series and great moments and glorious defeats, our history becomes useless to our ongoing struggle. Rather we need to examine events in terms of what we can learn that is practical to our present struggle, not in order to erase the beauty and poetry that can be found in much of the history of revolt, but to enhance that beauty and poetry by making it practical to our daily battle against power.

One recent event that has been mythologized is the series of demonstrations blockading the WTO summit conference in Seattle last year. In the months that have followed, similar demonstrations confronting various major conferences, meetings or conventions of

those in power have occurred. In most of these demonstrations, very real acts of revolt occurred, and my solidarity is with those who carried out these acts. But at least in the United States, most of these events were organized by political activists whose agenda was to make themselves heard — "to speak truth to power" as so many of thes small time politicians like to say — and who were willing to negotiate with the authorities over these events. for the most part anarchists have retained the mythology developed around Seattle and limited their discussions and critical analyses to the questions of property destruction and the nature os violence and nonviolence, keeping these discussions on the moral terrain on which the left political organizers prefer to argue. None of this threatens the Seattle myth. Nor does it open the question that is of far more interest from an insurrectional anarchist perspective: what place, if any, do such demonstrations have in our ongoing struggle, in our insurrectional project/ It is not a matter of refusing to go to such events, but of going, if one so chooses, with a clear intent, in a way that flows out of and back into one's daily struggle. In pursuing questions of this sort, each of us will draw our own conclusions and act in consequence, but if we do not ask such questions, we will continue to be dragged along by the agendas of power and its loyal opposition, running here and there to no avail, and complaining that the myth cannot be relived.

The small bits of new that I have heard about the events in Prague and about various solidarity demonstrations around the world indicate that there were some explicitly anti-capitalist events and that there was far less domination by "nonviolent" activists. Below are a few texts intended to encourage further discussion of these questions.

With a more discreet presence in its structure and with the future professional army, the military machine becomes increasingly "invisible", but the more "invisible" it becomes, the more it absorbs and penetrates the social, giving it the aspect of an enormous barracks.

This is why all the discourses about the separation between the economy of peace and the economy of war have no basis. In the same way, the purposes of civil reconversion of military structures or those of fiscal objection to military expenses are abstracted in an abstraction always functional for power. (On the other hand they are impossible to distinguish given the global nature of the state budget.)

To Cut the Knots

Genocide, institutionalized and gregarious violence, the hierarchy of the sword, blind obedience, the complete deresponsibilization of individuals are unmasked and fought: they are the means of war. Together with these, the plans for division by the powers that be, by the capitalists and the states, are refused — it is worth mentioning the objectives of war, even when these are reached through diplomacy. In the same way, it becomes necessary to refuse not only the objects of mercantile production — profit above all and from all — but also its methods: the division between who decides and who carries out, specialization, the domination of the machine over humans, the submission of nature and the alienation of relationships.

To sabotage their war then, one must try to attack their peace: in all the thousand threads and all the thousand knots of the web of the military spider. But without creating organizations and without creating leaders. Otherwise, even without uniforms, even in times of peace, we would all remain like soldiers, accomplice and victim of an immense enterprise of death.

Ready, aim . . . fire!
And the soldier, Masetti, shoots . . .
But at his captain.

having been elaborated and tested by the military. In addition, the production of arms is possible only thanks to the collaboration of numerous non-military enterprises such as those of transportation, of electronics support and of precision optics, to mention only a few. This doesn't count those which allow the everyday functioning of the military, from the restocking of food to the supply of clothing, from the systems of communication to the maintenance of machinery.

To give another example, the nuclear industry — even leaving out the problem of its use by the military and that of its poisoning of the earth — has need of an organization and of control similar to that of the army. More generally, economic activity turns increasingly toward the techno-bureaucratic administration of the existing order and toward the informatic control of the population. Every day we hear talk of video-surveillance, of the gathering of information through every sort of magnetic support, of communication between medical, advertising and financial data banks and those of the police.

The Knots in the Web

The bombing in the former Yugoslavia and the massacre of the Kosovars have been among us from time immemorial in all that we do not call "war". They are in the calculations of the industrialist and in the submission of the worker, in the voice of the teacher and in the obedience of the student, in the rally of the politician and in the boredom of the citizen.

They are in the ticking of the clock; they are in every social role.

But if the war machine, that which every day renders war possible in the world, appears to us as an untouchable monster, it is because from here we don't see the concrete presence upon the territory, all the tiles — even the least evident — that compose this mosaic of death. It is because from here we don't see the principals, all the political and economic institutions, all the businesses and financial groups that set it in motion.

A Violent Proposition Against the Weighted Chain of Morality

When dealing with the question of how to battle the social order, there is no place for morality. Anyone who desires a world without exploitation and domination does not share the values of the society that spawned them. Thus, it is necessary to avoid getting drawn into its viewpoint — the dominant viewpoint with all that implies. The dominant viewpoint in the present era is that of democratic dialogue. All are to come together to discuss their perspectives, argue over their claims, debate their opinions and negotiate compromises guaranteed to enforce the power of those who claim to represent us and to disappoint all parties (except those in power) equally. Isn't our democratic equality a beautiful thing? Within this viewpoint, revolutionary action ceases to be activity chosen by individuals in terms of their inclinations, capabilities, situation and desires. Instead it must be reified into a dichotomous choice given moral connotations between violence and nonviolence. For anarchists, who — in theory, at least — determine their own actions on their own terms, this should be a false and meaningless dichotomy.

The central aim of anarchist activity in the present world is the destruction of the state, of capital and of every other institution of power and authority in order to create the possibility of freedom for every individual to fully realize herself as he sees fit. This is not a moral principle, but simply — by definition — putting anarchy into practice. And it is a violent proposition. No apologies should be made about this. I am talking about the destruction of the entire social order — of civilization, if you will — and such an upheaval is, without question, far more violent than any hurricane or earthquake. But the significant question is how each individual will act, and that, for anarchists, is determined by each individual in terms of their desires, dreams, capabilities and circumstances — in terms of the life they are trying to create for themselves. In this light, it only makes sense that anarchists would reject morality, humanism and any other external value in deciding how to act. Even efficacy

would be rejected as an essential determinant, though, of course, one would try to succeed and would put all of oneself into any self-chosen activity in order to make it as strong as possible. But effectiveness is not the primary question — the desire to attack the institutions of domination and exploitation where one can is.

In this light it becomes clear that we who call ourselves anarchists have no use for dealing with such questions as: "Is property destruction violence or not?"; "Is this an act of legitimate self-defense?" and so on. We have no reason to try to make such artificial distinctions, since our actions are determined precisely by our desire to attack and destroy power. These distinctions between "violence" and "non-violence" or between "legitimate self-defense" and the violence of attack are based in the hypocritical morality of power that serves no other purpose than to place weighted chains on our ability to act.

Since the demonstrations against the WTO in Seattle, representatives of the mass media have been looking for anarchists to question about violence and property destruction. We will never be able to win over the media or to be presented "fairly" through them. So speaking to them on their terms, using their moral rules as guidelines in determining how we speak about these matters and following their protocol when we speak to them is absurd. The best way to speak to the media on this question is shown by the action of three Italian anarchists — Arturo, Luca and Drew — who beat up a journalist who dared to invade their comrade's funeral.

> and prostitutes prostrate themselves before power — this is also comprehensible. But that the helots, the maltreated, that the proletariat would be patriot — why, then?" — Zo d'Axa

Militarism is at the center of this society.

Militarism is not merely an ensemble of institutions (the police, the army . . .) created to defend the established order with force; it is also a culture — a culture of obedience, of discipline, of submission, of the planned negation of every individuality.

Militarism is every order shouted and carried out, every act carried out by those who have not decided either the reasons or the means, every uniform of cloth or of the mind, every hierarchy, every sacred cause that stirs flags and calls to sacrifice, every profane cause that exploits with the rhetoric of rationality. Militarism is the boss at work and the police on the street.

Militarism is anyone who is indignant about war without being indignant about its reverse, about a peace made of hierarchy and exploitation. It is anyone who begs us to stay calm — because everything is already so difficult, because the world has already changed so much, because there is nothing else left to do than to light candles and play ring-around-the-rosy around the military bases.

Militarism is anyone who speaks and acts in our names; anyone who wants us to be soldiers, even if in the so-called "revolutionary" army; anyone who promises us a bright future — provided it advances itself in tight ranks in the shadow of his or her flag.

Militarism is anyone who tells us that it is impossible to combat militarism without using its same means.

The Spider Web

In this society, a clear separation between civil institutions and those of the military is impossible. The economy scatters the world with corpses through the game of financial speculation. The multinationals that decide the fate of that which we once called agriculture with their seed rackets are the same ones that produce and sell arms. Many technological innovations enter into the civil market only after

the privilege of the powerful few against the exploited many. In light of this, it is evident that social peace means nothing other than the suppression of rebellion, of any uprising of the exploited. Such suppression involves violence or the threat of violence — the perpetual terrorism of the state visible in uniform on every street. Thus, social peace is simply an aspect of the ongoing social war of the rulers against those who they exploit, the war necessary to maintain capitalism and the state.

In this light pacifism is useless against militarism and war. To call states to interact peacefully is to ignore the primary function of the state. For the state, war is peace — that is to say, violence the way to maintain social peace, the continuation of domination and exploitation. This is as true for democratic states as it is for blatantly dictatorial and oligarchic regimes. The former merely supplement the force of arms with the illusory participation in consensus creating "dialogue" — which always upholds the present order — as a means to keep the exploited under control. So if the struggle against militarism and war is not to be a futile symbolic gesture that ultimately upholds what it claims to fight, it must leave behind the moralism of pacifism and humanitarianism which the state has already drawn into the realm of its justifications for war. This struggle must recognize the reality of the ongoing social war against the exploited and of the necessity to transform itself into a revolutionary struggle aimed at destroying the state and capital. For only when the state and capital are destroyed will the ongoing social war come to an end.

On the Purpose of Militarism and of the World Around Which It Turns

> "That the proprietors are chauvinists in the name of their mansion; that the financiers praise the army that, for pay, stands guard over the cash box; that the bourgeoisie hail the flag that covers their merchandise, this is understood without effort. Even that certain semi-philosophers, people of tranquility and tradition, that coin collectors and archeologists, that old poets

Technology and Class Struggle

The developments in technology over the past sixty years — the nuclear industry, cybernetics and related information techniques, biotechnology and genetic engineering — have produced fundamental changes in the social terrain. The methods of exploitation and domination have changed, and for this reason old ideas about the nature of class and class struggle are not adequate for understanding the present situation. The workerism of the marxists and syndicalists can no longer even be imagined to offer anything useful in developing a revolutionary practise. But simply rejecting the concept of class is not a useful response to this situation either, because in so doing one loses an essential tool for understanding the present reality and how to attack it.

Exploitation not only continues, but has intensified sharply in the wake of the new technology. Cybernetics has permitted the decentralization of production, spreading small units of production across the social terrain. Automation has drastically reduced the number of production workers necessary for any particular manufacturing process. Cybernetics further creates methods for making money without producing anything real, thus allowing capital to expand itself without the expense of labor.

Furthermore, the new technology demands a specialized knowledge that is not available for most people. This knowledge has come to be the real wealth of the ruling class in the present era. Under the old industrial system, one could look at class struggle as the struggle between workers and owners over the means of production. This no longer makes sense. As the new technology advances, the exploited find themselves driven into increasingly precarious positions. The old life-long skilled factory position has been replaced by day labor, service sector jobs, temporary work, unemployment, the black market, illegality, homelessness and prison. This precariousness guarantees that the wall created by the new technology between the exploiters and the exploited remains unbreachable.

But the nature of the technology itself places it beyond the reach of the exploited. Earlier industrial development had as its primary

focus the invention of techniques for the mass manufacturing of standardized goods at low cost for high profit. These new technological developments are not so much aimed at the manufacturing of goods as at the development of means for increasingly thorough and widespread social control and for freeing profit from production. The nuclear industry requires not only specialized knowledge, but also high levels of security that place its development squarely under the control of the state and lead to a military structuring in keeping with its extreme usefulness to the military. Cybernetic technology's ability to process, record, gather and send information nearly instantaneously serves the needs of the state to document and monitor its subjects as well as its need to reduce the real knowledge of those it rules to bits of information-data-hoping, thus, to reduce the real capabilities for understanding of the exploited. Biotechnology gives the state and capital control over the most fundamental processes of life itself — allowing them to decide what sort of plants, animals and — in time — even human beings can exist.

Because these technologies require specialized knowledge and are developed for the purpose of increasing the control of the masters over the rest of humanity even in our daily lives, the exploited class can now best be understood as those excluded from this specialized knowledge and thus from real participation in the functioning of power. The master class is, thus, made up of those included in participation in the functioning of power and the real use of the specialized technological knowledge. Of course these are processes in course, and the borderlines between the included and excluded can, in some cases, be elusive as increasing numbers of people are proletarianized — losing whatever decision-making power over their own conditions of existence they may have had.

It is important to point out that although these new technologies are intended to give the masters control over the excluded and over the material wealth of the earth, they are themselves beyond any human beings control. Their vastness and the specialization they require combine with the unpredictability of the materials they act upon atomic and sub-atomic particles, light waves, genes and chromosomes, etc. — to guarantee that no single human being can

Against Militarism: The State, Exploitation and War

"War is the health of the state." The truth of this statement stems from a deeper reality: war is, in fact, the basic functioning of the state. But to understand this one must have clarity of the nature of war and "peace". During the times when most people considered war in terms of the threat of nuclear annihilation, fear clouded understanding. Although this threat hasn't actually disappeared, it no longer seems to loom on the horizon with the immediacy that it had in the '80's and before. The military actions we have seen in recent years could remove the cloud that prevents a clear understanding of the nature of war if we examine them well.

In recent decades there have been very few declared wars in spite of the fact that military actions have constant. As early as the '60's, the U.S. war against Vietnam was never declared as such, but rather started as "advising" and then evolved into a "police action". Since then military actions have been known by such names as "peace-keeping mission", "humanitarian mission", 'surgical strike". Etc.

This apparently Orwellian language is in fact very revealing to those who examine it carefully. If the bombing of hospitals and apartment buildings can be a "police action", then events such as the bombing of the MOVE house in Philadelphia are simply par for the course. It should also come as no surprise that increasingly big city police forces are receiving military training and that the Marines have been training in American cities for dealing with urban unrest. In the case of the former, we are dealing with the training of "peace officers", and in the case of the latter, with the training of "peace-keeping forces". The unity of purpose between the police and the military is thus quite evident.

The purpose which these two institutions serve is social peace. But if armed organizations are necessary for the maintenance of social peace, then this so-called "peace" rests on a bed-rock of violence. All states, however democratic, only exist by means of force. From its beginning, the purpose of the state has always been to maintain

actually understand completely how they work. This adds a technological aspect to the already existing economic precariousness that most of us suffer from. However, this threat of technological disaster beyond any one's control also serves power in controlling the exploited — the fear of more Chernobyls, genetically engineered monsters or escaped laboratory — made diseases and the like move people to accept the rule of so-called experts who have proven their own limits over and over again. Furthermore, the state — that is responsible for every one of these technological developments through its military — is able to present itself as a check against rampant corporate "abuse" of this technology. So this monstrous, lumbering, uncontrollable juggernaut serves the exploiters very well in maintaining their control over the rest of the population. And what need have they to worry about the possible disasters when their wealth and power has most certainly provided them with contingency plans for their own protection? Thus, the new technology and the new conditions of exclusion and precariousness it imposes on the exploited undermine the old dream of expropriation of the means of production. This technology — controlling and out of control — cannot serve any truly human purpose and has no place in the development of a world of individuals free to create their lives as they desire. So the illusory utopias of the syndicalists and marxists are of no use to us now. But were they ever? The new technological developments specifically center around control, but all industrial development has taken the necessity of controlling the exploited into account. The factory was created in order to bring producers under one roof to better regulate their activities; the production line mechanized this regulation; every new technological advance in the workings of the factory brought the time and motions of the worker further under control. Thus, the idea that workers could liberate themselves by taking over the means of production has always been a delusion. It was an understandable delusion when technological processes had the manufacture of goods as their primary aim. Now that their primary aim is so clearly social control, the nature of our real struggle should be clear: the destruction of all systems of control — thus of the state, capital and their technological system, the end of our proletarianized condition and the creation of ourselves as free individuals capable

of determining how we will live ourselves. Against this technology our best weapon is that which the exploited have used since the beginning of the industrial era: sabotage.

that those rising up against their rule would attack this monstrous symbol of the rule of measured time over their lives. 1

the the demonstrations in Porto Seguro — or more accurately heated up the war the exploiters perpetually wage against the exploited. Thousands of cops and soldiers stopped the landless, indigenous, blacks and other protesters on the roads of Porto Seguro. In the last several weeks before the celebration every car or person that tried to enter the city was searched for dangerous items.

There was a big confrontation on the road in which a group consisting mostly of indigenous people, but also of landless, blacks, workers, students and anarcho-punks battled the police. 150 people were arrested. One heard more about the violence and the protests than the celebration. The democratic state of Brazil was forced to show its real face by using police tactics in its attempts to quell the mobilization and celebrate the 500 years of domination. But of course we know that behind every democracy stands the gun and the billy club — to enforce the "will of the people".

The landless movement planned its own "celebration" involving the intensification of land occupations.

In many cities the Globo clocks — the main symbol of the celebration and a heartlessly ironic reminder of how the time of domination weighs on the exploited — were smashed in the last week before the celebration, In Fortaleza on April 18, 400 students and workers smashed the clock and fought the police. In Recife on April 22, landless and homeless people threw Molotov cocktails at the clock. It was said that indigenous people smashed the clock in Rio de Janeiro, though this has not been confirmed. In Porto Alegre — a city run by leftists in a state run by leftists the clock was completely burned on April 22. In Florianopolis, on the same day, around 300 people — most of them students — threw some paint on the clock and organized a demonstration and more direct action, taking over a park that has been closed by the mayor. There were eight arrests and several injuries, including that of one person who was shot in the face with a rubber bullet. It is likely that the Globo clocks in some of the other 20 odd cities where they were built were also attacked.

It is no surprise that the celebrators would use the supreme symbol of the measurement of exploitation to celebrate the anniversary of the beginning of their domination in the region, and it is no surprise

Individualism and Communism. The Aims of Anarchist Revolution

The anarchist insurrectional project is a revolutionary project , that is to say a project that aims at the destruction of the present society and the creation of new ways of living. The aim of this revolution is the removal of every social limit that prevents individuals from creating their own lives in terms of their own desires and dreams and determining what relations they want to create in order to accomplish this. But such an aim implies other aims as well.

The social system of capital separates most people from the conditions of existence. This compels the vast majority to accept the mediations of work and commodity consumption in order to maintain a minimal existence at the expense of their lives, desires and dreams, of their individuality. The artificial economic scarcity imposed by capital leads to a competition that is often promoted in the United States as the basis of "individualism" in spite of the fact that it creates nearly identical mediocre existences in which life is subsumed in survival.

It is possible even within this social context to take back one's life, the conditions of one's existence, to a limited extent, by choosing to live on the margins as an outlaw. But such a decision can only be a first step if one does not want to isolate oneself. It puts one in the position of being at war with society as it exists. And one's enemies — the masters of this order — have far greater access to the means of existence than the marginalized outlaw. So if this individual revolt is not to fall into the realm of futile gestures, it must move toward a revolutionary perspective.

This perspective develops when one recognizes the necessity of destroying the social order, of utterly demolishing the state and capital. If all individuals are indeed to be free to create their lives and relations as they desire, it is necessary to create a world in which equality of access to the means and conditions of existence is reality. This requires the total destruction of economy — the end of property, commodity exchange and work.

Thus we see that the generalized realization of individual freedom goes hand-in-hands with the best aspects of the anarcho-communist ideal and can only be achieved through a revolutionary transformation.

But such a revolution is not a gift granted by abstract History. Here the full significance of individual rebellion shows itself. When we reject every deterministic view of revolution, it becomes clear that the actions of individuals in conscious revolt against the social order are essential for building a revolution.

Those individuals who reject all exploitation, who refuse to put up with a world that demands that one buy survival at the expense of one's dreams and desires, at the expense of life lived to the full, seek out the tools and methods to destroy this social order. From this the analyses, projects and actions that are the basis of an insurrectional anarchist projectuality can develop.

Smashing the Clocks of Domination

On April 22, the government and the ruling class of Brazil wanted to celebrate the 500 year anniversary of its "discovery" by Europeans prepared to dominate and exploit the resources and people of the land, imposing expansionist and mercantile value.

Globo network, Brazil's largest entertainment corporation, has been the main promoter of this celebration. For several years, Globo has been putting on events promoting this celebration, and has built big clocks in all the state capitals of Brazil in celebration of the 500 years.

But during the week that ended on April 22, there was a large mobilization of indigenous people, students, landless and others to demonstrate against the nationalist and capitalist ideals behind the celebration.

It was the largest mobilization of indigenous people ever known in Brazil. The indigenous people were going to Porto Seguro — where the Portuguese arrived in 1500 and where the official celebrations would take place on April 22 — went through Brasilia, the capital of Brazil, where they shot their arrows at the Globo clock until they stopped it. One of them managed to enter the national congress and pass through security with an arrow in his hand pointing at one of the most powerful men in Brazil, Senator ACM, the "emperor" of the state of Bahia.

The president, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, was afraid of going to Porto Seguro on April 22 due to the mobilization of indigenous people, the landless and people in general to demonstrate against the celebration. Even a week before the celebration, this pathetic ruler still wasn't sure if he should go, he was so worried about his security. One television news media head condemned the landless as anti-democratic because they made the democratically elected president afraid to go where he wanted in the country — an accusation that reveals more about the real nature of democracy than anything else.

In fact, the democratic state declared war on the people: on the indigenous, on the landless, on blacks and on anyone who wanted to go

Shivering Pigs Blush

On Saturday, February 19, in the village of Tepatepec in Hidalgo, Mexico, an unusual sight would have greeted any visitor to the public square. Sixty riot cops, stripped of their clubs, shields and most of their uniforms, were bound together with the ropes they use on those they arrest and forced to kneel in the chill air.

The situation started when police raided a teachers' college in the village in an attempt to put an end to student strike and occupation. The strike was inspired by the 9-month strike at the national university that was ended by a police takeover on February 6. Both strikes began in response to government proposals to make academic standards more difficult in ways that would particularly affect students from poor rural families who need to take time off to help on the family farm. Although the reasons behind the occupations were specific injustices within the present social order, the methods of action chosen were those of open conflict with the power structures rather than peaceful negotiation. Perhaps the history of government corruption in Mexico left the students with fewer illusions about what peaceful negotiation can accomplish.

I am reminded of the school occupations that temporarily shut down a good part of the Greek education system from late 1998 through early 1999. In this case as well, the occupations began as a protest against reforms in the educational system. In Greece, the presence of anarchists and other revolutionaries probably played a role in giving the occupations a more insurgent form. I don't know if the same is true in Mexico, but the national university is known to have a radical student movement.

But to continue with the story of the shivering pigs: Though state officials claim that no strikers were injured in the police raid, word reached the villagers that a young woman had been raped. Incensed by the rumor, several hundred people armed with clubs, machetes and, in many cases, pistols surrounded the school. In the ensuing battle, one cop was shot, seven people — among them cops and protesters — were injured and possibly a dozen patrol cars were

burned. Once those cops still inside were subdued, they were forced to remove their shirts and shoes and in some cases their pants.

After the sixty cops were tied together, they were paraded through the streets to the central square where the villagers forced them to kneel and then to lie face down on the pavement shivering in the cold air.

Of course the situation ended in a compromise of sorts. When all but fifteen of the 350 arrested students had been released, the villagers let the cops go. If any of the villagers considered taking more extreme action against the cops, they certainly realized that such a public action in their present situation could only lead to a massacre by the state. What they did shows the determination of these villagers to act directly in their own interests and in solidarity with the struggle of the students. These same students have indicated their willingness to defy power and its laws, as well as democratic morality, in other actions such as the hijacking a month earlier of a state-owned gasoline truck in order to get fuel they needed.

Police power is only as great as the willingness of people to accept it, but certainly without a strong insurrectionary movement, the state will always find ways to reimpose it. Nonetheless, the thought of these shivering pigs blushing with shame is a pleasant one, and the action of these villagers shows the limits of power.

To further confuse matters, the press in Eugene and here in L.A. has tried to pass anarchists off as a hate-group. It is here that power's manipulation of language becomes most clear. Years ago, bigotry was recognized as an ideological perspective with institutional effects that permeated the whole of society; hatred on the other hand was an emotion which could be legitimate under certain circumstances, though it was certainly always ugly when wed to bigotry. Several years ago — thanks to the media and leftist groups — bigotry and hatred began to be confused. Terms like "hate group", "hate crime" and "hate-free zone" became common. The institutional aspects of bigotry got lost in the emotional aspects and the struggles against it lost their revolutionary potential as activists begged the state to "stem the tide of hate." But even with the rise of this confusionism, very few people would consider a support group for rape victims in which those involved expressed their hatred for the rapists and called for action against them a hate group. People are responsible for their actions, and hatred is still recognized as a legitimate emotional response to someone who fucks you over. In this light, hatred for the authorities and their willing lackeys is a legitimate emotional expression since they not only fuck over people, but create institutions for the purpose of maintaining this exploitation and domination which leaves most people in misery.

But once again this word manipulation, serves the state in its need to repress revolt. To compare anarchists to hate groups isolates them from a great deal of the exploited. It, furthermore, opens the door to more intensive criminalization of anarchists as the left demands legislation against "hate crimes" and harsher penalties for crimes determined to be such.

As anarchists we have already made ourselves illegal-against law. But in order to maintain control, the state has to make rules that sometimes even hamper its own activities. For this reason, it needs to find ways, using its own laws and its own media, to manipulate language in such a way as to legitimate its repressive activity. In the face of this present repressive construction, we cannot afford to back down or moderate our views and actions. Rather, we must break out of our ghetto, build projects of attack with others of the exploited and clarify who we are in action with others against this order.

is "gang-related". Thus, the labeling of anarchists as a gang serves a very practical purpose to the repressive apparatus of the state — they can get us out of the way for longer periods of time.

But it has not only been the police and prison institutions that have been manipulating language to criminalize anarchists. That other institution of democratic social control — the media — has done more than its share of building this image. Thus, a reporter who did great damage to the ELF an ALF a couple years ago by referring to them as eco-terrorist groups recently printed an article referring to a land project in which a few and a few people who do not consider themselves so are experimenting with different methods of organic gardening and cob-house building as an anarchist camp-terminology which, particularly in the northwest of the United States has sinister connotations of secret militia training.

The intent of such a choice of words becomes clearer when it is expanded upon in the Los Angeles press and in statements by the police and the mayor of L.A. about the coincidence of an anarchist conference with the democratic national convention. Here one hears of anarchist encampments where military style training is supposedly taking place somewhere in Oregon. One hears of a national anarchist organization based in Oregon. Of course no such things exist. While anarchists disagree vehemently about the relative usefulness of formal organizations, those organizations that do exist, which call themselves anarchist are generally of a syndicalist or federative nature and have no interest in armed camps.

Insurrectional anarchists reject all formal organization as well as military formations that separate the revolutionary from the exploited people as a whole. As anarchists, we have no interest in leading the revolution, and so would not create armed groups separate from the struggle as a whole or any sort of formal organization. We are, ourselves, exploited individuals refusing and rising up against our exploitation. But it is in the interest of the state and capital to isolate us, to paint us as terrorists, armed monsters invading the terrain of other people's lives, a danger not only to the well-being of the ruling class but of everyone. Such isolation gives them the space to repress our revolt physically as well as on the terrain of words.

The Insurrectional Project

An anarchist insurrectional project requires a method that reflects the world we desire and the reality of the world we seek to destroy. Acting in small groups based on affinity fits both of these requirements. Power in the present world no longer has a real center, but spreads itself throughout the social terrain. Acting in small groups allows projects of attack to spread across the terrain as well. But more significantly, this method brings one's aim into one's method — revolt itself becomes a different way of conceiving relations. Anarchists always talk of refusing vanguardism — but such a refusal means refusing evangelism, the quantitative myth that seeks to win converts to an ideology of anarchism. Acting in small groups to attack the state and capital puts anarchy into practise as the self-organization of one's own projects, in relations based on affinity — real knowledge of and trust in each other — rather than adherence to a belief system. Furthermore, this sort of action, liberated from the quantitative, does not wait until "conditions are right", until one is guaranteed a large following or until one is certain of the results — it is action without measure. Thus, it carries within it the world we desire — a world of relations without measure.

Some Ideas on Insurrectional Anarchist Organization

Once one has decided not to put up with being ruled or exploited and therefore to attack the social order based on domination and exploitation, the question of how to go about this arises. Since those of us who rise up in rebellion cannot let themselves be organized by others without falling under a new form of domination, we need to develop the capacity to organize our own projects and activities — to put the elements together that are necessary for acting projectually in a coherent manner.

Thus, organization, as I'm using the term here, means bringing together the means and relations that allow us to act for ourselves in the world. This starts with the decision to act, the decision that our thirst to have all of our life as our own requires us to fight against the state, capital and all of the structures and institutions through which they maintain control over the conditions of our existence. Such a decision puts one in the position of needing to develop the specific tools that make intelligent action possible. First a thorough analysis of the present conditions of exploitation is necessary. Based on this analysis, we choose specific objectives to aim for and means for achieving these objectives based upon our desires and the ideas that move us. These means, these tools for action must first and foremost include ways of making our objectives, desires and ideas known to others in order to find affinities, others with whom we can create projects of action. Thus, we look to create occasions for encounters and discussion in which similarities and differences are clarified, in which the refusal of false unities allow the real affinities — real knowledge of whether and how we can work together — can develop. These tools allow the projectuality of individuals in revolt to become a force in movement, an element propelling toward the insurrectional break. Since affinity is the basis for the relations we are aiming to use in action, informality is essential — only here can its forms be expressions of real needs and desires.

So our desire to create insurrection moves us to reject all formal organization — all structures based on membership and the attempt to synthesize the various struggles under one formal leadership — that of the organization. These structures for synthesis share some common traits. They have a formal theoretical basis, a series of doctrine to which all members are expected to adhere. Because such groups are seeking numbers this basis tends to be on the lowest common denominator — a set of simplistic statements with no depth of analysis and with a dogmatic tendency that militates against deep analysis. They also have a formal practical orientation — a specific mode of acting by which the group as a whole determines what they will do. The necessity such groups feel to synthesize the various struggle under their direction — to the extent they succeed — leads to a formalization and ritualization of the struggles undermining

Manipulative Language and the Growing Repression of Anarchists

To think that the situation of Free and Critter and that of Rob Thaxton are isolated incidents is to miss a significant development in the response of the state in this country to even a distant threat of revolt. With the retreat of marxism into academia and largely irrelevant theorizing, anarchism has come to represent the most significant conscious revolutionary movement. Furthermore, many anarchists are not afraid to call for the destruction of the entire social order. The state inevitable responds to such movements of revolt with repression. The present repression is developing in an interesting way worthy of examining.

In previous issues of Willful Disobedience I have printed articles about the Marini trial in Italy. The prosecutor in this case, Marini, attempted to criminalize 53 anarchists — and with them all anarchists who refused to be well-behaved lap dogs — by claiming they were part of a non-existent armed organization. A similar construction is being developed here, but in a way that is more appropriate to the United States.

In the previous issue of this paper, I wrote about the Oregon Department of Corrections choosing to put anarchists on their last of gangs, thus criminalizing anarchists as gang members, implying a formalized organization with malicious intent. Within the prison system this allows prison officials greater control over communications to prisoners so labeled. Such prisoners can also have their visits restricted and any act of violence on their part becomes a gang-related incident, allowing for increased penalties.

But this labeling is not just applied in prisons. In Eugene, Oregon recently, police began to stop known anarchist, as well as any young person wearing all black and looking too punk, in order to do "gang profiles". This is not merely harassment. Several states are introducing measures to make penalties for so-called "gang-related" illegal activities substantially harsher. Thus, in California, a violation that would normally be treated as a misdemeanor becomes a felony if it

creativity and imagination and turning the various struggles into mere tools for the promotion of the organization. From all of this it becomes clear, that whatever claims such an organization may make about its desire for insurrection and revolution, in fact its first aim is to increase membership. It is important to realize that this problem can exist even when no structures have been created. When anarchism promotes itself in an evangelistic manner, it is clear that a formal theoretical basis has imposed its rigidity on the fluidity of ideas necessary for developing real analyses. In such a situation, the practical orientation — the modes of action also become formalized — one need only look at the ritualized confrontations by which so many anarchists strive to get their message across. The only purpose that this apparently informal formalization serves is to try to convince the various people in struggle that they should call themselves anarchists — that is, to synthesize the struggles under the leadership of the black flag. In other words to gain numbers of members for this formal non-organization. Dealing with the media to explain who anarchists are seems to enforce this way of interacting with the other exploited in struggle, because it reinforces the separation of anarchists from the rest of those exploited by this society and leaves the impression that the anarchists have some special understanding of things that makes them the de facto vanguard of the revolution.

So for the purpose of creating our insurrectional project we want to organize informally: without a formal theoretical basis so that ideas and analyses can be developed fluidly in a way that allows to understand the present and act against it and without a formal practical orientation so that we can act with an intelligent projectual spontaneity and creativity. A significant aspect of this informal organization would be a network of like-minded people. This network would base itself on a reciprocal knowledge of each other which requires honest, straightforward discussions of ideas, analyses and aims. Complete agreement would not be necessary, but a real understanding of differences would. The aim of this network would not be the recruitment of members — it would not be a membership organization — but rather developing methods for intervening in various struggles in an insurrectional manner, and coordinating such intervention. The basis for participation would be affinity — meaning the

capacity to act together. This capacity stems from knowing where to find each other and studying and analyzing the social situation together in order to move to action together. . Since there is no formal organization to join, this network would only grow an the basis of real affinity of ideas and practise. This informal network would consist of the tools we develop for the discussion of social analyses and the methods for intervening in struggles that we create.

This network is basically a way for individuals and small groups to coordinate their struggles. The real point of action is the affinity group. An affinity group is an informal, temporary group based on affinity — that is real knowledge of each other — that comes together to accomplish a specific aim. Affinity develops through a deepening knowledge of each other: knowledge of how the other thinks about social problems and of the methods of intervention they consider appropriate. Real affinity cannot be based on a lowest common denominator, but must include a real understanding of differences as well as similarities between those involved, because it is in the knowledge of our difference that we can discover haw we can really act together. Since the affinity group comes together for a specific circumscribed aim, it is a temporary formation — one that ceases to exist once the aim is accomplished. Thus it remains informal, without membership.

With this informal basis, once we recognize that our own freedom will remain impoverished as long as the masters continue to control the conditions under which most people exist, depriving them of the ability to freely determine their own lives, we recognize that our own liberation depends on intervention in the struggles of the exploited classes as a whole. Our involvement is not one of evangelism — the propagandistic method would place us on the same level as political movements, and we are not politicians or activists, but individuals who want our lives back and therefore take action for ourselves with others. Thus, we do not propose any specific anarchist organization for the exploited to join, nor a doctrine to put faith in. Rather we seek to link our specific struggle as anarchists to that of the rest of the exploited by encouraging self-organization, self-determination, the refusal of delegation and of any sort of negotiation, accommodation or compromise with power, and a practise based on direct action and

realm of economy — of goods for sale — that greed and generosity contradict each other. In the realm of uncommodified feelings, passions, desires, ideas, thoughts and dreams, greed and generosity go hand-in-hand. The more one wants of these things, the more expansive one must be in sharing them.

The more generous one is with them, the more one will have. It is the nature of these things to be expansive, to seek to broaden all horizons, to take more and more of reality into themselves and transform it.

But this expansiveness is not indiscriminate. Love and erotic desire can manifest expansively in many different ways, and individuals choose the ways and the individuals with whom they wish to explore them. It makes no sense, however, to make these decisions based on an imagined dearth of something that is, in fact, potentially beyond measure. Rather such decisions are best based on desire for those to whom one chooses to relate and the potential one perceives in them to make the fires of passion burn ever more brightly.

The mechanics of erotic desire — homosexuality, heterosexuality, bisexuality, monogamy, non-monogamy, etc. — are not the substance of free love. It can manifest in all of these forms and more. Its substance is found in those who choose to expand themselves, to goad themselves to expand their passions, dreams desires and thoughts. Free love, like revolution, acts to recreate reality in its own image, the image of a great and dangerous utopia. Thus it seeks to turn reality on its head.

This is no easy path. It has no place for our weaknesses, no time for neurotic self-pity or meagerness. For love in its most impassioned and unconstrained forms is as cruel as revolution. How could it be otherwise when its goal is the same: the transformation of every aspect of life and the destruction of all that prevents it? Back to the Venomous Butterfly Page (on KKA) Back to the Killing King Abacus Page 1

not that one must explore as many forms of erotic desire as possible, but that one has the possibility to really choose and create ways of loving that bring him joy, that expand her life and goad him to an ever increasing intensity of living and of revolt.

One of the most significant obstacles presently facing us in this area is pity for weakness and neurosis. There are individuals who know clearly what they desire in each potential loving encounter, people who can act and respond with a projectual clarity that only those who have made their passions and desires their own can have. But when these individuals act on their desires, if another who is less sure of themselves is unnerved or has their feelings hurt, they are expected to change their behavior to accommodate the weakness of this other person. Thus the strong-willed individual who has grasped the substance of free love and begun to live it often finds herself suppressed or ostracized by his own supposed comrades. If our aims are indeed liberation and the destruction of the logic of submission in all areas of life , then we cannot give in to this. The point is to transform ourselves into strong, daring, self-willed, passionate rebels — and, thus, also into strong, daring, self-willed, passionate lovers — and this requires acting without guilt, regret or pity. This self-transformation is an essential aspect of the revolutionary transformation of the world , and we cannot let it get side-tracked by a pity that degrades both the one who pities and the one who is pitied. Compassion — that feeling with another because one recognizes one's own condition in theirs — can be a beautiful and revolutionary feeling, but pity — which looks down at another's misery and offers charity and self-sacrifice, is worthless for creating a world of strong individuals who can live and love as they choose.

But an even greater impediment to a real practise of free love and the open exploration the varieties of possible relationships is that most people (even most anarchists) have so little greed for, and therefore so little generosity with, passion, intensity of feeling, love, joy, hatred, anguish — all the flaming pangs of real living. To truly allow the expansiveness of passionate intensity to flower and to pursue it where the twisting vine of desire takes it — this exploration requires will, strength and courage . . . but mainly it requires breaking out of the economic view of passions and emotions. It is only in the

the necessity of attack against the structures of power and control. The point is to encourage and participate in specific attacks against specific aspects of the state, capital and the various structures and apparati of control. Since our purpose is to struggle against our own exploitation with other exploited people, certainly with the aim of projecting toward insurrection, there can be no guaranteeing of any results — with no organization striving to gain members, we can't look for an increase in numbers. There is no way to know the end. But though we have know guarantees, no certainty of accomplishing our aim, success is not the primary reason for our struggle. The primary reason is that not to act is the guaranteed defeat of an empty and meaningless existence. To act to take our life back is to already regain it on the terrain of struggle, to already become the creator of one's own existence, even if in constant battle with a monstrous order determined to crush us.

Why We Are Insurrectionalist Anarchists

- Because we are struggling along with the excluded to alleviate and ultimately abolish the conditions of exploitation imposed by the included.
- Because we consider it possible to contribute to the development of struggles that are appearing spontaneously everywhere, turning them into mass insurrections, that is to say, actual revolutions.
- Because we want to destroy the capitalist order of the world which, thanks to computer science restructuring has become technologically useful to no one but the managers of class domination.
- Because we are for the immediate, destructive attack against the structures, individuals and organizations of Capital and the State.
- Because we constructively criticize all those who are in situations of compromise with power in their belief that the revolutionary struggle is impossible at the present time.

- Because rather than wait, we have decided to proceed to action, even if the time is not ripe.
- Because we want to put an end to this state of affairs right away rather than wait until conditions make its transformation possible. These are the reasons why we are anarchist, revolutionaries and insurrectionalists.

Against the Logic of Submission: Free Love

Because revolutionary anarchists of all types have recognized the freedom of every individual to determine how they will live on their own terms to be a central aim of anti-authoritarian revolution, we have spoken more often and with more courage of the transformation of personal life that must be part of any real revolution. Thus, questions of love and erotic desire have been openly discussed in anarchist circles from very early on. Anarchists were among the first advocates of free love recognizing in marriage and the absurd sexual restrictions imposed by religious morality ways in which submission to authority was imposed. Women such as Emma Goldman and Voltairine de Clayre recognized in puritanical morality one of the greatest enemies to the liberation of women in particular as well as humanity in general.

But the free love advocated by anarchists should not be confused with the tawdry hedonism advocated by Playboy and other promoters of commodified sexual liberation. This latter is merely a reaction to Puritanism from within the present social context. Its continued adherence to the logic of submission is evident in its commodification and objectification of sex, its dismissive attitude toward passionate love — because it can't be quantified and priced — and its tendency to judge people based on sexual willingness, performance and conquest. Love and erotic desire freed from the logic of submission clearly lies elsewhere.

The struggle against the logic of submission begins with the struggle of individuals to create the lives and relations they desire. In this context, free love means precisely the freedom of each individual's erotic desires from the social and moral restrictions that channel them into a few specific forms useful to society so that each may create the way she loves as he sees fit in relation to those she may love. Such a liberation opens the way for an apparently infinite variety of possible loving and erotic relations. Most people would only want to explore a few of these, but the point of such liberation is

part in demonstrations or other events, before taking any action, each of us as individuals need to clarify just what our revolutionary project is, just what it is we are really aiming for as anarchists and as revolutionaries, so that each individual project we do will be within the context of our revolutionary projectuality and will use a methodology in keeping with the aims we proclaim. If we do not do this we will keep on blundering about, all too often imitating those we call our enemies. Such blundering is precisely what the organizers of the NAAC did and it made the Los Angeles conference the least enjoyable one I have ever been to. Back to the Venomous Butterfly Page (on KKA) Back to the Killing King Abacus Page 1

Critique of the NAAC. Why can't anarchists be anarchists

When people make the choice to call themselves anarchists, I assume they mean that they are making a choice about how they want to go about their lives, their projects and the creation of revolution. There are plenty of other perspectives on how to go about creating social transformation, that there is no need for those who don't wish to go about their projects in an anarchist manner to use that label. Thus, when I went to the anarchist conference in L.A., I was disappointed, not in the level of discussion or the sort of people who showed up — I had no expectations for the former and am aware enough of the general make-up of the anarchist movement to expect a predominantly young white turn-out for such a thing. What disappointed me was that the conference itself was not organized in an anarchist manner.

When people call themselves anarchists, they are stating that they absolutely reject all state institutions, all external rule and all delegation of the decisions relating to their lives and actions. This is simply a most basic definition of what anarchism is. On a practical level, this means that in creating our projects, we refuse to imitate state institutions, we avoid making hard and fast rules and we only make decisions that relate directly to what is necessary for us to accomplish our projects — not decisions that relate to or could affect the actions of our comrades who are not involved in the decision-making process. The NAAC fails on all counts.

I recognize that planning a continental anarchist conference is a difficult task. If anything though I would think that such a daunting task would move those involved to try and make it as simple as possible for themselves — limiting their activities to arranging a space and possibly — out of hospitality — some food, taking care of publicity and scheduling, and being available to give people information about what was going on. In other words, it would have made sense — from both an anarchist and a practical perspective — if the

organizers had stuck to simply organizing the event and not trying to organize beforehand the behavior of those who came.

When I came to the place where the conference was taking place, I was immediately confronted with a sign telling me that I was not allowed to drink or take drugs and was to avoid talking about illegal activities. I had never been given a say in these restrictions — they were rules made over my head — that is to say, laws. I was not greeted or welcomed as a comrade when I entered, but was rather met with the demand to register — a demand that included pressure to pay an exorbitant $25. Even most border guards in other countries that I have entered will at least say "Good morning! How are you?" before demanding that you check in. I felt as if I were entering some bureaucratic nightmare, not a gathering of anarchists intent on developing their own revolutionary project. The plethora of people apparently doing security was equally unnerving. When one adds that the organizing collective also made the decision to invite the press — a decision that quite clearly goes beyond what is necessary to the practical organizing of the conference — it is clear that the organizers in fact on a practical level chose to act as a governing body of the conference, not merely as its organizers.

From the way the conference was structured, it is clear that the organizers, like so many within the anarchist milieu, have made a fetish of security. Certainly, when one is in the process of taking illegal action, one needs to consider precautions to prevent arrest, but when we extend this way of thinking to the totality of life and to the way we go about all of our projects, then the state has won. And this isn't mere rhetoric. Constant security consciousness is the mentality of the state and capital — it is the constant visibility of the cop on the street; it is the ever-ready nuclear weapons system; it is the security guard walking the aisles of every major store, sitting at the desk at the front of the library or the welfare office; it is the INS at the border. And it is also the anarchist who immediately confronts you at the door of conference requiring you to register with less courtesy than a border guard, or the black-clad shithead who interrupts a workshop to point out someone suspiciously just because they don't look like a typical anarchist. The culture we live in — the culture of the state and capital — is a security culture. When

we let that same mentality come to dominate our way of doing things, we end up imitating the state and that is what the organizers of this conference did — creating rules of behavior for others, setting up an imposing security system, requiring registration — and allowing all of this to take precedence over comradely welcomes and making people feel at home.

Having been an anarchist for almost 25 years now, I have been to a few anarchist gatherings (including the one in Long Beach in 1992). The others I have been to were organized by people who gave priority to comradeship and hospitality and to the smooth running of the gathering itself. There were no rules imposed — except if a space itself required it (and even then the "rule" was more one of not getting caught breaking the rules of the space) — , instead problems that arose were dealt with on the spot. If there was registration it was voluntary, for the purpose of providing housing and adequate food. It was not as a security measure. The organizers made no decisions that did not deal directly with the practical necessities of organizing the conference. And any security that may have existed to watch for possible police raids were amazingly invisible — apparently feeling no need to come across as counter-cops in a lame attempt to scare off undercovers. And these gatherers generally went along smoothly, in a friendly manner. They, in fact, showed that it was possible to accomplish even a complex task such as organizing a gathering of several hundred to a few thousand (in the case of the San Francisco gathering of 1989) people in an anarchist manner. Of all the anarchist gatherings I want to the one that just happened in Los Angeles came across as the most bureaucratic and the least well-organized.

If there is such a thing as an anarchist revolutionary project — that is a projectuality toward a world without authority or capitalism — it can only be accomplished by using specifically anarchist methods, but if we cannot even gather a few hundred anarchists together without resorting to authoritarian, state-like methods of organizing, because we have let our minds be permeated by the same security-first mentality on which the state operates and by a media-induced sense of self-importance (we are so American, aren't we?), how do we ever expect to bring about such a revolution. Before organizing such events, before publishing our papers, before taking