

Bits of the World in Brief

Fifth Estate Collective

1983

On Sunday, July 17, at around 1:30 am, two masked men carrying machine guns broke into the house in Comiso, Sicily functioning as the coordinating center for the groups against the U.S. cruise missile base. Once inside they lined all the occupants up against the wall and aimed their guns.

About 20 people were subjected to this terror. They included most of the Anarchismo group from Catania and other local anti-militarists. A blast was fired in the direction where Alfredo Bonanno stood and it was later discovered that a bullet had passed through his clothing. The two intruders then ordered everyone in the house to get out of Comiso for good. The two men are assumed to have been mafiosi.

Those in the house are lucky to still be alive. The mafia have clearly made a threat. And their threats are to be taken seriously. Their interest in the cruise missile base is economic. With the base come thousands of U.S. troops, their families, back-up personnel and service industries. For the mafia the base automatically means an increase in drug trafficking, prostitution, gambling, and other "business interests."

The attack by the mafia came only a few days before the planned occupation of the missile base. The occupation took place on the 22nd, 23rd, and 24th of July with libertarians and anti-militarists coming from all over Europe to help with the occupation. Upon hearing of the armed attack on the coordinating center, already many local and non-local people have committed themselves to defending those threatened from any more possible intimidatory measures.

The issue in Comiso is not just about the cruise missile, not just about the base of U.S. troops, not just about NATO and the East-West war machine, not just about local corruption and the economic exploitation of the Sicilian working class and peasantry, but about the collaboration of the State, of big business, of organized crime, of the security forces, of all the political parties and of international capital in ensuring that the desire for freedom and peace is unrealized.

(For up to date information, write to: Coordinamento, Leghe Autogestite, via Conte Torino 1, 97013 Comiso, Sicily, Italy; telephone 0932 966289.

On September 26 some 1,200 protesters from all over Italy successfully blockaded the cruise missile site in Comiso. Local residents, some government officials, and, clergy international supporters caused work at the construction site for the cruise to be halted for a day by blockading the four entrances. The U.S. plans to deploy 112 cruise missiles at Comiso by the end of the year.

Police attempted to dislodge the protesters with water cannons and tear gas. A number were beaten when they refused to move. Construction workers refused to cross the blockade lines and 10 workers already inside left.

A marcher from the U.S. said, "They saw the police beat up the people and they didn't want people beaten up on their behalf, so they wouldn't go in."

—from the *Guardian*

Greek anarchists, Photis Danatos and Kyriakos Miras, after surviving a 58-day prison hunger strike earlier this year to protest their continuing legal harassment by authorities (see "Bits of the World in Brief," FE Summer 1983) have both been forced to go underground.

Seven days after the two were released in May following massive public protests over their detainment, Danatos was again arrested and began a second hunger strike. Miras immediately went on the run. Danatos was transferred to a civilian hospital and managed to escape (much like Kropotkin) aided by two comrades.

Miras and Danatos have been the constant victims of the government's displeasure with Danatos having spent three years in prison following the 1979 "events in the St. Barbara quarter" of Athens.

Supporters of the two are asking for comrades to protest to Greek embassies or write Prime Minister Andreas Papandreu. The anarchist fugitives may be contacted through Basilis Karaplis, Lawyer, 8 Aristidou str., Athens, Greece.

As usual, the Republican Party will have unwelcome visitors at its presidential convention scheduled for August 1984 in Dallas, Texas. The Yippies, who planned the 1980 Detroit Republican convention fiasco (see FE #303, Oct. 20, 1980), and a large range of activist groups including our friends in the Columbia (Mo.) Anarchist League are planning a week of protests. The theme of the demonstrations will be "If the G.O.P. won't stop the war...We'll stop the G.O.P." Particularly given the name of the coalition, "Freeze Reagan/ Bush in '84," our fear is always with such activity that, although militant in form, it winds up to be a left field pitch for the Democrats. Still, when organized well (although they rarely are) these mass spectacles can be fun. If you're interested, there's a planning conference set for Nov. 19-21; contact the above group at POB 8708, Madison WI 53708.

If I eat shit food at McDonalds, only hurting myself and making Board Chairman Ray Kroc richer, right? Actually, no. As it turns out there's a direct link between America's love of fast-food hamburgers and the destruction of tropical rain forests in Central and South America. Thousands of acres, particularly in Guatemala and the southern Mexican state of Chiapas, are being cleared to provide room for grazing cattle. The cheaper beef is exported to the U.S. where the principle buyers are fast-food chains. To add to the tragedy, the cleared land can only support grazing for a short duration due to nutrient depletion of the soil, so the cattle producers move on and clear more forests. These fragile ecostructures being laid to waste in order to put Big Macs in American gullets are irreplaceable. They are often primordial forests which support an amazing range of plant and animal life that exist in a delicate balance. Once these areas are gone, it is a permanent loss; all for a shit burger.

The current issue of *The Match!* (Box 3488, Tucson, AZ 85722) had a good idea for those who bridle at the pervasiveness of religion in this country. From the "In God We Trust" on U.S. money to President Reagan's referring to Cabinet appointees as "god fearing," religion rears its ugly head everywhere. *The Match!* suggests that instead of referring to cities by religious titles, why not designate them by secular titles? Examples? Mr. Louis rather than the odious St. Louis, or Senor Francisco rather than the catholic San Francisco. Silly? Certainly, but no more so than to have to abide by the religious superstition thrust upon us by theists.

Just as we were going to press, word came from the Federation Anarchiste Francaise that Radio Libertaire has been granted a legal broadcasting frequency by the French government. This surprise move comes even though the authorities contended it was impossible to have more than 22 radio bands operating, broadcasting hours will be slightly reduced by the unexpected legitimation, but the French anarchist broadcasters hailed it as a victory.

The decision to grant the "impossible" 23rd frequency came as a result of an intensive campaign of support for R-L both in France and internationally, according to the FAF.

Related

See "Radio Libertaire Back On Air After Police Raid" in this issue.

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