

Bits of the World in Brief

Fifth Estate Collective

1988

Planning for Anarchist Gathering / 88

A meeting to plan the 1988 Anarchist Gathering was held Sept. 12 in Toronto which will be the host city. About sixty people from all over North America attended, indicating to the local planning group that there is "interest and support both locally and from across the continent."

The anarchist "unconvention" will be held July 1-4th, and much like the preceding events in Chicago and Minneapolis will feature "structured workshops and forums as well as opportunities for spontaneous events and happenings." Meetings will be by affinity groups (special interests, gender, age, etc.), specific topics (racism, homophobia, technology, national liberation movements) and skills (squatting, direct action, print media, etc.).

Also proposed are a cultural evening, a poster show and a day of music and celebration in the park. Posters for display are requested and proposals for performance pieces and theater are welcome.

Although six months off, the local planners want to begin getting an idea of how many people to expect. Please contact the address below for a copy of a fuller report of the September 12 meeting, directions to the meeting points, and to coordinate transportation. A fuller discussion of the problems involved in crossing the border will be forthcoming in the next report from Toronto and in this paper. We suspect purple hair, anarchist "A's," radical literature or a surly attitude towards the surly border guards will probably make entry into Canada difficult.

Posters (\$3) and T-shirts (\$10) [design unknown] are available. Contact: "A" Survival Gathering, The 1988 Anarchist Convention, Box 435 Stn. P, Toronto, Ont., M5S 2S9 Canada. Oh, yeah, send them money! These affairs cost lots of money to put on. People here in Detroit have raised \$150 at a recent dinner (see Detroit Seen) for the gathering and we urge others to do the same.

On August 15, Adler, one of Germany's largest clothing firms, had eight of its branches firebombed, almost simultaneously, in eight different towns. Claiming responsibility was Red Zora, a loose association of feminists, stating that the attacks were in response to the exploitation and use of "Third World" women as cheap labor in Adler factories. Adler employs over 3,000 people in South Korea and Sri Lanka. No one was hurt in the bombings and the total damage done was over \$22 million.

— from *Counter Information*, c/o 43 Candlemaker Row, Edinburgh, Scotland

A boycott of Burger King begun in 1984 has succeeded in getting the company to phase out use of beef raised in the Central American rainforests. Sales of Burger King shit burgers dropped by 12% as a result of the campaign. About one half of the rainforests in Central America have been cut down to create pasture for beef cattle. Now McDonald's is the target of another campaign to stop them using plastic foam packaging for their \$4.1 billion-worth of burger sales per year. The foam packages are a huge problem—their million packages a day could take 50,000 cubic feet of space to dispose of; they can't be burned because of the release of toxic gases; and the styrofoam packages are "ozone killers"

since the fluorocarbons they release destroy the ozone layer. However, even if these mock food joints “reformed” their worst abuses, they still should be avoided.

— information from *The New Catalyst*, Box 99, Lillooet, BC V0K 1 V0 Canada

The Anarchist Black Cross, an international group which aids political victims, has recently begun activity in Vancouver: c/o Tragic Bandit Publishers, Box 2881, Vancouver, B. C., Canada V6B 3X4.

The origins of its tradition stem from the Anarchist Red Cross in Tsarist Russia which aided political prisoners and deportees and organized self-defense against anti-semitic pogrom raids by the Cossacks. It was sustained economically by Russian Anarchists in America, particularly in Chicago. During the Russian civil war, 1918–1921, when the Red Cross was active in organizing relief, it was thought better to change the name to the Anarchist Black Cross to avoid confusion.

After the Bolsheviks seized power, the organization moved to Berlin, still with its main aid Chicago-based, and continued to help Russian prisoners (now of the Soviet Union) with the added task of helping victims of Italian Fascism and prisoners of post-war German reaction.

When Germany succumbed to fascism and the depression hit America, the decline in the amount of financial aid and the huge wave of people needing that support broke the back of the organization. Nevertheless, Chicago remained a source of its strength for years up to recent times. The recent revival of the Anarchist Black Cross took place as a result of the work of such people as Stuart Christie, Albert Meltzer and Miguel Garcia in England.

Present activities of the Vancouver ABC include the case of Katsuhisa Omori —sentenced to death in Japan for a bombing he never committed, Greek hunger-striker Victor Armanious, and the Vancouver 5 (4)—5 anarchists who were arrested and charged with a series of bombings of a missile plant, porn shops and an ecologically harmful power plant. Gerry Hannah, one of the V5 (4) recently received day parole and is now residing in Vancouver. He will be reviewed for full Parole in six months. Doug Stewart, another of the 5(4) was transferred to Ferndale Minimum Security camp, which is a vast improvement over Matsqui, his former place of imprisonment. Brent Taylor is in Colins Bay which is a max/med prison, and Anne Hansen is still at Kingston Maximum Prison for women. For their mailing addresses you can write to Anarchist Black Cross, and at the same time, ask to receive their newsletter.

All the prisoners are appreciative of any mail they receive and funds are always needed for further support work.

News has reached us of a crackdown by the Malaysian government of Prime Minister Mahatir Mohamad in late October, 1987 against the regime’s opponents. Arrests included members of the Penan and Kayan tribes, as well as other environmentalists who have protested nuclear dumping and clearcutting of the rainforests. Two of the arrested Malaysians were later released while a third member of the group Friends of the Earth received a two year sentence under the Internal Security Act. All the Penan tribe members were released on bond, with a pending court date of October 31, 1988.

The Penans have lived for centuries in environmental harmony with the rainforest in Borneo, located in a province of Malaysia, with all their food, shelter, clothing and medicine coming from renewable rainforest materials. In the past few years the Malaysian government has looked the other way while timber companies have illegally clearcut the Penan rainforest, the oldest rainforest in the world.

Environmentalists in Malaysia charge many politicians in power hold shares in these illegal logging companies. The logging has caused floods, erosion and contamination of the water supply. The fish, game and plants that Penan tribes need to survive are dying. In a desperate move to save their home and way of life, the Penan tribes began to blockade the logging roads. Unarmed, except for feather-tipped spears, the Penan put their lives on the line against giant trucks illegally carrying tropical timber bound for Europe and America.

The Rainforest Action Network asks that letters of protest be sent to: Prime Minister Mahatir Mohamad, Government of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Funds to assist the arrested may be sent to: The Rainforest Action Network, 300 Broadway, San Francisco CA 94133.

Barely noticed in January was the signing of a bilateral extradition accord between the U.S. and Canada which would eliminate the legal basis for sanctuary which permitted thousands of American men fleeing the military draft during the Vietnam war to escape north of the border. At that time, Canada would not extradite persons accused of a crime in one country which was not illegal in theirs (it has no draft law). This has been wiped out with

the stroke of a pen. Perhaps Mexico will be the haven of choice for draft resisters if the U.S. is ever foolish enough to re-institute its hated conscription to support imperial adventures abroad.

Justice—AmeriKKKan style

Ex-boxer Rubin (Hurricane) Carter may finally be free after serving a 19-year prison term for murders he never committed. The U.S. Supreme Court refused in January to reinstate the conviction of the former boxing champion and a companion after it had been reversed by a New Jersey court. Imprisoned since 1966, Rubin was released in 1985 from a racist frame-up which was popularized in the song, "Hurricane" by Bob Dylan on his Desire album (worth listening to again). American justice is a joke once it leaves the tender confines of the upper classes it was designed to protect, and the lower it goes on the social scale the more people are chewed up by it. Travesties such as the continued imprisonment in California of ex-Black Panther, Geronimo Pratt, a victim of an FBI frame-up, makes "respect for the law" a bad joke.

The number of arrests for anti-nuclear civil disobedience in the United States and Canada increased in 1987 by nearly 60% over recent years, to a total of over 5,300. Statistics compiled annually by *The Nuclear Resister* newsletter show that the current figure equals the record number of arrests reported in 1983, the year of the Euromissile deployment and massive demonstrations in the United States and Europe.

(*The Nuclear Resister* is published 8 times yearly; subscriptions are \$15/10 issues from Box 43383, Tucson, AZ 85733.)

"These numbers give notice that a substantial, growing part of the peace movement is committed to risking arrest through nonviolent direct action as a means to achieve nuclear disarmament," observed Felice Cohen-Joppa, co-editor of *The Nuclear Resister*.

Most of the arrests were weapons related and occurred at military facilities (nearly half were at the Nevada nuclear test site), war contractors and federal offices. About 400 of the total were of people protesting nuclear power, uranium mining and related projects.

As a consequence of these arrests, over 120 people served or are serving prison terms of from two weeks to 17 years! Those incarcerated represented only 2% of the total arrested.

Action groups all across the continent, some in loose alliance with others, but for the most part acting independently, engaged in over 180 separate actions in 1987 at more than 70 different sites. (Of total arrests, 95 were reported from Canada, during nine actions at three sites).

On January 28, a 3-judge Federal Appeals Court panel—all Reagan appointees—upheld the conviction of Wisconsin draft resister Gillam Kerley for failing to register. However, the court criticized the harsh 3-year prison term and \$10,000 fine imposed on Kerley by Judge John Shabaz, and sent the sentence back to him for reconsideration.

Kerley, the executive director of the Committee Against Registration and the Draft (CARD), has already served four months of his sentence which is the maximum term suggested by the new U.S. Sentencing Commission guidelines. Judge Shabaz' stiff sentence for Kerley was the longest sentence given a draft resister since Vietnam and in many ways is a testimony to the effectiveness of CARD in alerting young men to alternatives to draft registration.

Kerley's appeal comes at a crucial time, as calls for a new draft grow louder from Presidential candidates and in Congress. Donations are urgently needed for Kerley's legal/political defense; send to CARD, 731 State St., Madison WI 53703. The group's newsletter is also available from the same address.

Omori's Appeal Denied

Katshuisa Omori, the political prisoner on Japan's death row, had his execution affirmed January 21 in what is supposed to be his final appeal. Omori was arrested in 1976 for the bombing of a Hokkaido government office in support of native peoples. A guilty verdict was returned in his trial even though it was admitted that the evidence was circumstantial against him. Omori has been kept in solitary confinement for the last 11 years. Demonstrations

in support of him were held world-wide in December, and demands for his release will increase with news of his impending execution.

—from *Ecomedia Bulletin*, Toronto's anarchist bi-weekly, Box 915, Sta. F, Toronto, Ont. M4Y 2N9, Canada

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