

Tales from the Planet

Fifth Estate Collective

1989

Anarchist Gathering in Ottawa

Between May 19 and 21, a regional anarchist gathering sponsored by the Outaouais Anarchist Circle was held in Ottawa (the capital of Canada, located on the border between the provinces of Ontario and Quebec). The gathering was attended by about 150 people from Ontario, Quebec and Vermont, and followed by a now familiar format of workshops, musical events demos and communal meals. A generally upbeat mood was clouded by a number of sexist incidents. Although some of these incidents seemed to be caused by men who were not directly connected with the gathering, women were angry about the lack of response from anarchist men who were present (for example, a man had interrupted a women-only meeting and later made so much noise with a drum that they had to leave the house). Discussion of these incidents dominated a brief evaluation period before the demo, and it was made clear that some women were strongly considering not coming to future gatherings.

One particularly noteworthy workshop was given by two members of the *Rebelles* collective. (*Rebelles* is a Quebecois journal initiated by the pro-state “libertarian-socialist” Socialisme et Liberté group.) After stating a number of facts and figures and noting economic disparities between anglophones and francophones in Quebec, the Rebels members quickly went on to assert the necessity of laws and the state to protect Quebecois culture, and dismissed the anti-statist position as “dogmatic.”

This evoked neither visible enthusiasm nor disgust from those present, and a brief question period centered on the activities of the *Rebelles* militants, exchanging information and specific questions about the situation in Quebec. The only other person present from Quebec, however, wondered aloud how we were to abolish Canada without abolishing Quebec, and emphasized that *Rebelles’* statist outlook was not shared by all Quebec “anti-authoritarians.” (This seemingly redundant statement was necessary because of Socialisme et Liberté’s ongoing vanguardist tendencies. Richard St.-Pierre, one of the people who gave the talk in Ottawa, for example, and who repeatedly said that Socialisme et Liberté was the largest Quebec “anti-authoritarian” project, had previously taped a notice on the counter of the Montreal anarchist bookshop Librairie Alternative exhorting people to purchase the “only” Quebec “libertailan” journal, i.e. *Rebelles*, despite the fact that there are a number of Quebec libertarian journals.)

During the gathering, about fifty anti-authoritarians protesting martial law in China held a demo in front of the Chinese embassy, and to wrap up the gathering, about 150 high-spirited anti-authoritarians formed a contingent in a demo protesting ARMX, a semi-annual arms sales bazaar which was held in a local football stadium. No arrests took place.

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Nicaraguans prefer “none.” Revealing, but not really surprising are the results of a June 1988 opinion poll of 1,129 Nicaraguans who, when asked, “Which political party do you identify with?” gave the following results: 28%—FSLN (Sandinistas), 9%—all other parties, and 63%—none or don’t know. This stinging rejection of political rackets of every stripe by a majority of Nicaraguans deals a one/two punch to ideologues on the left and right the world over, who for years have been shamelessly using Nicaragua to attempt to grease their creaking theories.

—Primitive Nature

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CATANIA, Sicily—Anarchists Alfredo Bonanno and Giuseppe Stasi were arrested February 2, 1989 following an expropriation of a jeweler's shop in Bergamo, Italy. Bonanno has been involved in militant class struggle for years in Sicily, is the author of numerous books and articles and publishes the periodicals, *Provocazione* and *Anarchismo*.

The two are accused of armed robbery, aggravated bodily harm and resisting arrest. At our last report they were still in prison in Bergamo.

On Feb. 6, they were interrogated by a judge and declared that the robbery was carried out for personal financial needs and that as anarchists, they consider the redistribution of wealth in a society based on social and economic inequality to be just. This, they asserted, is a position that historically anarchists have always shared.

Trial updates and a list of Bonanno's writings in English are available from: Elephant Editions, BM Elephant, London WC1N3XX; for the Italian language publications mentioned above, contact: A. Bonanno, C.P. 61, 95100 Catania, Italy.

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Resistance to technology is "alive and well" in American libraries, according to Dr. Sara Fine of the University of Pittsburgh. About 20% of any given library staff will actively or passively resist automation, she said. "Technological progress is often met with resistance, and just as technology has become more sophisticated and subtle, so has the resistance to it."

Fine said the resister's "symptoms of choice" include boredom (passivity), black humor (cynicism), and phobic reactions [sic] (dizziness and nausea). Some symptoms are "especially destructive" such as a feeling of "We vs. They."

She cited a 1979 study which indicated that the single biggest fear about technology is not the loss of job, but a fear of breakdown in human relations.

—from *The Unabashed Librarian*

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According to a recent AP report, Sir Edmund Hillary, one of the first two men to climb Mt. Everest, has said that the world's tallest peak should be sealed off for five years to give it time to "rehabilitate itself" from all the rubbish from expeditions. The numerous expeditions every year on the mountain are not only leaving huge amounts of junk and trash behind, they are destroying the vegetation on the slopes to get firewood.

Hillary thinks that a five-year respite would allow for much of the trash to "disappear down under the snow, down into the basin. And the mountain would become rather cleaner and more wholesome again." Of course some rubbish will never break down and disappear properly, but even as it breaks down will leave chemical residues and metals that were not on Everest in the first place. Many of these will be poisonous in some way.

The garbage of industrial nature tourism finding itself on the world's tallest mountain is still another vivid example of a civilization in profound crisis. That the desire to go away to wilderness has been colonized by the pathology of conquest and the business that produces the many commodities to facilitate this form of tourism suggests that people ought to consider staying home and dealing with the crisis there.

A more likely prospect is that capitalism will build a trash incinerator halfway up the slope...

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Parishioners in Palm Springs, California who donated thousands of dollars to their priest for 28 years have discovered after his death that he spent hundreds of dollars a month on greyhound racing and owned 90 greyhounds. The Roman Catholic priest, pastor of a Palm Springs church until his death in 1985, ran an international dog-racing operation for more than a decade as parishioners clothed him, gave him furniture and paid for trips to his native Ireland, where he kept the dogs.

Records of the National Greyhound Association show that the priest spent hundreds each month to train his dogs, feeding some sirloin steak and chicken while he lived frugally at the rectory. He also bought an air-conditioned desert house in Bermuda Dunes, Calif., as a luxury kennel. The Roman Catholic Diocese found nothing that would "cast any doubts on the integrity of Father Flahive." He left most of his \$283,094 estate to the Catholic Church.

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1989 marks the sad 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the introduction of television to the world. At the University of California Berkeley campus it was marked April 27 by a television smashing event similar to ones held for the last two years by students showing their distaste for the idiot box.

This year the campus police tried to stop the event by carrying away a pile of TVs that had been assembled at Biko Plaza on the campus. Police Lt. Pat Carroll characterized the smashing as “an insane act” and a university spokesman said, “This is outrageous behavior and cannot be tolerated.” As demonstrators locked arms to prevent the cops from carrying away the TVs, the police, always the defenders of the sane and non-outrageous, began hitting and pushing people who objected.

At one point about 300 people were gathered and a set was thrown from the second story of Sproul Hall exploding loudly on the steps below while demonstrators smashed four sets near a fountain.

About 100 people assembled later at the campus police station; one alumnus called television an “instrument of state and corporate control.” Given the ferocity of the armed might of the state against even symbolic destruction of television, the truth of the statement seems obvious.

—info from *The Daily Californian*

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Unsatisfied with turning the entire earth into a junk pile, industrial capitalism has turned its effort to despoiling outer space. The U.S. Space Command announced in late May that the Soviet satellite, Cosmos 2021 had become Object No. 20,000 in space. The Space Command’s Surveillance Center tracks about 7,000 manufactured space objects, but catalogs every satellite or piece of junk larger than a softball in Earth orbit since Sputnik was launched in 1957. Before long, the bureaucrats will propose a Superfund to clean up outer space.

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**Web Posting Note:** Due to an editing and typesetting error only the second half of the following section of Tales from the Planet was published. It appears its entirety in Tales from the Planet in FE #333, Winter, 1990.

As more [Israeli] soldiers refuse to serve and are sent to jail, the government is using harsher methods to intimidate the movement. Several Yesh Gvul activists have been arrested and the movement leaders are facing charges of “incitement to mutiny.” Moreover, according to a new official policy, immediately upon their release from prison, Yesh Gvul’s refuseniks will be called again to serve in the occupied territories and jailed again if they refuse.

Last year the General Security Service (SHABAK, formerly the notorious Shin Bet) launched an investigation of Yesh Gvul based on publication of the Soldier’s Guidelines No. 2. The government maintains that it may constitute incitement and aid to mutiny. We can only say, “We hope so!”

The Vietnam war had to be stopped in good part because of the widespread mutinies and resistance among war-weary American GIs; it would be only fitting justice if the same happened to Israel. Write Friends of Yesh Gvul, 1678 Shattuck Ave., Box 6, Berkeley, CA. 94709 for more information.

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The EPA and the state of New York plan to move families back into the contaminated area of Love Canal this August, renaming the town “The Sunrise City.” Officials claim the area, which, prior to 1978 had been used as a dumping ground primarily by Hooker Chemical Company for more than 22,000 tons of chemicals is now safe, though little has been done to remove the contamination; workers that built a clay cap over the site, dug trenches and worked on storm sewers got sick during this so-called “clean-up.” 56% of the children born at Love Canal after the disaster had birth defects. In one year, out of 22 pregnancies, only 4 normal babies were born. Children had rashes, asthma, seizures and bone disease. The same state health department that ordered two large-scale evacuations at Love Canal, now wants to move families back in. At one point, officials discussed moving low-income families into the town as a solution to the homeless problem. Citizens’ Clearinghouse for Hazardous Waste is calling on people to oppose this madness. For more information, write: CCHW, Justice at Love Canal Campaign, PO BOX 926, Arlington, VA 22216;

FE Note: For a discussion of Love Canal, see News & Reviews, FE #305, March 18, 1981.

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