

News & Reviews

Fifth Estate Collective

2000

The several thousand unapproved, pirate radio stations operating in the U.S. won a Pyrrhic victory in July when the Federal Communication Commission agreed to license hundreds of the low power broadcasting operations, many which feature anarchist, punk, black, and community programming.

The catch is that the FCC will demand that licensed frequencies broadcast a certain number of hours a week. Also, about half of the applications for licensing have come from right-wing, fundamentalist churches.

Operating a radio station other than a few hours a week, day after day, is a daunting prospect, and although some radical stations have had a notable impact on local struggles and community building, most of them probably have listenerships no more than in the high two digits. Whether such an intensive undertaking that will be demanded by the government is worth the low audience numbers will have to be decided.

The other option is to keep broadcasting the way they have. Fuck government regulation.

However, even with the new FCC leniency it seems little has changed. On Sept. 29, a multi jurisdictional task force comprised of nine carloads of federal marshals, sheriff's deputies, city police and FCC officers raided the Springfield, Ill. home of Mhanna Kantako, the father of the micropower radio movement, and shut down his unlicensed Human Rights Radio. The raiding party confiscated all of his equipment and computer.

Kantako, who is blind, started broadcasting in November 1987 and had logged 4,448 on-air days showing it can be done. His nonstop civil and human rights message has made him a frequent target for the authorities.

The bogus charge is that the operation of the low power broadcast signal might cause planes at the nearby Air Rendezvous Air Show to crash.

The second annual Underground Publishing Conference took place in Bowling Green, Ohio, June 10–11 on the campus of the local university.

The event organizers, Jen Angel and Jason Kucsma, who recently launched a new, radical, glossy magazine, *Clamor*, attracted 300 zinesters and aficionados to meet, trade, talk, and learn about zine making in the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries. Most of the participants were from the Midwest punk and anarchist milieu, but a few traveled from as far away as Philadelphia, and Gainesville, Florida.

There was also representation from the comic, self-published poetry, and hardcore music scenes.

Enthusiasm was high during the workshops and talks scheduled throughout the two days and the sessions featured many imaginative and useful topics, such as Prisoner Zines, Copy Centers Are Your Friend, Typography and Graphic Design, Zines in Public Libraries, Distribution, Underground Comics, The Power of a Jobzine; as well as more general sessions on date rape, activism, and herbal health remedies for women; also a session hosted by two *Fifth Estate* staffers entitled Media Resistance.

There was a good turnout (25+), for the Media Resistance workshop, which I co-moderated. It was a general overview of the history of social movements and radical publishing from 1840 to the present. But the discussion eventually turned to the pros and cons of print vs. electronic publishing, a hot topic among today's zinesters.

A session on Dead Anarchists I Have Known, hosted by Bob Helms of the Philadelphia IWW, was a compelling slide presentation complete with amazing anecdotes about the 19th century anarchist movement in Philadelphia.

The evening's entertainment ranged from the Lost Film Festival presented by Bloodlink Motion Pictures (www.bloodlink.com), to rock with Aloha, Lovesick (Ann Arbor), Minim (Chicago), and Stylex (Bowling Green). A third conference is planned for next year. Info from clamor magazine in the item below.

—Julie Herrada

Clamor magazine, mentioned above, is self-described as, “A loud and continued uproar of many human voices.”

This beautifully designed, slick-cover magazine has published four times as of its August/September issue which contains a vibrant debate on voting, photography from Charles Gatewood, articles about violence and masculinity, and unjobbing. Past issues feature stories on non-monogamy, punk abolitionists, and several have interviews conducted by FE staffer Peter Werbe with Howard Zinn, John Zerzan, filmmaker Errol Morris and car nut Brock Yates on Harley Davidsons. Clamor is at POB 1225, Bowling Green OH 43402; on the web at www.clamormagazine.org. Sample copy is \$4.

Paul Wright, editor of *Prison Legal News (PLN)*, and Jailhouse Lawyer Vice President of the National Lawyers Guild, was placed in disciplinary segregation for breaking an absurd rule limiting the number of envelopes an inmate can have in his cell to 40.

The screws at the McNeil Island pen in Washington state tried to use this minor violation as an opportunity to keep Paul in the isolation unit for months, then transfer him to -a maximum security facility.

Even though Paul and his cellmate testified that the envelopes were split almost evenly between them, the Washington State corrections officials convicted him, hoping to interfere with the publication of PLN. The newsletter recently celebrated its 10th anniversary of exposing the brutality, mismanagement, and corruption rampant in lock-ups across the country.

The PLN staff on the outside mobilized its subscribers and the warden received 2,000 letters and calls of protest. Surprised by the outpouring, prison officials released Paul after three days in solitary back into minimum security. Calls of protest do work!

You can receive a sample of PLN at 2400 NW 80th St., #148, Seattle WA 98117 or from www.prisonlegalnews.org. Write Paul Wright #930783, at MICC, POB 881000, Steilacoom WA 98388.

British author and anarchist, Alex Comfort, who gained international fame in 1972 in the midst of the sexual revolution for his bestselling *The Joy of Sex* died earlier this year at 80. He was also a poet and nuclear-disarmament campaigner.

The Joy of Sex, published in 1972, sold 12 million copies worldwide and was translated into two dozen languages.

Comfort, who frequently said he was irritated that he was always remembered for the sex manual rather than his other extensive work, nevertheless acknowledged that it was pioneering. “Before my book, writing about sex gave the impression of being written by non-playing coaches,” he once said.

Comfort also wrote over 50 other books of novels, poetry, criticism, scientific texts and Asian philosophy. He was active in London anarchist circles, was a pacifist member of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, and a conscientious objector during World War II.

It turns out that Theodore Kaczynski, a.k.a. the Unabomber, was a volunteer in mind-control experiments sponsored by the CIA at Harvard in the late 1950s and early 1960s, in which some subjects were given large quantities of LSD.

Michael Mello, author of the recently published book *The United States of America vs. Theodore John Kaczynski*, notes that at some point in his Harvard years—1958 to 1962—Kaczynski agreed to be the subject of “a psychological experiment.”

What did the CIA's mad scientists give Kaczynski? Did the experiment's long-term effects help tilt him into the Unabomber's homicidal rampages? The CIA's mind experiment program was vast. How many other human time bombs were thus primed? How many of them have exploded?

—Alexander Cockburn and Jeffery St. Clair

FE Note: Kaczynski, reached in prison, denied being given “anything to eat or drink,” or having any LSD-like experiences.

Hey, old-timers or those interested in the last era of radical protest: if you want to relive the 1960s in the Motor City with John Sinclair, the White Panthers, and the rock of the Grande Ballroom, check out a just released 72-minute spoken word CD, “Music is Revolution,” compiled by Detroit's Book Beat Gallery proprietor, Cary Loren.

It was put together from tapes held by the Bentley Historical Library in Ann Arbor and was edited down from 50 hours of recorded conversations and speeches.

Included are the SDS Weatherman Declaration of War by Bernadine Dohrn, a jailhouse interview with Black Panther founder Bobby Seale, plus other White Panther ramblings. Fifth Estate staffer Peter Werbe makes a cameo appearance commenting on Sinclair's incarceration for two joints of marijuana. Gary Grimshaw art, MC5 photos and posters, underground newspaper articles, and Mid-West '60s art comprise an accompanying 16-page booklet.

Price, postpaid, is \$12 from Book Beat, 26010 Greenfield Rd., Oak Park MI 48237, ph.: 248—968—1190. This highly recommended, independent bookshop, which carries the *Fifth Estate*, is located in the Lincoln Center mall.

Another indication of the resurgence of Anarchism is the number and success of anarchist book fairs across the continent this year. Since April they have been held in San Francisco, Chicago, Baltimore, and Montreal. All venues promise another in 2001.

Stay out of the Malls! Compost the catalogs! If you need gifts for birthdays, weddings, anniversary or holidays, why not skip capitalist enterprises and buy from movement sources.

Subscriptions to radical publications is one present many of us send to family and friends, plus books from independent sellers (such as, ahem, the Fifth Estate), or donations in the honoree's name.

One welcome present can be the Slingshot Organizer pocket calendar, put out by the long-running Bay Area anarchist newspaper of the same name. The organizer is a 160-page, pocket-sized, day planner with radical historical notes, phone book, menstrual calendar, contact list, and more. They're \$5 each; four for \$16, postpaid. Send check or well concealed cash to Slingshot Collective, 3124 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley CA 94705.

Large orders call (510) 540-0751.

Funds raised go to support the paper. Another good choice is the Earth First! Journal, which just celebrated its 20th year of publishing.

This edition is experimenting with a magazine format, rather than tabloid, a tree-free cover wrap, and 100 percent post-consumer content newsprint.

The issue was put together by a collective of historians and journal editors—current and former—to give the full scope of a movement committed to “No compromise In Defense of Mother Earth!” See subscription on this page for information.

Another good gift would be Norman Nawrocki's newest book, *No Masters! No Gods! Dare to Dream*. It's his third collection of urban tall tales, short fiction, “news” poems, dreams, rants and rhymes, some of which are from his theater and musical cabarets.

Over 100,000 people saw his last show about date rape and violence against women. He is currently touring Canada with his newest comedy cabaret about homophobia, “My Dick & Other Manly Tales.”

Order from AK Press, POB 40682, San Francisco CA 94140 or www.akpress.org. The book is \$9.95 plus postage. Also, ask AK for their latest catalog of titles.

Were you beaten or arrested in Seattle?

A team of movement lawyers announced in October the filing of a class action suit against the City of Seattle, its mayor, and the city's former police chief for gross violations of protesters' constitutional rights during last year's WTO protests.

If you were unfairly arrested (who wasn't?) or mistreated by the Seattle cops, contact lead attorney, Steve Berman at (206) 623-7292, or go to the Seattle Indy-Media Collective site at www.seattle.indymedia.org.

The suit is spearheaded by the Trial Lawyers for Public Justice, a national public interest law firm. Although initially brought on behalf of four individuals, the number of plaintiffs may reach 600, all of whom were arrested during the late November/early December 1999 protests, both within and outside of the so-called “no protest zone.”

We know that cops are the paid protectors of the rulers, and that suits like this aren't going to stop their repressive and brutal behavior, but the suit seems like a good idea if for no other reason than to keep public pressure on the police and perhaps win some pocket change for those subjected to their brutal tactics.

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