

# The Punk Rock Candy Mountain

Zack Furness

2002

a review of

*Evasion*. by CrimethInc ex-workers collective

*DIY Guide II* by CrimethInc ex-workers collective

*Hunter/Gatherer*. Journal of folklore and folkwar. CrimethInc ex-workers collective

**Editorial note:** In the last issue, I began to express my solidarity with the far-flung posse of revolutionary neo-Situ, post-punk poets known as CrimethInc. Now, I'd like to re-state that the CrimethInc (ex)Workers Collective is one of the best and brightest things to happen to N. American anarchism since TAZ hit the streets in 1991.

Like Hakim Bey's fabled epistle, CrimethInc documents are hugely popular among non-activists, non-anarchists, and people who have never been members of AR-A, NEFAC, or the ELF. Because of the texts' popularity, poetic language, and anti-political energy, the Crimethinkers (and Hakim Bey) have been the targets of a huge backlash within Official Anarchism.

While I think no one person or group is beyond criticism, the attacks on CrimethInc have, for the most part, been mean-spirited exercises in name-calling and whining. If any one of the more-anti-bohemian-than-thou, puritanical, leftist rants against CrimethInc had worthy critiques, I'd try to acknowledge them.

But, really, I see them as sour and steeped in extra-serious notions of self-sacrifice. Perhaps the worst of these is the recent piece by Ashen Ruins called "Against the Corpse Machine" (which has been widely circulated online). Its attack on CrimethInc is one of the harshest yet. To paraphrase Vaneigem, Ashen Ruins so ignores joy's necessity in the project of revolution that he speaks with a corpsemachine in his mouth.

All the super-militant, super-moralistic shit that is making its rounds on the Internet in the guise of anarchism would make me want to puke without all the unwarranted, spoil-sport attacks on CrimethInc, a group of anonymous propagandists who deserve their popularity among punk rockers and academics.

Who knows, some of those traveler kids and school teachers reading *Evasion* and *Nights of Love, Days of War* just might be a little more down for the revolution than the vanguardist jerks who claim to be The Anarchists online. So, in my spirit of support for Crimethinkers everywhere, I'm reprinting this review of the controversial book *Evasion* (available from FE Books). This comes from the "Bad Subjects" collective and their online zine devoted to "Political Education for Everyday Life."

— Sunfrog

## ***Evasion.***

review by Zack Furness (December, 2001)

"Something happened when we quit our jobs, quit paying rent, quit paying for anything. And I think back to the early days—when, like clouds parting to reveal the sun, we discovered what we were told had been lies, that it could be done; and that it would mean the time of our lives."

This quotation, taken from the introduction, provides a sneak preview into the world of *Evasion*—a world of overflowing dumpsters, political critiques, theft, excitement, and freedom.

*Evasion* is a collection of zines (of the same name) that have been compiled for the first time by the good folks at the CrimethInc. collective. While the book focuses upon the life of the author, it more acutely discusses the politics of living and the ability for people everywhere to drastically change the ways in which they live.

The book serves as both a blueprint for how to live outside the market (providing excellent advice about dumpster diving, squatting, stealing from corporate; chains, freight hopping, etc.) and also as an invitation to those trapped within the tumultuous cycles of work and consumption.

However, the real essence of this book lies within the energetic and meaningful prose of the nameless author. While the entire book is well written, there are moments of pure genius that arise without warning, sweeping the reader into a different reality and a whirlwind of possibility.

During these moments, the nameless author could best be described as the Thoreau of the alley—one who lives/writes deliberately, and without regrets.

It is very fitting that the author remains nameless because the idea being explored is that this could be you, your life, your freedom. *Evasion* suggests that true living can be done both for oneself, and in spite of capitalism.

Specifically, *Evasion* teaches one how to live off the excesses of the capitalist system without contributing to it. The ethic presented to the reader is one of exploiting the exploiters—robbing the corporate chain-stores in order to get by, eating what others carelessly throw away, living in houses that people abandon, riding for free on trains that penetrate our landscape.

Despite the daily schemes of theft, food acquisition, travel, and housing, the author is explicit about his/her devotion to a lifestyle free from animal products, drugs, or alcohol.

Individuals that live a straight-edge, vegan lifestyle sometimes have the tendency to assume a “holier than thou” platform on which they tend to be overly critical. However, the author’s lifestyle choices are reflected upon in order to demonstrate to readers that one can live this lifestyle without compromising one’s ethics.

Furthermore, the author never expresses contempt for individuals who subscribe to the capitalist system, but instead, he/she fully understands the symbiotic relationship at work. The author is not critical of people because they are blind sheep or mindless sinners, but because they have not challenged their worldview and they are not living lives of enjoyment.

While the author’s lifestyle may not be appealing to everyone, it’s worth exploring how one can accomplish it. Regardless of your disposition, the message presented throughout is one that all of us can understand: life can be exciting, positive, fun, daring, and rewarding ...but only if we let it be.

*Evasion* not only challenges the assumptions of what it means to survive, but also, of what it means to truly live. It is not often that a book can really change the way in which you think about life. This is one of those books.

## ***Hunter/Gatherer***

Another thought-provoking and graphically stunning ‘zine by the people who brought us *Harbinger*.

The central document here is the visionary statement of our ancient legacy called “History as We Live It.”

Perhaps responding to their growing chorus of critics, CrimethInc grounds this publication with many stories of practical self-liberation. Finally, they end with the “penultimatum” for every reader to publish the second edition of *Hunter/Gatherer*, leading to “35,000 versions” of the next issue. —Sunfrog

## ***DIY Guide***

The Greensboro NC faction of the decentralized conspiracy known as CrimethInc have brought us a practical booklet about eating, creating, traveling, publishing, building, protesting, dismantling the system. More down-to-earth than the usual, dreamy CrimethInc. fare, this text practices what other Crimethinkers preach. —Sunfrog

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See response in Letters, FE #359, Winter, 2002–2003.

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