

# Tennescene

john johnson

Long time readers of the *Fifth Estate* will remember the section called “Detroit Seen” which brought news from the radical scene in Detroit. We hope to continue “scene” reports in the new incarnation of the *Fifth Estate*.

Howdy y’all! (The Eco-Anarcho-Communist Faction of the Society for the Preservation of the Good Parts of Southern Culture officially declares “y’all” a new, non-sexist alternative for addressing groups. People who still say “you guys” are obviously not concerned with preservation of our fine language, or worse, they are yankees.)

Well, the *Fifth Estate* has gone South. But really folks, it’s just a geographical move.

Tennessee may not be a hotbed of the Revolution like Eugene or Detroit, but we do have our fair share of radicals who are into challenging the death machine in our own creative ways. There is a great diversity of landscape and culture here. The dominant politics are reactionary, and the local ruling elites have invited all sorts of multinational corporate robber barons and carpet baggers in to exploit the local people and pillage the local landscapes. The mountain cultures are alive and struggling with corporate colonization just as urban cultures are dealing with similar issues of homogenization and gentrification.

Tennessee is blessed with some fine homegrown dissent. Southerners, ex-yankees, and ex-westerners all work together to stem the tide of capitalist destruction, and put forth positive and hopeful revolutionary politics. Political comrades are hard to find, so committed radicals find all sorts of alliances with liberals and progressives on various campaigns. Despite the hostile political climate, awesome projects are underway across the many bioregions of the state. Here is a quick rundown:

In Knoxville, eco-anarchists with Katuah Earth First! (KEF!) have organized tree sits, blockades and banner hangings to protest road construction around town and in the Smoky Mountains. Knoxville also has its own pirate radio station, Knoxville First Amendment Radio (KFAR). There is an active Food Not Bombs chapter, and an Anti-Racist Action chapter to challenge a resurgence in Klan activity in East Tennessee. The Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance (OREPA) has been organizing to stop nuclear weapons production at the government’s facility in Oak Ridge (birth place of the A-bomb). OREPA hosts mass demonstrations and civil disobedience. Check out: [www.stopthebombs.org](http://www.stopthebombs.org).

Down in Chattanooga, KEF! has organized some very well attended anti-war protests and hosted various traveling radical educational events such as the US Out of Columbia Roadshow tour. Radicals in east Tennessee have also been organizing against the Tennessee Valley Authority and its plans to produce tritium. Folks have also been organizing against TVA’s plans to restart the Unit One nuclear reactor at Browns Ferry in Alabama.

KEF! has also been a leading proponent for forest protection and against the spread of rampant industrial clear cutting and destruction of our beautiful, diverse native forests.

Also in Chattanooga, much to the dismay of the local yuppies, Food Not Bombs continues to serve hot, free vegetarian food every Sunday to a very cool “community of the occasion” that consists of homeless people, radicals, punks, progressives, and anyone else who happens to be in the park.

Near Chattanooga, the folks at Moonshadow offer a variety of work shops on art, ecology and sustainable living and have hosted all sorts of environmental groups. Here, we find the secret headquarters of the south’s most notorious gang of fern-sniffing tree huggers Katuah Earth First!

Middle Tennessee is home to several rural radical communities: Pumpkin Hollow, Short Mountain Sanctuary, and IDA. Besides being the new FE headquarters, PH is home to one of North America's only anarchist rural infoshops. SMS is a long running "radical faerie" commune. They raise goats and veggies, and throw one of the best mayday parties this side of anywhere. IDA is a queer arts community that offers zany theatrical and musical events and tours and is home to Idapalooza, an outdoor queer music festival. Nearby is Tennessee's most infamous commune, the Farm.

In addition to the continued work of folks at the Peace and Justice Center, the Nashville scene is ripe with a new radicalism. In addition to a new Food Not Bombs chapter and large anti-war mobilizations, two new DIY-spaces The Muse and The Rule of Thirds gallery regularly offer anarchist films, performances, open mics, art exhibits and dance parties.

Eco-radicals in the southern mountains stay in touch through seasonal cam-pouts hosted by Earth First! groups across the region. Anarchist networking is mostly informal, but large contingents travel to most mass protests. The Southern Girls' Convention, hosted by various southern communities for three years now, will be held in Asheville, NC March 14-16, 2003.

All y'all are invited to come visit and help further the cause of revolution everywhere across the South. After all, it's not just a racist backwater anymore.

## **Contacts**

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<https://www.fifthestate.org/archive/359-winter-2002-2003/tennescene>  
Fifth Estate #359, Winter, 2002-2003

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