

Letters to Fifth Estate

Various Authors

2003

FIFTH ESTATE LETTERS POLICY

We welcome letters commenting on our articles, ones stating opinions, or reports from your area. We can't print every letter we receive, but each is read by our staff and considered for publication.

Letters via email or on disk are appreciated, but type- or hand-written ones are acceptable. Length should not exceed two, double spaced pages. If you are interested in writing a longer response, please contact us: POB 6, Liberty TN 37095. fifthestatenewspaper@yahoo.com

Dear FE:

Human culture is something that everyone is entitled to. Culture is who we are. As anarchists, we envision a world free from authority, where creativity, happiness, and sharing are the major aspects of life.

"But I won't share my culture, get your own!"

Sometimes, middle-class, white American anarchists "adopt, appropriate, or adapt the cultures and rituals of marginalized minority groups." Well, we've given up our own. We've abandoned our consumerist culture. Native America has the Great Spirit. African America has jazz. And, white America has McDonald's. You can see why so many white people abandon their culture for another's.

So, there are really only four choices for the disillusioned whitey:

1. Adopt foreign culture
2. Be Nihilists
3. Reclaim Paganism
4. Create a culture

Well, the first one is out of the picture since so many people get pissed off. And, I don't have any faith in Nihilism. You cannot ever truly escape your culture. You can modify it, but everything about you is a reflection of your culture: language, manners, food, clothes, etc. So, that leaves us with two possibilities. Learn about your ancestors' forgotten paganism or just make some stuff up. But if you are going to create culture, make sure the traditions have some actual significance and aren't just some arbitrary rituals.

Everyone has a race. Some Americans are multicultural; they are the future. Some people put a lot of emphasis on race, but here's the heartbreaker: Within the next century or two, there will be no white, no black, no whatever. America is a melting pot. Cultures form as a consequence of isolation from one another. Cultural divergence is the product of a loss of contact. But we are not isolated from one another. We cannot escape each other. We speak the same language, listen to the same music, and live together. Aryans, Black Panthers, etc., are not destined for

power; if nationalistic groups succeed in preserving their cultures, they will represent tiny minorities, with the vast majority of Americans being multicultural.

I found the “Anarchist People of Color to Gather in Detroit” notice on page 45 of the Fall 2003 issue quite disheartening. After explicitly stating four times that white people couldn’t come, you printed, “THIS IS A PEOPLE OF COLOR ONLY EVENT.”

Thanks for remembering how stupid white people are. If you hadn’t printed that line, I probably would have read the rest of the page with the dozen or so other references to this “people of color only” event absentmindedly and shown up wearing a Nascar t-shirt, an, “I’d rather be fishing,” hat, carrying a 24-pack of Pabst Blue Ribbon, with my mullet flapping in the wind.

So, this is a chance to diversify the Anarchist movement? Sounds like a way to segregate it. There’s a plan; split up Anarchists into white-only and black-only factions. Because apparently we cannot work together since we cannot ever attend the same conferences.

Anarchism goes above and beyond race. And, of course, there will never be a White Entertainment Television or a White History Month. That would be “racist.” Presenting W.E.T.: Friends, The Andy Griffith Show, Dukes of Hazard, I don’t even like television in the first place, but that channel would really suck. And, no doubt there won’t ever be an anarchist gathering with signs that say, “THIS IS A WHITE PEOPLE ONLY EVENT,” nor would I ever attend one.

So, what are we supposed to do since we can’t go to the APOC conference? Guess we’ll all just have to go to a Phish concert instead. Or maybe we should do what you said: “White anarchists and supporters should encourage individuals and groups of color they know about the event to attend.” White people handing out fliers to a “colored-only” event? Sounds like a shitty sitcom.

Let’s get over political correctness. What if I said, “I find the term “white” derogatory. Call me an European-American instead. Fuck the dumb shit, okay? And, the last time I checked, the word ‘okay’ came from Ojibwa. I hope that the tribal council doesn’t sue me for “cultural approbation.”

We’re all human beings, god damn it. Let’s start treating each other like it. I say that if more people become involved with the anarchist movement, that’s good. The more the merrier. But the color of their skin doesn’t really matter. It’s their energy, ‘commitment, and contribution to anarchism that really matters. I hope that no one thinks that I’m racist, but I’m not ashamed of being white, and I won’t be self-deprecating. I hate white power. Anarchists hate all power; it’s too dangerous. But any other race would be just as tyrannical if they ran the show. That’s why we must destroy power.

Being part Irish, and raised Catholic, I don’t think that them Klan boys would be very hospitable to me in any way. They’d string me up too.

And, by the way, I don’t really have a mullet.

Remember that White’s a color too.

Indianarchy

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Dear F.E:

A question for William Manson (see “Analyzing Authoritarian Narcissism, Fall 2003 FE): Don’t you think it’s more accurate to say that “the attainment of wealth and power” is motivated by a desire for wealth and power rather than “emotional disability and incapacity for loving relatedness”?

The folks at the top of the wealth-power pyramid can’t be explained away by badmouthing their motives. They aren’t the only ones in this society displaying emotional disability and dearth of affection. Not everyone with these disabilities achieves—or even strives for—wealth and power.

In fact such disabilities have often led to artistic creations. Think of Kafka, Beethoven, Proust, T.S. Eliot, Jackson Pollack. Anyway, Strangelove doesn’t qualify as one of your “countless historical examples” since he’s a made-up character.

D.M. Borts,

Detroit

William Manson responds: Fromm and others have contrasted “power-to” (realize one’s human faculties) with “power-over” others. For those with the capacity for sympathetic identification (as Proudhon and Tolstoy argue), the latter is an impossibility. To the narcissist, by contrast, fellow human beings are only “real” to the extent that they serve his/her needs (and “unreal” as mere downsized wage-slaves or “civilian casualties”). It is this pathological narcissism, not merely an impaired capacity for love, that I emphasized.

It’s certainly true that people may compensate for their impaired love capacity in different ways. (One could even argue that in a brutalizing, loveless society, the genuinely loving, empathetic person is gravely at risk!)

Notwithstanding that his deafness tragically isolated Beethoven from close attachments, don’t you feel that even his late Ninth Symphony still expresses deep love and reverence for humanity and nature?

Admittedly, the psychological motives for wealth-accumulation are complex, ranging from “worldly asceticism” (Max Weber) to Freudian “anal-hoarding” to “wealth addiction” (Philip Slater).

To the Fifth Estate:

Hey! I’ve been reading the Fall issue of FE with growing enthusiasm, and that’s a big turnaround for me. I have to admit that I’ve not been much of a fan of FE in past years...it never caught my attention much...but with this new collective, and this surprisingly excellent issue, you guys are blowing me away! except your letters section is tooooo small...

I do have some general comments/criticisms, and feedback, though. Here’s a quick run-down: I think you encourage a general guilt orientation in the section on cars (if you/others haven’t read Lev Chernyi’s words on “Desire or Guilt in Liberation Movements” check it out: www.intheheart.net/desireguilt.html.)

And there’s way too little jujitsu of conditioned “Givens” (like the general uncritical acceptance of the “professional” value system; an inability to escape “news writing method”; and how we’re being tooled and dumbed down by these!). People need to value more WARMTH (not only in direct connections), and more of the WILD JOY thing which has a way of keeps me (at least) wanting to live in this world!!

I see that we’re also tooled in some ways by single issues, while seemingly no time is spent on the broader picture, the macro war of everyday life all around us and in our heads (i.e. “beating ourselves up inside our heads” as John Trudell points out); this war that directly affects everyone, not only those most notably oppressed. (The VALUE of waking up to everyone’s pain is that we are then able to then see our common humanity instead of a perpetually divided and alienated “Us vs. Them”)

If anarchists could expand beyond these kinds of limitations, anarchists could really begin speaking with a broader section of the populace (instead of the forever anarchist ghetto) and begin getting through conditioned armors that so many are largely fooled into keeping and building up (by “leaders” they trust). My own method is to try to personalize the war of everyday life (to take a bit from Raoul Vaneigem) towards as many sections of humanity as possible—including sections which we traditionally view as “The Oppressors.” Then, we’re going after the excellence in people wherever they have happened to have gotten stuck (i.e. encouraging more of the whistleblower types to do their arts—like Ramsey Clark, ex-c.i.a. Philip Agee, John Stockwell and many others).

If you haven’t seen my main website yet, which includes a broad critique with solutions, please take a look:

www.intheheart.net/solutions.html

Chuck

In transit

www.intheheart.net



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