

News and Reviews

Fifth Estate Collective

2003

**David Rovics. "Return" (Available from FE books for \$10)
reviewed by Ellen Carryout**

David Rovics is a dynamic troubadour, an American Billy Bragg, a Phil Ochs for our time, a folk music MC making revolution accessible. A collaboration with Ever Reviled Records, this latest collection contains classic Rovics musical rants focusing on the struggle for an independent Palestine. As the poetic lyrics chronicle the horrors of life in the occupied territories, some listeners will experience a chilling combination of tears and rage. But Rovics touches on other themes as well.

The biting rap in "Reichstag Fire" puts whole September 11th theories into lyrical form. The disc opens with the rousing utopian hymn "After the Revolution," reminding us again that another world is coming. The vision is ridiculously optimistic and at times humorous, leading some critics to wonder why the world dreamed of in the song still contains "states" and "courts." Perhaps the next Rovics record will have a revolution to follow the revolution! "After the Revolution" is only one of the fired-up anthems that will have people singing along. Two other memorable songs in that mood are "Resistance" and "Strike a Blow Against Empire."

Like other agitprop musicians, Rovics takes risks mixing music and his politics. Sometimes the combination of political program and artistic refrain feels forced. Sometimes the politics provided are a garden-variety leftism where a more nuanced approach would be appreciated.

But after dozens of listens, Return is still in high rotation at Fifth Estate headquarters. We love Rovics in part because we know his work has been tested in the streets. He puts his body and his guitar on the line every time he sings, and this new CD is no exception.

**News from the Underground: Direct Action from Around the Globe, P.O. Box 10384, Eugene, OR 97440.
reviewed by jj**

Activists with their own photocopiers have brought back the old-school newsletter! *News from the Underground* is a monthly roundup of action news and forthcoming events in North America and the World. Published by a collective of ex-Earth First! Journalistas, the editors feel there is a lack of news about direct action available in the existing media and press, alternative or otherwise. Includes eco-actions, night work, animal lib, anti-war, anti-globalization and more.

If you're not plugged into the infotoxin super highway of kilobyte overload, and you can't wait for the next issue of your favorite quarterly 'zine to come out, then this little newsletter may be just what you need for action news, inspiration, and updates. Subscriptions are \$15 per year for 12 issues or \$1 per issue. Special low income rate of 12 first class stamps. Send more for extra issues to distribute or to support subs for prisoners, libraries, etc., P.O. Box 10384 Eugene, OR 97440. Send action reports, calendar items and other items of interest to news@mckenzieprinters.org.

Do Or Die: Voices from the Ecological Resistance #10

This is the latest (and sadly last) issue of *Do Or Die*. For ten years, *Do Or Die* has been reporting on ecological resistance in the UK and around the globe. Known recently for book size issues, #10 is a whopping 380 pages. Covering everything from the hard hitting SHAC campaign to Plan Columbia to Feminist health to South Pacific Solidarity

to the ELF and more, this issue is chock full of action reports, analysis, book reviews, and interviews. From the first page: “Down With The Empire! After over a decade of radical ecological resistance in Britain, it’s time to look back on our actions and look forward to our future. It’s time to celebrate our resistance...It’s time to mourn for our moment. Over the last decade thousands of species have been wiped out of existence. Vast forests-charred stumps. Coral reefs bleached dead by warmed seas. Millions starved within the prison of civilisation. Wild peoples massacred, enslaved and pauperised. It’s time to strategise how to make a real impact on this apocalypse. Look seriously at our strengths and weaknesses and pull together to resist. The empire is powerful but the spring is growing. It’s a challenge like no other, but with love, luck and hard resolve we can transcend. Up With The Spring!” For each copy send 7.00 pounds (UK), €15.00 (Euros) or \$15.00 US (rest of the world). All prices include postage, and please send only well-hidden UK pounds, euros or US dollars cash or UK cheques/postal orders made payable to Do or Die. For details on ordering multiple copies, please email doordtp@yahoo.co.uk. Do Or Die c/o Prior House, 6 Tilbury Place, Brighton BN2 2GY England. www.eco-action.org/dod

Hobnail Review: A Guide to Small Press & Alternative Publishing is a review/listings magazine which features independent, self-published journals, zines, and other publications that offer new perspectives and radical alternatives, challenging and reinterpreting accepted norms and values. Hobnail Review will also feature articles, news, and other material relating to publishing beyond mainstream. Hobnail Review is published in August and February. 3-issue subscription \$15.00. Sample \$ 6.00. Checks payable to Hobnail Review. Overseas payment in cash only (US\$ or sterling). Available from PO Box 44122, London, SW6 7XL, UK

The Journal of Aesthetics and Protest—Los Angeles 2003 Vol. 1, issue 2.

If only every art-school graduate and post-modern thinker held the revolutionary aspirations that these writers, editors, and designers do! At 178 pages, the *Journal* is a packed art and theory project for creative radicals. Although some writers fall into the kind of jargon-laden epiphanies that made Baudrillard famous, at its best, the magazine challenges, interrogates, and pushes that permeable boundary between art and life. An extra bonus is the gorgeous perfect-bound design by former Detroitier Kim Varella. \$13 for two issues: 3424 Council St., LA, CA 90004. sparkle@c-level.cc (213) 386-4641. www.thejournalofaestheticsandprotest.org

A Day Mournful and Overcast by an “uncontrollable” from the Iron Column (re-published by the Kate Sharpley Library)

The Iron Column was notorious or famed for being made up of ex-prisoners, and also for its ferocious defence of its revolutionary principles. “We have been treated like outlaws, and accused of being “uncontrollable”, because we did not subordinate the rhythm of our lives, which we desired and still desire to be free, to the stupid whims of those who, occupying a seat in some ministry or on some committee, sottishly and arrogantly regarded themselves as the masters of men...”

This pamphlet gives us a direct line to the Spanish Revolution and the hopes and dreams of the people who made it. This is not a piece of abstract theory; it’s written from experience: the nature of prison, the misery of being treated as an animal and the joy, however brief, whatever the hardships, of really living, living free from the dead hand of the old world. More than a discussion of the politics of militarization and control, it’s a hymn to freedom—and a tribute to those who fight for it. This was first published in *Nosotros*, the daily newspaper of the Iron Column in Valencia, in March 1937. This edition published by the Kate Sharpley Library, 2003. The Kate Sharpley Library also produces a regular bulletin containing articles, reprints, reviews and a list of its publications. Send an addressed stamped envelope for a sample copy. PMB 820, 2425 Channing Way Berkeley, CA 94704

Mary Losure, *Our Way or the Highway: Inside the Minnehaha Free State*. University of Minnesota Press, 2002. reviewed by Carrie Helena

Did you ever wonder what the liberals really think of us? In this flavorful portrait of a sustained resistance community, public radio veteran Mary Losure carefully chronicles the struggle to stop the reroute of Highway 55 through south Minneapolis. Beginning in 1998, the Minnehaha Free State group sustained protests for more than a year and eventually faced an unprecedented show of force by law enforcement.

Our Way or the Highway crosses the boundaries between nonfiction genres. Is it a mere factual account or memoir, principled advocacy or academic prose? Ultimately, the author maintains her journalistic distance. She does not pretend to be one of the protesters or one of the cops and bureaucrats defending the road.

From the flawed perspective of a writer trying painfully to be fair, Highway does an amazing job showing the tensions between different factions in the movement. The interactions—between liberals and radicals, Native Americans and anarchists, and so on—are instructive for people involved in coalition work and hoping to avoid all the predictable mistakes. Revolutionaries can certainly learn about when ideology can in the way of ethical action.

There's no doubt that the participants in the Minnehaha Free State would find errors in Losure's reporting and analysis. But thankfully, she's not out to demonize dissent like so many are today. Since our fascinating subculture has been largely undocumented in the mainstream press, Losure's choice of subject matter suggests her latent sympathy with those ragtag collectives willing to take great risk in stopping the juggernaut of progress.

2/15: the day the world said NO to war, a HELLO book co-published by AK Press \$25.

This attractive book is chock full of photographs, quotes, and commentary from the International Day of Action against Gulf War II, 2/15/03 and other winter/spring '03 anti-war actions from around the globe. From Baghdad to Barcelona, this contains dramatic photos from mass demonstrations, civil disobedience, and small protests. Available from FE Books or from AK Press. www.akpress.org

Fight the Prison Industrial Complex!

It feeds one of the highest incarceration rates and produces some of the highest rates of recidivism in the world. You can make a difference!

Contact the Prison Book Program on how you can fight the Prison Industrial Complex. The Prison Book Program has been supplying individuals and groups of prisoners with quality reading material since 1972. We believe that literacy and access to reading materials are crucial for the personal, spiritual and political development of all people. With 2 million people locked up in our nation's federal and state prisons and local jails, and with educational programming being drastically cut, the need for our services has never been greater.

Prison Book Program

110 Arlington St.

Boston, MA 02116.

Tel: 617-423-3298

Email: info@prisonbookprogram.org

Website: www.prisonbookprogram.org

Boycott Borders!

When buying presents for any occasions, please consider as your first shopping choice the Fifth Estate's Bookstore in the Barn. We carry titles from independent and radical publishers and a portion of our proceeds supports this newspaper.

Second choice should be any local, independent bookseller.

Last on your list, in fact, to be avoided, are the chains, and particularly the Borders Books empire. Borders presents itself as a customer friendly store, sensitive to local authors, provides coffee bars, and encourages browsing.

This is all true but behind the nicey-nice exterior is a ruthless, union-busting, mega-corp that is currently trying to smash the efforts of its low-wage employees to organize a labor local at its flagship store in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Borders CEO, Greg Josefowicz, who raked in \$23 million in compensation last year, is spending millions to fight the organizing effort so he can keep his serfs' beginning pay at \$6.50 an hour. Besides a national boycott of the Borders stores, strikers are asking local supporters to "adopt a store" to picket and leaflet. Information at BordersReadersUnited.2ya.com.

fifth Estate

Fifth Estate Collective
News and Reviews
2003

<https://www.fifthestate.org/archive/363-winter-20032004/news-and-reviews>
Fifth Estate #363, Winter, 2003/2004

fifthestate.anarchistlibraries.net