

Anarchists gather everywhere

Fifth Estate Collective

2004

This Spring saw many anarchist gatherings and book fairs. For the second consecutive year, *Fifth Estate* had a table at the mother of all anarchist book fairs organized by the Bound Together collective in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park. In early May, the Madison, Wisconsin anarchists hosted the book fair called Pencils and Pandemonium (perhaps this tag is a play on Chicago's "Matches and Mayhem," which passed the torch of an early May Midwest book fair to the comrades further north). And finally, anarchists in nearby North Carolina hosted a South Eastern Anarchist Network Conference (see report).

Anarchy Down South by Alexander Trocchi

(from a much longer article we found at A-Infos and Infoshop)

In April, the South Eastern Anarchist Network Conference finally happened in the post-industrial small city of Greensboro. Despite its lack of headlines, many of the most committed, passionate, and possibly lunatic anarchists I know come from the Southeast United States. I suspect that unlike their sisters and brothers in struggle in areas with huge anarchist scenes such as West Philly, being an anarchist in the most religious and conservative part of the country is an utter trial by fire.

As one southern anarchist put it: "Fundamentally I had a choice: I could either move to some anarchist ghetto where things were already happening, or I could try to start things happening in my hometown against all odds."

Anarchists came from all over — from Lake Worth, Florida to Knoxville, Tennessee — overall. I'd guess around one hundred and fifty anarchists. Southern anarchist groups were there doing distro, such as the paper Fifth Estate and the Urban Pirate CrimethInc faction. Anarchists were as usual mostly younger and white, but there was a great range of age, race, and class — quite a few of the anarchists appeared to be gray-haired truckers, and there were anarchist people of color in attendance. There was also a vast number of queer, transgender, and intersex anarchists in attendance. In the South, the amount of sexual and gender repression is intense, and these folk were some of the most militant at the conference.

The organizers had set up gender-neutral bathrooms ahead of time, and the transgender and intersex anarchists put forth photocopies of a list of demands about themselves and how to relate to them with dignity and respect — although apparently not everyone paid well enough attention, for at the end of the conference some of them noted there was still lots of confusion over sex and gender. Overall, the atmosphere at the conference was one of friendship and camaraderie, and there was hardly any in-fighting or navel-gazing, and everyone from anarcho-primitivists to anarcho-communists had practical discussions together. I was pleased to be at the first anarchist conference where the Southern accent was predominant, from its drawling lowland variety to its more high-twanged Appalachian cousin.

The atmosphere of this conference was one of revolutionary joy — a breath of fresh air to the ideological bickering that pervades many anarchist conferences and feelings of inadequacy in the face of the depravations of the Bush regime. Against the regional roots of racism and religious bickering, it's clear that the anarchist movement is growing in the Southeast.

See www.southeastanarchist.org

Alexander Cockburn at the Bay Area Anarchist Book fair:

You have an important duty this election year. You have to make a choice, so they tell you...

On the one hand, you have someone who is in favor of war, tax cuts for the rich, the WTO, the Drug War, and rape of the planet. That's on one side.

On the other side, you have a man who's in favor of war, tax cuts for the rich, the WTO, the Drug War, and the rape of the planet.

There's a big choice in America: between a mass murderer and an imbecile. Who's the mass murderer, you ask? Well, they both are, but one's more imbecilic than the other. John Kerry is a cold-eyed killer. If you read the book about him in Vietnam by Douglas Brinkley, it is a blood chilling narration of a guy who could not wait to go and kill.

I hear people on the Left saying George Bush wouldn't go to Vietnam; what a coward. What's happened to the left? They sit around complaining that George Bush wasn't in Vietnam killing people. It the only decent thing he ever did for the rest of his life.

Bush, at Yale, didn't think about much except where the next beer was coming from, when confronted with the agony and horror of war, rushed into the National Guard like any other sensible person. Kerry, on the other hand, wanted to go fight the war.

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