

# News & Reviews

Fifth Estate Collective

2004

Readers may have noticed that the important content last time limited our reviews sections. But now we are back. This summer, we caught up on our reading and offer the following four pages to comment on some of the many great books and 'zines that we've received in the last several months. And we pledge to continue next time. We love to get mail! Please send us your journal or book to look at. Or send us a short review. If you publish or distribute magazines, please contact us about trade possibilities.

PO Box 6, Liberty, TN 37095

***Globalize Liberation: How to Uproot the System and Build a Better World.*** Edited by David Solnit. Almost 500 pages! City Lights. 2004. \$18. Available from the Barn. See page 54 for ordering information.

reviewed by Sunfrog

A nice companion in any radical library to *We Are Everywhere!*, the recently released *Globalize Liberation* is a manual, encyclopedia, and primary text for the global justice movement. With contributors back from the trenches to pose theory for transforming the movement for a new world, *Globalize Liberation* gravitates towards uprisings, from the blockades on the highways to the hope in the barrios, from Argentina to Mexico, from Quebec to California.

In the tight introduction, editor David Solnit does a good job grounding his theory for "a new radicalism" in the practice of direct action. He rejects the ideological trappings of Left and Right and steers carefully clear of using our A-word to define his perspective. Solnit writes: "The new radicalism has many names or no name at all." He intentionally avoids anarchism as a label, even though it's in the Bay Area anarchist milieu where Solnit has grown as an organizer and tireless revolutionary. I don't mind (or agree with) Solnit's aversion to labels, but I do take issue with his repeated use of the adjective "common-sense" to describe his politics. In my experience, common-sense is simply a loaded code-word for unexamined assumptions, especially those of a knee-jerk and fundamentalist nature. In Solnit's case, it almost comes across as a born-again anti-intellectualism, and based on the brilliant material he's compiled, we can trust he's no anti-intellectual.

For some readers who are very well-read in movement literature, this well-organized and carefully-produced volume covers no new ground. People may see it as just one more in a glut of post-Seattle primers touting the glory of full-time activism. On the other hand, I like a review of basic themes through foundational texts, and *Globalize Liberation* is perfect for that. If there were a required 101 class in anti-capitalism, this book would be central to the reading list. I'd recommend this hearty effort to younger activists in a heartbeat

***The Surre(igion)alist Manifesto and Other Writings.*** Max Cafard. An Exquisite Corpse Book. 2003. PO Box 25051, Baton Rouge, LA 70802 [cafard@corpse.org](mailto:cafard@corpse.org) 170 pages. \$12. Available from the Barn. See page 53 for ordering information.

Reviewed by Sunfrog

Long-time *Fifth Estate* readers are already familiar with the juicy philosophical ferocity of Da-Da-Daoist Max Cafard. In fact, many of the irreverent instigations in his new greatest-hits compilation have previously manifested

in our pages, including the still stunning title-track. If a reader opens to a random page, she is likely to stumble across a thesis like this:

“The Left has to be even more dynamic: more anarchic, energetic, creating unheard of and unimagined surpluses. Advanced capitalism gave up worldly asceticism long ago, but much of the Left has perpetuated a monasticism of militantism and sectarianism. If the Left is to have a future, it must begin thinking again about the almost taboo concept of freedom.”

Mixing Perlman and Nietzsche, butchering Bookchin, and dissing Derrida, Cafard cooks us a non-ideological gumbo with irrepressible spices, castigates conformist philosophy, and shreds pious politics with a poetic scythe. Our colleague David Watson describes Cafard as a “visionary smart-ass,” and I think that’s as apt a moniker as any.

As a writer whose poetry reads like political non-fiction and whose political non-fiction reads like poetry, I have some indulgent habits in common with this prankster of word-play this alliteration aficionado. But in these victimless writerly crimes, I am but an outlaw apprentice to the outlandish Cafard. I’m just honored to smell the sentences blooming in the brambles of this sumptuous tome.

**The heartland looked pretty scary in *Harpers* excerpt from Tom Frank’s new book *What’s the Matter with Kansas?*** But there’s hope for denizens of the flatland: The Crossroads Infoshop and Radical Bookstore is now open in downtown Kansas City. The new infoshop and bookstore features books, magazines, and materials from the radical left. The space is a worker-owned co-op, pursuing affiliation with the IWW as a unionized workplace. Infoshop webmaster chuck is part of the Crossroads Infoshop collective. Crossroads Infoshop and Radical Bookstore 1830 Locust St. (at 19<sup>th</sup> St.) Kansas City, MO 64108 On the web: <http://www.infoshop.org/crossroads.html>

**As FE prepares for its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary issue, we can look to our Minneapolis comrades in the punk rock milieu for a little inspiration.** Earlier this year, to celebrate its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary, *Profane Existence* published a very impressive book-length issue with a compilation CD. If this doesn’t “make punk a threat again,” what will? More grassroots than the wildly successful “Rock Against Bush” movement, all props to Profane Existence as an integral part of the anarchist punk movement. Contact Profane Existence for more information. PO Box 8722, Minneapolis, MN 55408, phone: 612-722-1134 <http://www.profaneexistence.com>

**Doris 22, POB 1734, Asheville, NC 28802. \$1.50 or \$1 plus stamps**

This impressive, long-running, personal, DIY zine by Cindy includes interviews old and new, jokes, and journal-like entries. The centerpiece is an interview done with Cindy about anarchism and feminism, and being “out” as an anarchist. Here’s a short and inspiring section from that:

“Anarchism was amazing to me. I had always had this really deep love for humanity, and always saw so much potential in people, and here was a political philosophy that was based on these things. I started wanting to change the whole world, and I believed, and still do believe that it’s possible. We can create a world based on compassion and mutual aid, rather than competition and mindless consumption. It’s the only thing that really makes sense.

“My boyfriend was anti-feminist. He thought it was divisive and unnecessary. At first I thought he must be right. Having my own ideas and beliefs was still new to me, and I had terrible self-confidence and was very vulnerable. Eventually, though, I learned to see feminism as a completely essential part of the struggle for an anarchist world, and just completely essential in general, for obvious reasons. Sexism and patriarchy are so ingrained, in men, women, and transgender people, and ifs not going to just magically go away. If you’re interested in feminist movements during revolutionary liberation struggles, I really recommend the books *Free Women of Spain*, and also Sandino’s *Daughters*. There are lots of good books out there, but these two were inspiring to me.”

***Pie any Means Necessary: The Biotic Baking Brigade Cookbook.*** Agent Apple. AK Press, 2004.

reviewed by Leafy

“I went to jail having sabotaged nothing more than a little man’s big ego.”—Rahula Janowski

This very interesting discourse on political food-throwing focuses mainly on using pies to unwelcome politicians and plutocrats or express slapstick and subversion. The book covers everything from recipes to court cases. There are many interesting stories, including one about pie-throwing activist Livernoise, who required and obtained vegan jail meals for himself. Livernoise relays the thoughts and feelings he had during his months in jail. Challenging the parameters of appropriate protest, the amazing book quotes Eldridge Cleaver calling violence “as American as apple pie” and Gandhi claiming he would “prefer violence than the emasculation of a whole race.”—

***The Day Philosophy Dies.*** Casey Maddox. Flashpoint Press. 2004.

reviewed by Leafy

Cameras. Ready. Action! The narrator has been kidnapped by cruel radicals, to be the superstar in a movie that will change the world forever. The reader feels the captive's confusion as the chapters show a collage of events, being titled "fast forward," "rewind," or "play;" This book knots-up my stomach and takes my breath away, with themes and moods that remind me of John Carpenter's *Escape from L.A.*

Through the kidnapers, Maddox explores some views on anarchy as seen by the larger society; psychological and physical cruelty are the captors' tools. The captive is influenced by these methods, yet eventually becomes a sincere revolutionist.

The narrative packs existential angst, alternative life-styles, and the exposure of Western culture's intrinsic problems. This novel exposes the Western culture as Ann Wilson Schaefer does in *When Society Becomes an Addict*. Western civilization is now protected by Patriot-Act pomposity watching over the mining and enslaving of the whole planet

***Animal Ingredients: A to Z, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.***, E. G Smith Group and AK Press, 2004.

reviewed by Leafy

Want to know how vegan your body-lotion is? How about your toothpaste or seasoned-rice mix? This book reports on the many chemicals and additives used in our society and gives parameters for using the safer ones. Think you already know it all, from years of label reading? Included are over 10 pages of those hard-to-pronounce ingredients derived from animals. Page 31 tells all the ways animal blood is used in our society. This crucial resource will make a great addition to any collective library.

***The Military Strategy of Women and Children.*** Butch Lee, Beguine Press and Kersplebedeb.

Order from Stoopsale Books, POB 268985, Chicago, IL, 60626. 2003.

reviewed by Leafy

I don't always do this, but I did read the last page first. I knew then that I loved this book with its clarifications about women's society and women's economy. In the spirit of the most provocative and path-breaking radical feminisms, Butch Lee explains the dynamics used as "euro-capitalism continued the Witchhunt in new forms, destroying the women's economy and independence, raising up a native patriarchy, which got addicted to capitalistic values." This militant, meta-political primer about gender and generational issues, Lee's contribution to meaningful male-culture bashing—done through historical evidence and current-events facts—shows how egalitarian societies have succeeded before being destroyed by imperialism.

***No Man's Land***, Fielding Dawson. Times Change Press. 8453 Blackney Rd., Sebastopol, CA 95472. 2000.

reviewed by Leafy

Reading this book taught me a few other points about creative writing, yet it really is a documentary about the prison this story is set in. Tension, "like a needle floating on water," is palpable between Dawson and the Guard after Dawson hugs the inmates.

Dawson helps a group of male inmates do creative play-writing. Prison managers mess with almost every step Dawson takes. The play they write becomes a story about some of the common, inane prison situations: "They let the guys go they know will come back." A sick, elderly prisoner is double-bunked with a healthy prisoner because the Hole is full. "They kill you in No Man's Land."

Dawson also frets: "He'd looked into my eyes because...he hadn't learned not to...He'd be like the other guards, and that would be his ambition: be like them. Them. To hell with them. And him." It's good reading, Dawson spitting at the prison walls which represent the State's demands.

***Beggars of Life: A Hobo Autobiography***, Jim Tully, AK Press/Nabat: 674 A Street, Oakland, CA, 94612-1163. 2004.

reviewed by Leafy

The introduction by Charles Willeford calls Jim Tully a "Holistic Barbarian." He also notes that the "political-industrial-military-academic complex" that Tully criticized in the 1920s is what we still have today. In collaboration with AK Press, Nabat Books is reprinting works by "various misfits, outsiders, and rebels," considering that today's successful people are likely toxic.

In the autobiography, Tully describes the trips that taught him to be a hobo. He also had to develop a sense of humour, but always saw beauty everywhere. This narrative contains some of Tully's famous one-liners, which distill situations or qualities into their simple essences.

# fifth Estate

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