

About this Issue

Fifth Estate Collective

2006

This issue's theme—The Psychology of Freedom—comes to the reader without pretension or self-righteousness. We are not trying to instruct others on how they should conduct themselves in their personal or collective lives. Rather, we feel it is important to explore the anti-authoritarian ideals we often project onto society from the inside of our communities and lives.

It doesn't take an anthropologist or a great theorist to realize that people thrive in situations where love, sharing, and mutual aid prevail as opposed to what constitutes the current monstrosity in which we live where ruthless competition, violence, fear, and rage are the norm. Early societies manifested the former qualities as a matter of necessity; their survival depended upon mutuality. However, in the modern world, the permanent mobilization of fear is the basis for sustaining the state and the economy; this fear has roots deep in the first state societies.

While people once lived in harmony as an integral part of nature, now they live in fear of the wild, of outsiders, of newly constructed punitive sky gods, of the power of women, of those below one in the social hierarchy. Fear was then transformed into a rage against all that was threatening. Security came with surrender to the rulers and the supreme Ruler, complete with a military and productive apparatus.

The political state depends on an infantilizing mass character structure of submission. Mass acquiescence feeds the myth of the state's necessity. But for all that the rigid global order may deliver to some in material terms and even through its twisted spiritual institutions, the state's destructive impact on our collective psyche and the planet's body becomes more painfully obvious each day.

In Eric Fromm's instructive 1955 text, *The Sane Society*, he asked what if the definitions of modern society were applied to an individual; how would we judge that person? A homicidal, egoistical, psychopath was the answer. His conclusions for solving our common human dilemma was to establish what he called communitarian socialism—*anarchism*—which reinstalls those principles and emotions that nurtured our species through its first million or so years.

We agree, but what do we do while waiting for and hastening the revolution, and what if there isn't one in our lifetime? How do we navigate an increasingly frightening and destructive world that seems clearly headed in the opposite direction from what we desire? How do we maintain emotional and planetary health? Some of the tentative solutions implied in these pages are obviously incomplete, only part of the story. But some of the most personal and local venues for liberation suggested—such as love and intimacy, laughter and erotic play—get close to the root of what we value and why we fight against alienation. Sexual and emotional repression convey the core of how so many people get skewed and fragmented, abused and hurt in this society.

Our fourth issue of 2005—our fortieth anniversary year—is published late in December, hence it is labeled as Winter 2006, so as to not have it appear almost immediately out of date. With this late-breaking edition, we have completed four consecutive years of consistently producing four issues a year, quite an accomplishment after publishing sporadically for much of the 1990s—and not at all in the year 2001.

Also, this issue was produced solely in Tennessee by our small “bolo bonobo” production collective at the Pumpkin Hollow community, where the Barn and our mail-order book distro is based. For our Spring 2006 edition, pro-

duction duties will return to the Detroit group, and we will continue to alternate responsibilities in this manner into the indefinite future.

While we are still evolving and working out the finer details of our new editorial arrangements, emerging is a new arrangement where the two geographically-based collectives within the larger collective will work cooperatively and autonomously. The discerning reader will probably notice some changes, especially between the personality of issues produced in different locales. We'll do our best to provide quality art, writing, and provocative content—wherever the issue is finally edited and designed.

This time, much of our regular news and analysis coverage has been eclipsed by attention paid to our friends in New Orleans, the central feature of which is John Clark's compelling, "A Letter from New Orleans." In many ways, then, theme connects back to our lead article on New Orleans. Despite the harsh lessons in race, class, and catastrophe meted out by this mass crisis, New Orleans also represents the charm and charisma of a new culture based on the carnivalesque. New Orleans represents and maintains values of music and dancing and pleasure and sensuality exemplified in the face of unspeakable suffering.

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