

Letters

Various Authors

2006

Six billion healthy people?

I read with some surprise EB Maple's letter (see FE 370, Fall 2005) regarding an article I wrote which was published in the Winter 2005 issue of the *Fifth Estate*.

Maple writes: "The standard issue primitivism of the article's message appeals to me in many ways..." Thanks, a rather condescending way to agree with some aspects of my vision, but an acknowledgment nevertheless.

But then Maple adds: "Still, a call for the creation of organically self-organized subsistence movements that are aimed at asserting access to land doesn't seem particularly feasible for too many people when we're talking about an increasingly urbanizing trend across the world."

I believe anarchists and other rebels need to encourage each other to keep trying. Eventually some of us will have successes and a momentum will be created which will be on our side. And remember, land based peoples everywhere are counting on us to begin listening and learning. But then, perhaps Maple and I don't agree on what we are aiming for, because s/he also states: "I...wonder what a revolution would really look like; how much of the old industrial, citified world will we bring into the new one?"

Civilization didn't colonize everywhere at once, nor did it reach its current strength immediately, so its undoing might occur to different degrees and at different places at different times. In this respect, a modern-primitive synthesis might take hold in some areas should coercive authority there be destroyed (or wither away?), but hopefully Maple agrees with me that any amount of the "old industrial, citified world" would obviously be out of place in a truly "new one".

Maple's question "Besides, can tens of millions move to the countryside?" was very misleading. I didn't suggest anywhere that tens of millions of people should get up tomorrow morning at ten o'clock and head out to the countryside.

Most ecologists recognize that urban life is unsustainable and damaging to human (and many other life forms) health. A healthy person lives in a healthy habitat. A city is not a healthy habitat. Somehow all of us need to be fighting for and dreaming of and moving toward non-urban lives. Not tens of millions EB, but six billion!

Seaweed

British Columbia, Canada

FE Note: See also "Both Sides Now," this issue, pages 34–35

The City is Civilization

The impossibility of land reoccupation/reclamation/reintegration on our part means the impossibility for indigenous autonomy and freedom and consequently an impossibility for squatting movements to emerge in the

cities, the most intensely privatized zones on the map (See EB Maple's letter, FE 370, Fall 2005). Why stick with the possible, with politics why stay within the parameters defined by the ruling ideology?

It is time to shed feelings of waiting and defeatism. How do situations, how do things change? When people have had enough. Ya Basta. Haven't you had enough?

"We are reminded that the city as polis created not only politics, but the police." That is from a David Watson article.

I add: We are reminded that the city as a walled sewage system created not only dead rivers—but civilization. Why let scientific statistical research determine anarchist strategy, dreaming, re-wilding and actions? We all know about the frightening world power relations are constructing for us. We all live in it.

Orang Outan

British Columbia, Canada

Anarchist Among Rednecks

It was my intention to never be in a city again. Flush toilets and capitalists are just so-aggressive. But, here I am. Living in a bus and traveling about sometimes means ending up in strange places. In fact, it might actually mean always ending up in strange places!

I've never had any desire to visit hideous, tacky Florida. But life takes us where we need to be, if we let it. A domino-effect of circumstance forced me to come hang out with one of my oldest and dearest friends. So, even in hideous, tacky Florida, I'm at home.

My friend David owns a motorcycle shop. He specializes in keeping older, funkier bikes on the road. Bikers come from all over to find rare, particular doo-hickies.

It was among these customers that I found, inside myself, something surprising. There's a core group that considers David's shop their home away from home. They gather in the late afternoon to sit around, drink beer, and shoot the shit. Listening to their talk, it didn't take too long for the revulsion to set in. A more sexist, racist bunch of flag-wavers I've never seen.

But then there's me.

Just being polite, for David's sake, made me realize something outrageous. I can connect with their humanity. They do have some. It's weird. I feel like I'm doing a graduate course in learning to love my enemy! Which is nothing less than the pure, unadulterated Spirit of Revolution.

Loving your enemy is the most radical, revolutionary idea humanity has ever had. And our only real hope. The real Revolution comes from within; everything else is made-up bullshit.

What if everybody practiced loving their enemies?

There would be no enemies. Imagine that.

Anne R. Key

Anne is a radical homeschooler traveling the country with her son in a converted school bus. They are finding fabulous learning opportunities everywhere. Contact her at: anne_r_keye@yahoo.com

Are Wobblies bums? Do Wobblies want to work?

Nice issue on the IWW (see FE #370, Fall 2005), especially the stuff on the free speech fights, sabotage, etc.

Must say, though, I was a bit surprised of the angle many of the articles tended to take: Wobblies war on work? I found that to be wrong in that the IWW—or any other labor activist—is not averse to work per se, just the oppression of workers. Though you tried to explain some rationale for this stance in more than one selection, it just seemed odd to me.

Wobblies desperately tried to organize hobos, yes, but not as hobos. These guys were traveling around homelessly because they sought work, not because they were professional hobos. IWW campaigns in the hobo jungles

were an attempt to bring some humanity to a miserable state of affairs: strengthen them by giving them a sense of union.

The ultimate goal, however, was for them to remain Wobs after they'd gotten jobs as mill workers, lumberjacks, seamen, miners, what have you, and then spread the organizing into those worksites. At a glance, one might almost think that your mag implied that the IWW was a union of "bums." Instead, it was a union of very proud people who, like most of us, work.

Beyond that, they fought for social change and a higher vision that might change the world order. But they were not principally a group that celebrated the Big Rock Candy Mountain—more like Workers of the World, Awaken.

Anyhow, I was still glad to be a part of it all.

John Pietaro

Hudson Valley, New York

FE Note: John wrote "Wobblies & Music: A Century of Radical Song" for FE 370, Fall 2005. His web site, flame-sofdiscontent.org, features information about his band and his music activism.

We welcome letters that respond to articles or report on your activities. Please write us! Email correspondence is preferred. Please limit letters to 300 words. We reserve the right to edit for length, grammar, and clarity. If you are interested in a longer exchange, please let us know.

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