

Letters

Various Authors

2006

Send letters to Fifth Estate, POB 201016, Ferndale MI 48220

No Anarchist?

Congrats on changing anarchist to anti-authoritarian on your front page description. Too much baggage on the word anarchist. It's glamorous for those with that identity; fear and mistrust for those outside the milieu.

There was that period from about 1880 to 1920 when anarchists were killing people. Like monotheists, they thought they were in touch with the higher moral values of the Universe and thus were free of morals in this world.

I really enjoyed the three pieces in the Fall 2004 issue on what was then the upcoming presidential election ("Everybody but Bush," FE #366, Fall, 2004). I read them all several times. Some of the most passionate writings I have seen in FE. And, while I understand the first two positions [advocating abstention from voting], I was with Walker Lane all the way who argued the opposite.

So much so, that towards the end of his piece, I was barely reading the words and just riding the energy. What made the final decision for me was seeing the drool forming at the corner of Bush's mouth during the last debate.

I had to ask myself if a drooler should have access to weapons of mass destruction? Probably not. So, I voted for the big wooden puppet guy. (Where do the Democrats find these candidates? One of my favorite comments on a politician was Calvin Trillin referring to Al Gore as a "man-like object.") I had to break my rule about voting for corporate candidates, as they all tend to kill people. But, if I can't break my own rules...

Fred

San Francisco

FE Response: We decided to drop anarchist from our masthead description, replacing it with "anti-authoritarian," not so much to get away from popular misconceptions about anarchy, i.e., chaos, bomb throwers, violence, etc., but more to not be identified with the many contemporary tendencies the word represents.

Do readers have any thoughts about the change?

False Dichotomy

The Winter 2006 *Fifth Estate* (Issue 371) carried a review of my book, *How Nonviolence Protects the State*. While on the whole, Anne R. Key's review was fair and insightful, she does include a few misleading statements.

The major criticisms this reviewer raises are in fact all addressed at length in my book. Anne says the book contains "a dangerous lie," which she identifies as "dichotomizing," "buying into militarism" as opposed to embracing a diversity of voices, and ignoring the need to create models of anarchist alternatives. From the very beginning, I point out that the dichotomy between violence and nonviolence is a false one. Later, I point out the need for "each people, each bioregion, each community, each individual" to formulate "their own revolutionary strategy..."

These are the “many voices, from many directions” the reviewer calls for. And, I explicitly argue the need “to provide models for autonomous social relationships and self-organization,” and suggest that in certain circumstances, “setting up a free clinic can be far more effective than the most complex guerrilla assault.” A thorough reading of the book makes it clear that I am not arguing for militant tactics alone, but for a diversity of tactics.

The book is available from Signalfire Press and AK Press.

Peter Gelderloos

Harrisonburg, Virginia

Still Live & Jumpy

I got hold of the Fall 2005 issue of FE on work and the IWW centenary (FE #370). It's always a pleasure to see people on your side of the ocean who manage to resist the globotomization. I appreciated very much the articles on the IWW.

Nice to see also that the Non Serviam logo, which appears on your front page, is still live and jumpy after all these years. My friends of L'exagere made a sticker out of it in the late 'eighties!

In your article, “Why I Was A Burglar,” you quoted from the writings of Alexandre Jacob, the early 20th century French anarchist robber, using a translation of Canadian comrades from the 1999 edition. In the meantime we have produced a new edition in French, augmented with a CD, which you seem not to have heard of. All our fault; we certainly missed to send you a copy when it was published.

In your introduction, you write, “[Jacob] was released 23 years later [after his conviction and life sentence] only due to the closing of the prison.” This is wrong; he was released in 1926 due to a successful international campaign. The Guyane hard labour camp was closed years later (1953), although transportation to the prison colonies had been abolished by the French state in 1937.

Gobelin

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France

Seed Money

I found this money in my seed box. I started spinach and lettuce today. I thought I should give a little seed money to the *Fifth Estate*, as well.

I was a little disappointed in the last issue on the Psychology of Liberation (FE #371, Winter 2006); how could Paul Goodman and Alex Comfort be overlooked?

From the Garden,

Will Petry

Williston Park, N.Y.

FE note: And, how about Wilhelm Reich? Those great writers on the human psyche weren't overlooked, just not included. Maybe theme's title was too expansive. We printed first person accounts of people trying to be human in a world that militates against the effort rather than theoreticians. Hopefully, the influence of these authors was evident in our essays.

Thanks for the donation; it those such as yours that keeps this publication afloat.

Anarchist Writing

This past weekend I spent hours going through my magazine and zine archives. My goal was to separate out all of the anarchist magazines and zines so I can put them into some kind of order. There are stacks and stacks of anarchist periodicals in my 20-year collection of periodicals from the American alternative press.

My collection only scratches the surface of what anarchists have published in just the past twenty years, but, boy, does my back hurt!

I'm currently working with Jason Mc-Quinn (editor of *Anarchy* magazine) on an anthology of anarchist writings, theory, art and more, titled *North American Anarchist Thought Since 1960*.

The book will be a representative sampling of North American anarchist thought and creativity over the past 45 years. It will include articles and editorials from magazines, zines and websites, plus excerpts from a few books. We don't want to leave anarchist artists out, so the book will include poems, graphics, cartoons and several pages of magazine covers from the anarchist press. It will be published this year by C.A.L. Press and Breaking Glass Press in a hardcover edition on acid free paper. It will also be updated with subsequent editions.

We've set up a website for the book (www.northamericananarchist.org) which will include a comprehensive bibliography that will be updated after the anthology is printed. We can't go through every magazine and book published over the past 45 years and our own collections probably miss many important things. This is why we need your help.

1. If you have an opinion about the best, or most influential, anarchist books, magazines, or articles that you've read, we'd like to hear your opinions. Send us an email with your suggestions.
2. If you are an anarchist author, poet, editor, or artist who has published or produced more than a few pieces, we'd like to hear what you think is your important or relevant pieces.
3. We are setting up an advisory committee which would help us with questions, research and other decisions.
4. Do you know of a zine or magazine or book that was published by a lesser-known or closet anarchist? We know about obvious anarchist books and magazines, but some books and periodicals have been published by anarchists who aren't widely known. Do you know of a publication that was published by a variety of people—such as a university newspaper—that included significant anarchist participation?
5. Did you publish an anarchist periodical? We need information on where your periodical was published, the editor(s), and the duration of the publication.
6. Are you a Mexican anarchist or familiar with anarchism in Mexico?
7. Are you familiar with anarchist materials published in North America which were published in languages other than English? For example, anarchist periodicals in Italian and Yiddish were published in the U.S. into the 1970s. We also need help from people who can read French and Spanish.

We are creating an announcements list for people who want to be kept updated about the project. Send me an email at editor@north-americananarchist.org with the subject line "NAA Announce List." Our web address is northamericananarchist.org.

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Bye, Bye, FE

While I support independent media, and I acknowledge the importance of the work that you do, I find the *Fifth Estate* too full of anger and “fighting against” issues for my liking.

There are additional ways, using more positive energies to change our world and these are much closer to our heart passions.

Pat

Floyd, Virginia

fifth Estate

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<https://www.fifthestate.org/archive/372-spring-2006/letters>
Fifth Estate #372, Spring 2006

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