

Letters

Our readers respond

Various Authors

2009

Send letters to fe — AT — fifthestate — DOT — org or Fifth Estate, PO Box 201016, Ferndale, MI 48220
All formats accepted including typescript & handwritten; letters may be edited for length.

INDEBTED

Sorry to hear about your financial situation. As vile and evil as it is, money is still the life force of the modern world. Without proper funds to sustain a project, more often than not, it will all come tumbling down.

I'd hate to see that happen to *Fifth Estate*. I first found you back in 1994 as a young high schooler raging against, well, everything. The great rebel without a clue. Your publication served to help open the doors to better knowledge and networking. Great writers and thinkers, activists, and similar publications to lead to more sources.

So, in a sense, I feel indebted to your magazine. However, money is tight for me, too. As a prisoner of the State, I earn approximately \$15 a month.

All I can do is throw \$5 at you to support a renewal of my subscription. With any luck, when this place finally loosens my fetters and I'm let out to the larger prisons of the real world, I can give more, do more. Out—maybe next year.

Keep the resistance alive and keep *Fifth Estate* alive.
A prisoner in Oklahoma

KINDRED SPIRIT

I received your expiration notice in the mail today, but unfortunately, I am completely indigent. I'm struggling with the prison just to give me a toothbrush right now!

I love your magazine and am a kindred spirit in anarchism/antiauthoritarianism.

I'm serving 25 on 25 because I'm an enemy of the state, so I'm completely at your mercy for charity.

If you could possibly renew my subscription I'd be extremely grateful. However, if you're unable due to the collapsing economy, I certainly understand. At least I don't have to worry about where my next meal comes from—even if it is only beans and greens (with a worm or two for seasoning!).

Yours for the coming revolution,
A prisoner in Texas

FE note: Our free subscriptions to prisoners aren't charity, which is vertical, but are, in traditional anarchist parlance, mutual aid, which is horizontal. *Fifth Estate* readers contribute to our Prisoner Subscription Fund when

subscribing or renewing with the express purpose of keeping the flame of anarchy alive in those who live under the most repressive circumstances.

The third of a month's pay isn't necessary, but well appreciated.

Given the punitive nature of the prison system, we will only publish the state from which we receive inmate letters.

CUBA ARTICLE, Si!

Walker Lane's piece on Cuba ("An Anarchist In Cuba" Summer 2008) was a good piece that all people should read. Cuba's only threat to the U.S.A. is it would be more a tourist destination than Florida, if we could go there.

Drew Murphy www.myspace.com/jwblhotmv

INSURRECTIONAL JOY

Thank you for your lovely issue on Play (Fall 2008 FE).

In an era when the glare of the incarceration-frenzied state on the right and the hair shirt wearing blue meanies of the left continue to loom large, it was fantastic to read your thoughtful and engaging reminder of the anarchist anti-authoritarian insistence on the "insurrectionary nature of joy."

In far too many circles, this lesson has been obscured. Your issue offers a useful correction. Yet, I only wish there had been more material on queer anti-authoritarian organizing.

Further, I wish your review could have considered the uses of play in combating mechanisms of social control, particularly in the post-9/11 era. Play must not be relegated to the archives of history.

Just the other day, members of the Rude Mechanical Orchestra joined the pro-choice direct action group, Church Ladies for Choice, in a clinic defence of a women's reproductive health clinic. It was a rainy Saturday morning. The Catholic Bishop had sent his minions to harass those using services.

Yet, faced with the joyous sound of the culture jamming Church Ladies and the revolutionary marching band's noises, the anti's quickly departed. The Rude Mechanical Orchestra performed their rendition of Twisted Sister's anthem, "We're Not Going to Take It," as the anti's departed. There is always a place for joy and justice in this revolution.

Thanks for highlighting this thrilling historic mode of world-making.

Benjamin Shepard, PhD

Author of *Queer Politics and Political Performance*, Routledge, 2009

PARLOR ANARCHISTS

Enclosed is a renewal and a one time donation of \$50. Keep up the good work. Embrace the profoundly radical and unorthodox even if—especially if—it pisses off the politically correct "humanistic" parlor anarchists!

Yours in the spirit of Stirner,

PW

Pinellas Park, Florida

FE Note: It is donations like this and the attitude of mutual aid that accompanies such gifts that keeps the FE going.

LOYALTY TO ANARCHY

I have read you since Spring 1988 and you're still the best. I'm a long time "mental patient" under "state" treatment. I'm on at least nine different mental medications.

No need to put me in prison for my anarchism. They just get me hooked on brain pills until I'm not only a prisoner in my own home but a prisoner everywhere I may go. Are there any anarchist groups that have people like me?

The doctor and case manager just diagnose the hell out of me with every move I make.

One reason I'm labeled so schizophrenic is my loyalty to anarchy. Looks like just saying you're an anarchist can get you in a mental prison. I need help and support while I attempt to get my brain back without the cops coming to beat me up.

What is *Fifth Estate's* opinion of psychiatry? You don't mention that hardly ever... I would love to get some letters from you people. I don't feel safe. I need anarchist support, not a state lawyer.

Chris Jones

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Spokane, WA 99201

FE note: The Winter 2006 *Fifth Estate* (#371) was a special issue on "The Psychology of Freedom" and had a number of articles addressing these topics.

You may also be interested in the Icarus Project, in which many anarchists and radicals are involved. Their mission statement says: "The Icarus Project envisions anew culture and language that resonates with our actual experiences of 'mental illness' rather than trying to fit our lives into a conventional framework. We are a network of people living with experiences that are commonly labeled as bipolar or other psychiatric conditions. We believe we have mad gifts to be cultivated and taken care of rather than diseases or disorders to be suppressed or eliminated."

You can contact them at: www.theicarusproject.net, or

Icarus Project

c/o Fountain House

425 West 47th St

New York, NY 10036.

MCGOWAN TRANSFERRED

I want to thank you for sending me the last two issues of your publication as well as your consistent and continued coverage of the imprisonment of environmental activists (See "The Green Scare Goes On," FE Fall 2008). It is greatly appreciated that FE provides free subscriptions to prisoners, a growing number for sure; now 2.3 million in the US.

Currently, I am at one of two (known) "communication management units" (CMU) run by the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) that was opened in May 2008. I am among roughly twenty men imprisoned here—a majority of which are Muslim and have so-called "terrorism" cases.

Many of us were doing just fine at low and medium security prisons prior to our transfer here. The unit itself is quite small, consisting of three ranges (hallways) with a tiny recreation yard. We are completely segregated from the 900 men of the medium security prison the CMU is located at. In fact, for us to go to Medical (or leave the unit), the whole area is shutdown so there is no contact with other prisoners.

Perhaps the worst aspect, aside from the lack of due process with our transfer and illegal manner in which the CMU was established, is how our contact with the outside world is restricted.

Federal prisoners are granted up to 300 minutes a month of phone time and as much as eight full days of visiting per month. At the CMU, the difference is stark. Although the staff claims we are not here for punitive reasons, we can only receive one 15 minute call a week that is live monitored, and one 4-hour non-contact visit per month which takes place behind glass with video cameras hovering over my visitor's head and mine.

Given these conditions—the absolute segregation, communication limits, and lack of public information about the CMU—one must wonder what is the goal of the CMU. Is it to destroy the well-being, mental health, and family/community ties of its captives? Is it to serve as a deterrent to people involved in the environmental, animal rights, and social justice movements?

Is this just a straight up political prisoner unit? It's hard to take seriously the claim that I need "better communication management" given that my time in prison is marked by high participation in educational programs and a lack of any disciplinary infractions.

I don't want to end on a down note, though. I am making the best of the situation in which I find myself—reading tremendous amounts, corresponding with friends, family, and people all over the world, reflecting, and exercising.

Soon, I will start a paralegal program to help with post-release employment and activism.

Thanks to everyone who has written or helped out in any way; support is invaluable. Updates on my situation and legal work can be found on supportdaniel.org.

Daniel McGowan #63794-053

USP Marion

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Thank You For Supporting *Fifth Estate*

With the ongoing collapse of almost everything, and almost daily announcements of print media sources folding, the support we've gotten from readers is extraordinarily heartening as we enter our 44th year of publication. A special thanks to our subscribers and those who add an extra donation when renewing, and especially to our Sustainers, whose generosity is a key part of our financial stability.

We know times are becoming increasingly difficult for everyone, but we urge you to maintain your support of this magazine. Radical voices become increasingly crucial during crisis periods such as the one we're in and with costs of publishing soaring, we need your continuing support.

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GIs and PRISONERS: If this is a requested sample copy, you have to write us again to let us know that you want a subscription. Subs are free to you.

CORRECTION

The last line of "Free Feasts, Erotic Play, and the Eruption of the Marvelous" by Gardeners Against the Work Ethic was inadvertently left out of *Fifth Estate* #379 (Fall 2008).

The complete closing of the article on page 35 should have read:

"And let's also realize where traces of these currents can be found today."

fifth Estate

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<https://www.fiftheestate.org/archive/380-spring-2009/letters>
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