

Letters

Our readers respond

Various Authors

2013

We welcome your opinions.

Please send us your comments and ideas about what we have published by letter (typed or handwritten), email, or social media.

Address information is at our website: www.fifthestate.org

Florida Kollektive

I'm writing on behalf of our small and growing kollektive in northeast Florida.

We are focusing our grass-roots efforts on organizing community projects with friends throughout the state and are preparing to launch a new project focusing on distributing literature. With our projects, and our lives, we embrace cooperative models and combat the capitalist mentality.

Our project begins with an old school bus. We are converting it into a mobile info-shop which we call The Radical Book Mobile. It will be a mobile distribution center of promotional/educational material for local and regional interest groups; our own printed material and a variety of new and used books.

We intend to provide access to literature because we believe in the power of an educated populous. Capital should not be an obstacle for educating oneself and so we will ask only for a suggested donation for the items we stock. We will always welcome barter, trade, and even gift to insure people have access to the knowledge they seek.

Similarly in our build out of the bus, we are using salvaged materials and donations from people who want to support the project.

While we are gathering materials, merchandise and building the book mobile we are holding info-fairs every weekend at our kollektive house in Jacksonville. We are distributing print media from the Slingshot Collective in Berkeley, the Earth First! Journal from Lake Worth, Florida, the Fifth Estate from Detroit, several other independent publishers, and have donated our personal libraries to get momentum going. We'd like to develop working relationships with other publishers and collectives and distribute works and titles which may be available.

Please let us know if you're interested in helping us get started and how best to open the channels of contribution and communication. We can be reached via email from kairoskollektive@riseup.net, our project website is burnpilebooks.wordpress.com, 700 East Union St., Box 10, Jacksonville FL 32206, or call us at (904) 701-DoIt.

Siddhi

Riverside (Jacksonville), Fla.

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Portrait Origin

The final page of Fifth Estate's Spring 2012 issue featured a drawing of a man named Coyote, who wrote upon it of his life experience as a member of the commune and intentional community Twin Oaks, located in the White Oak Forest, east of Appalachia.

Initially unbeknownst to FE's editors this piece occurred as a "Portrait-Story," specifically part of a series of over 600 originals called "Voices for Appalachia—A Portrait-Story Project Written and Narrated by Hundreds" (active 16 months altogether, between March 2008 and November 2009).

The collection is largely about residents' folk, family and bioregional connection with their land, the resistance movement against mountain range removal coal "mining" and towards a future beyond reckless extraction industries.

See voiceforappalachia.org.

Of interest to anti-authoritarians in a climate-destabilized world, "The Post-Katrina Portraits: Written and Narrated by Hundreds," (active 13 consecutive months, September 2005 onward) largely shows a stateless disaster relief effort.

And, just in case one believes that overt self-determinationist expression can only form as reaction to grievance: facesomadtown.org.

Also, the little known Black Bloc Portraits almost immediately precursored (amongst other works) what became formalized as The Portrait-Story Project: see dc.indymedia.org/newswire/display/115903/index.php.

Given explicit grassroots political will, such a broadly participatory art and story documentary project could emerge anywhere. See portraitstoryproject.org for reifying details.

Informed inquiries may go to wanderer@riseup.net

The Portrait-Story Project bottomliner

Fifth Estate Note: Thank you for clearing up the origin of the graphic and story we printed, and for its history.

We received the graphic and story directly from Coyote who is a subscriber and supporter of the Fifth Estate. He didn't submit it for inclusion in our issue, but we did so without mentioning it to him as somewhat of an intended surprise. It's good to know that it is part of a much larger project.

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Zerzan in London

I made it to the talk that John Zerzan gave at London's Raven Row Gallery in August. [See article on John's talk on P. 10.]

It was interesting and generally well received from what I could tell, although I expect most that came were familiar with his work. There were a number of interesting questions afterwards that got built on from the talk. I might try and get back there and have a look at the Fifth Estate back issues if the show is still running!

Quite strange that there was so little protest around the Olympics, either against the event itself or just to use that as an opportunity in terms of coverage. There was a huge police operation to stop any form of protest, and known protesters may have been sent threatening letters before the games started.

The security operation behind the games was quite a scary prospect, including the level of surveillance. Apparently, they have lampposts installed with mics that can pick up specific conversations. George Orwell eat your heart out!

I don't know in any detail what the anarchist response was, as I am fairly recently new to these ideas myself. Perhaps the mood of national optimism swept the anarchist circles as well. If so, lets hope it doesn't last too long!

Tim Francey

London

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The Free is Free!

Congrats on your excellent Summer 2012 issue, especially the Summer Reading sections. I noticed no anarchist novels were included; a pity as I'm promoting The Free, 2012 edition, which would have been perfect.

Fifth Estate gave the novel, set during an anarchist revolution in the collapse of capitalism, a Wow! review when it first came out in 1986. It was written by E.B. Maple, who I understand is still in your collective under his real name.

The new version of this anarchy-feminist adventure, which is a free download linked to a blog on the theme, is twice as long and leads us, with the neighbourhood collectives and free unions, right through capitalist collapse, climate chaos, and a violent, joyful, sexy and often hilarious social revolution and into a budding money-free world.

While yet to go viral, The Free has been acclaimed on its blog, thefreeonline.wordpress.com, with over 100,000 visitors, mostly to the relating themes, plus 2,600 Friends of The Free on its Facebook page: facebook.com/thefree.mikegilli. You can free-download also for e-book and phone readers on the blog.

Some academic anarchists scoff at novels, but this one is perfect for learning and study as well. As all the classic ideas take place in the background story, they are referenced to the relevant books you can link to, and also free download from the Anarchist Library.

So, if you're curious, especially if you're a wage or mortgage slave, or if you're female or gay, check it out. The Free will clarify your plans on what to do as our crazy system and mistreated climate fall apart around us!

All the best and hope you're still revolting,

M.Gilliland

Barcelona

Walker Lane responds: Mike is being kind. Not having fiction reviews in our edition on Anarchist Summer Reading is a hole in what is available for not just our ideas, but for what emotions the genre elicits in a reader. I read The Free and wrote the review in these pages over 25 years ago, yet many of its scenes still stand out vividly in my mind. I highly recommend it.

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Viability of Violence

Greetings from the Texas gulag! As always, I thoroughly enjoyed your superb magazine and read the Spring 2012 edition cover to cover before passing it around to my literate comrades

However, I must take strong exception to John Zerzan's take on the viability of violence as a tactic in the promotion of revolutionary values [see "Vagaries of the Left"].

Like it or not, the American people, and, indeed, most people of the Western world, have been pointedly conditioned since infancy to view private property as sacrosanct. Destruction of that property, even in a worthy cause, and used as a propaganda tool, is almost inevitably counterproductive and only serves to alienate the forces for good.

Violence can be a great tool when you have superior numbers and arms, but until a critical number of sleeping people wake up to the predatory and unsustainable nature of capitalism-imperialism, the reactionary forces will continue to use it because it works in tandem with the corporate owned media's spin machine.

That photo of the California campus cop pepper spraying unarmed, peaceful student protesters did more to wake up people than a thousand smashed windows. Zerzan should ask himself, if violence promotes progress, why do reactionary forces use agents provocateurs when violence isn't present?

Our hope lies solely in the waking up of "the hundredth monkey" to our toxic situation. Violence only prolongs the sleep.

Yours for a peaceful revolution,

Richard Ostrander

Huntsville, Texas

John Zerzan responds: I doubt that the image of people passively being pepper-sprayed did much of anything to embolden or inspire others to resistance. I admire their courage and, yes, it exposed the pigs, but does playing the victim really help us move forward?

There is really no way around the move to targeted property damage, as I see it. Property is sacrosanct but the move to actual resistance is necessary. We must go through that barrier, overcome the initial antipathy.

ELF and ALF actions have been effective, it seems to me, especially when accompanied by lucid communiques explaining the necessity of physical attacks on oppressive targets.

Sticking with play-the-protest game tactics that obey the rules is no substitute for moving forward in real ways. I don't see property destruction as violent, by the way. Can inanimate objects, say, a building, be violated?

Maybe quite a few more than you think are ready for break-out tactics, and will respect resistance over obedience.

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Homophobic Lyrics

When I recorded my album “Dissent” in December 2011, I wanted it to represent the philosophical underpinnings that make up my anarchism. What I did not want it to represent was any form of bigotry.

Unfortunately, my hip-hop background and my anarchism had not merged into a cohesive whole (still trying to figure out how best to employ the latter with the former), as is evidenced in the song, “Hate Me,” which Paul J. Comeau, in his review of “Dissent” in the Summer 2012 FE, chose to pinpoint for my use of homophobic slurs to denigrate those I am critical of.

I took Paul’s review pretty hard at first and felt like I was being attacked. Naively, I had trouble seeing that even though homophobic slurs are often heard in hip-hop music (the cliché, “everybody says it”) they are still homophobic slurs, same as an ethnic or racial slur.

Since I am not a homophobe or anti-gay I should not employ words that are. I was also upset because this was my first review in an anarchist publication. I was not too excited that my first impression would be that of a gay-basher. But, I do not think that was overtly stated by Paul and was more me being uber-defensive.

I would agree that “there is no place in anarchism for homophobia.” It took this little encounter to see that this applied to myself as well and that the language I was using was inherently homophobic, whether I had realized it or not.

Spanish
Brooklyn, N.Y.

fifth Estate

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