

Anarcho-Shorts

& Other Tales of the Planet

Various Authors

2016

Berkeley Barb Celebrates 50th

by Ken Wachsberger

Preceding the *Fifth Estate* by two weeks, the *Berkeley Barb* celebrated its fiftieth anniversary with exhibits, films, poetry, and panel discussions on August 9, 2015.

The two papers were among the first five members of the Underground Press Syndicate. The Barb was known for its radical news coverage, outrageous visuals, support for liberation movements, and its explicit sex ads.

Celebration attendees heard stories about how the *Barb's* first sex classified ad came to be, one member's difficulty in turning against his mentor, founder Max Scherr, to join the staff rebellion that created Berkeley Tribe, and the Barb's and Black Panthers' support for gay rights. Scherr's penny-pinching personality and the role of the sex ads were called out multiple times, but with an air of retrospective amusement.

In opening and closing keynote addresses, Trina Robbins recalled her career as a groundbreaking feminist comix artist and historian. Dr. Eugene Schoenfeld, known to underground press readers nationwide, including the *Fifth Estate*, for his health and sex advice column, "Dr. HIPpocrates," described the period as "the golden age of sex," after discovery of the birth control pill and before AIDS.

Over 400 people attended the various events.

There was a staff and friends reunion including Dr. HIPpocrates, former Black Panther Bobby Seale, Berkeley Free Speech Movement veterans, and a live concert that began with former Beau Brummels singer Sal Valentino and ended with Country Joe McDonald, singing his anti-war "Fixin' to Die Rag" with the chant he made famous at Woodstock, "Give me an F..."

The Paris Commune: Restored Movie

Cinéma du Peuple (The People's Cinema), a movie-making collective formed by French anarchists in France in 1913, used the newly-popular medium of film to commemorate the Paris Commune of 1871, the first modern autonomous self-governing resistance to the state.

The result was the 1914 film, "La Commune," with one of the group's members, Armand Guerra, as producer and also actor in the 19-minute production.

"La Commune" utilizes historic still photos and reenactments of the episode leading to the insurrection and declaration of the Commune. The last two minutes include footage of a 1911 gathering of surviving revolutionaries, including the anarchist Nathalie Lemel.

There is also a scene depicting the Communards' Wall (Mur des Fédérés) where 147 Commune fighters were executed by the victorious reactionary forces, and a flag with the inscription, "Long live the Commune."

The production undertaken by Cinéma du Peuple was the first of its kind and became the inspiration for several radical film collective projects in the 1930s, '60s and beyond.

"La Commune" was lost for many years, but in 1995 a nitrate negative copy was found in the French national film archives. Available free online at cinema.arte.tv/fr/la-commune.

Pay to visit Karl Marx?

At some point before he died, Karl Marx decided to provide himself with a burial plot in one of London's private graveyards, Highgate Cemetery. His friend Friedrich Engels paid for it.

Today, visitors can view his grave, with a monument topped by a glowering, larger-than-life visage of the man. It was installed in the 1950s courtesy of the Communist Party of Great Britain.

Below the bust, an inscription calls out, "Workers of all lands, unite!"

Lately, however, some of them have been complaining, if not uniting, against a fee being charged to visit Marx's resting place, a man who advocated an end to capitalism.

According to a recent *Wall Street Journal* article, a charity, Friends of Highgate, began restoration of the graveyard, the resting place of many famous people, and instituted fees to cover the costs.

In protest, some lefties visit a public park bordering the cemetery and peek over a fence to get a distant glimpse of their political idol.

For its part, the charity that looks after the cemetery sees a different kind of irony: Karl Marx's decision to buy a burial plot in a private London graveyard over the then state-provided alternatives.

One of the charity's founders remarked of Marx, "He led the capitalist life. He even pawned his wife's silver."

Madrid street name changes

Forty years after the death of Francisco Franco, some tributes to the brutal dictatorship he headed in Spain are finally being removed from public view.

The Historical Memory Law, enacted in 2007, called for all symbols portraying the Franco regime in a positive light to be removed. But, there is no time frame specified, and owing to strong right and far-right political influence in the country, many have remained in place.

The leftist Madrid city council recently estimated that some 170 streets, squares and public buildings in the capital still bear names honoring Franco and his murderous rule.

A major downtown Madrid street, Calle General Yague, is named after a Franco officer known as the "Butcher of Badajoz" after overseeing the massacre of hundreds of civilians in the southern city. Another name gives tribute to the Blue Division, Spanish soldiers who fought under Hitler on the Eastern Front during World War II.

The mayor and city council say they plan on changing all of the names plus that of a Madrid square named after Margaret Thatcher.



Bye-bye Franco

News from Spain reports increasingly draconian anti-terrorist laws, a wave of police attacks against anarchists across the country (68 comrades arrested during the past three years), and a steady march of anti-austerity measures leading to economic insecurity and poverty.

2016 *Slingshot Organizer* available

It's year 22 for the ubiquitous *Slingshot Organizer*, the paper challenger to the smartphone. Longtime supporters of the *Fifth Estate*, the folks at *Slingshot* keep on innovating and improving their calendar/resource guides. Both the "classic" (4.25 by 5.5 inch) and desktop (5.5 by 8.5 inch) versions for 2016 offer covers in 15 colors. The larger model comes with a tough recycled plastic coil binding. See slingshot.tao.ca for where to buy the Organizer online and in stores.

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<https://www.fifthestate.org/archive/395-winter-2016-50th-anniversary/anarcho-shorts>
Fifth Estate #395, Winter 2016 — 50th Anniversary

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