



### GOODBYE TO ALL THAT

This is the last issue of the **Bound Together Newsletter**, at least in this incarnation. I do the most of the work involved in putting this newsletter out, and I will be leaving the bookstore at the end of December. I feel that it would be unfair to my fellow collective members, my readers, and my friends to simply quit without an explanation, and this is my attempt to answer why I'm leaving. So often people simply drop out of projects without a word; journals end by ceasing to exist without a discussion of why they have ended. By writing about my reasons for leaving, I hope that I can touch upon questions that people who have an anti-authoritarian/anarchist perspective need to attempt to answer, and if they can't, they

need to re-examine their own participation.

At this point I don't think these questions can be answered within the ideology of anarchism and anti-authoritarianism.

My name is Freddie Baer. I have been working in the **Bound Together bookstore collective** for about three years now. At first I just worked on the first incarnation of the **BT Newsletter**, doing graphic design, but in May '84 I joined the **Bookstore collective** and began doing a weekly shift. My reasons for joining were very personal. An eight year relationship I had been in had just ended badly, and I was very depressed, lonely, and feeling isolated. I joined the **Bookstore** in an attempt to end that isolation and involve myself with others that I felt shared some of my political beliefs, in

what I perceived was a community. I had considered myself part of the "anarchist movement" in one way or another since 1972 (including a stint at Processed World for fifteen months) though I had not called myself an anarchist for some time, finding that label too restrictive and narrow, in fact, not liking any labels at all. However, I did call myself anti-authoritarian when I had to, using an acceptable political verbal shorthand for very complex, diverse ideas.

In the fall of 1985, I started working in an office where I have access to a MacIntosh (for typesetting and lay out) and a xerox machine. At that time there was not a regular Bay Area anti-authoritarian journal, and I felt that it would be useful to report and comment on important local events that could be of interest to both the local and more distant anarchist/anti-authoritarian community. I also thought that newsletter could pass along information about the bookstore and upcoming events. Finally, there are many creative people around this community, and I felt that the newsletter could be a format for their (and my) work. Since I had the means of production at my disposal and the inclination, the newsletter began.

Has the **BT Newsletter** served my original purposes? I don't know. I see articles from the newsletter reprinted in the anarchist and anti-authoritarian press. Somebody, somewhere, must be reading it. I occasionally get comments from friends and correspondents. I also get criticised for what I and others write, though more often than not, I just hear that someone's unhappy about something I've written. Most of the time nobody really says anything about the newsletter one way or another. Has the newsletter really made a difference in anyone's opinions?

I'm leaving the bookstore because I have asked myself many questions about what it means to participate in an anarchist bookstore, and why I have participated, and I have not been able to answer

satisfactorily to my own self. I joined the bookstore to be less isolated, but I became more isolated within an insular and self-perpetuating community that does not question its own ideology and action. I joined the bookstore to work on a project with others with a similar political viewpoint but never questioned why I felt the need to be doing that project or why I assumed others would share my political viewpoint just because they, too, called themselves anti-authoritarian.

What does it mean to be an anarchist bookstore? The rote answers have become to disseminate information on anarchism and anti-authoritarianism that is not available elsewhere and to provide an alternate gathering place for the anarchist/anti-authoritarian community, but these answers are no answers because they raise more questions that go unanswered. Why is it important to disseminate anarchist ideas? Why are those ideas considered applicable to anyone's daily life? What does it even mean to be an anarchist/anti-authoritarian in 1986? What is/Who is/Where is an anarchist/anti-authoritarian community?

I have often said that the anarchist/anti-authoritarian community is a false community, that the only thing that unites this community is the rather tenuous glue of opposing the state, and even that is not consistent (considering some's qualified support of some state government apparatus as in Nicaragua). The community then further fragments into different forms of opposition, different types of anarcho-isms that have their own pat solutions to what ails the world. Regardless of this, shared politics alone do not a community make.

I have also said that within this false community of anti-authoritarianism, you can find people with whom you can share ideas and interests other than politics, and form your own community of friends. However, I have come to the conclusion

that to form a friendship on the basis of shared politics alone is not very healthy. Politics because of its nature is not very nurturing; it is cold and rational and anti-human, and anti-authoritarianism remains a politics.

I have become identified with my activity--the bookstore has become me. I go observe a demonstration and by my presence there am the ipso facto representative of Bound Together. It doesn't make a difference that I have criticisms of the bookstore, that I don't even consider myself an anarchist...I have become Ms. Anarchy Activist of 1986 by my very participation and the production of the newsletter. The newsletter became something acceptable "to do." I never questioned its function, how it contributed to my continued self-isolation within anti-authoritarianism, and how people related to me on the basis of the production of the newsletter.

I would like to go beyond politics; I would like to go beyond polemics. I would like to go beyond the politics of opposition (the state/capitalism/church--what have you), and I'd like to go beyond opposing opposition--the nasty negativity that pervades anti-anti-authoritarianism lately. I would like to grow and become more human. I would like to understand why I am the way I am, why I do what I do, and how I can change. I want to understand why I do things, and I want to be able to answer the questions that I raise, at least for myself. I want a sense of history; I want to develop theoretically. I want to be more creative and intergrate what I feel and think into what I do and create. I want my social relationships to be based on caring, not critiquing, and I want to help people grow from criticism, not cut them down. For of all those who have said that I am too critical, please remember that I am more critical of myself than anyone, and that I question my motives on all that I do and think.

I am not leaving the bookstore angry; I am leaving somewhat sad and depressed because I have spent three years of my life there, and it is a major life change for me to depart. I care very much for some of the people I have worked with and met there, and I hope very much that those friendships will not end with the end of my participation there. On the other hand, if those friendships do end with my leaving, it reflects back on my earlier statement that politics alone can not be a basis for friendship.

This is going to be one hell of a last newsletter. Besides my departing statement, Lawrence has just submitted a piece critical of anarchism which brings up a lot of the same points that I make (but in a more, shall we say, academic way), Lee has written a piece (sort of) critical of criticism, and Keith Sanborn has submitted an almost unreadable denunciation of the Lettrist disruption reported in the last issue. I imagine this is going to make for some dense reading and will give more ammunition to those who perceive that the discussions going on here on the west coast are nothing but squabbles and petty feuds. I think that the discussions in here are much more complex than bickering and should not be written off as such. To do so would ignore the fundamental problems with anti-authoritarianism/anarchism.

Finally, I recognize the influence that Stephanie Klein has had on me; the questions that she raises in **Bizarro Processed World** are the ones that I have asked myself. I have spent a long time agonizing over whether or not those are questions I would have asked myself otherwise if she had not brought them up. I can honestly say that I believe that I had begun to question my own activity; however, Stephanie lucidly and coherently put into words that which I had been feeling. For this I thank her.

--Freddie Baer  
11/30/86



## IS PARIS BURNING?

This article reports on the student protests of the past week in France against Government legislation aimed at overhauling the country's university system. The Government proposal was essentially aimed at making the 72 universities in the government run French system more distinct and independent. Legislation would raise academic fees and allow universities to be more selective in their admission policies. The changes would have given individuals universities the right to issue their own diplomas. In addition, universities would have gained greater power to select among applicants, rather than automatically admit all high

school graduates.

Student leaders denounced the measure on the grounds that it would create a more "elitist" system, a hierarchy of universities, with some diplomas being more highly regarded by prospective employers than others.

Another factor for the student protests, according to government officials, is that the education bill falls against the background of an economic crisis, when unemployment among youth is at record levels.

Students from more than 70 general purpose universities organized themselves into a protest movement. The movement was effective enough to force the

conservative Government to scrap a plan to revamp the university system, a plan that the students deemed to be against their interests. The movement showed several things, among them that the students, who organized themselves into committees covering the entire country, were able in a short time to become a major political force.

The movement differed student activism in 1968 in that the students' aims were essentially practical, often economic concerns; participants claimed not be revolutionaries at all but people eager, as their slogans said, to assure themselves a more secure future.

A striking element in the movement was that it did not produce conspicuous student leaders, as the 1968 movement did in Daniel Cohn-Bendit. Another striking element of the movement was the rapidity of its growth and the fierceness of its opposition to government legislation.

One student said: "We don't have the kind of money the Americans have. The Government wants to encourage private giving to support the universities, but in France no private company is going to give unless the universities train students for them. We would become adjuncts to the companies and would no longer by universities at all."

*Thursday, 12/4:* Dozens of people were injured when students clashed with police at the end of a march in Paris. Between 300,000 and 500,000 students had massed along a five mile route, larger than a similar demonstration a week ago, when 200,000 people demonstrated in Paris and another 200,000 in provincial cities. For today's march, students from the provinces had come by special trains and buses.

After marching through Paris most of the marchers gathered in front of the Invalides Monument to listen to a program of speeches and music that promised to continue past midnight. An estimated 2000-3000 students tried to press on to the

front of the National Assembly building, which has been the focus of the protest. They were met there by a line of helmeted riot police, and it was there the clashes occurred. The police used water cannons, tear gas and truncheons to disperse the students. About 180 people were reported injured, several seriously. Two of the injured students were in serious condition; one student lost an arm when a tear gas grenade exploded in his hand, and another lost an eye when he was hit in the face with a projectile.

The violence that then followed what had been a peaceful and good humored demonstration clearly changed the atmosphere with students angry no longer only because of the proposed legislation, but also because of what they saw as police brutality.

*Friday, 12/5:* René Monory, the Minister of Education, announced the Government would continue to pursue planned legislation, but in what seemed to be a concession, he said earlier provisions to increase fees and make universities somewhat more selective would not be immediately pursued.

Thousands of students in Paris took to the streets again in unplanned demonstrations, snarling traffic for much of the afternoon and evening. For much of the day squadrons of buses used to transport the French riot police could be seen rushing from one place to another in an effort to block key intersections and bridges.

An estimated total of 20,000 students calling for the resignation of the French Interior Minister Charles Pasqua, who is responsible for the police, marched from the Sorbonne University to the square in front of the Paris Opera and then back again.

*Late Friday night, 12/5:* Malik Oussékine, 22 years old, a student of Algerian descent, died after being beaten by the police during a demonstration.

Oussékine was reported by the police to have died of a heart attack in a hospital, but witnesses say that the police had beaten him.

One witness said three policemen had followed several students into the courtyard of a building near the Sorbonne from which they had been evicted after demonstrations earlier Friday. "The policemen came into the entrance of the building and beat us with nightsticks," said Paul Bayzelon. "The young man next to me was crying, 'Leave me alone, leave me alone!' He fell, and the police kept kicking him in the head."

Another witness, Phillippe Dumas, a professor from Montpellier, said the motorcycle police had been "using their nightsticks against anyone who was young, on the street, on the sidewalks, to the right and to the left."

**Saturday 12/6:** This afternoon, 15,000 to 20,000 students marched from the Sorbonne to the hospital where Oussékine had died. At one point, demonstrators charged a cordon of riot police, forcing

them into a police station.

**Saturday night:** The violence in the Latin quarter lasted from early Saturday evening until a few hours before dawn Sunday. Youths could be seen building and burning barricades on the streets, throwing paving stones and bottle at the police, setting cars afire and looting shops. In the fighting at least 68 people were injured and 28 people arrested. After four hours about 500 police surrounded the area and dispersed the rioters. Police said 20 cars were burned and 21 windows broken.

Security officials defended the decision to send a motorcycle-borne police flying squad to stop demonstrators burning cars and building barricades outside the Sorbonne. Witnesses say it was officers of this squad who beat Oussékine.

**Sunday 12/7:** The increase in anger, and a growing sense of alienation from this country's political leaders seem to be behind the students' refusal to accept a concession made by the government on Friday when the Minister of Education offered to withdraw at least temporarily the



Bouquets were piled near where a student was beaten to death by police during protests in Paris

BY ASSOCIATED PRESS



Associated Press

Burned car lying on its side in the Latin Quarter in Paris as street sweepers cleaned up debris yesterday.

most disputed parts of the government's plan.

Shopkeepers swept up sheets of shattered glass in front of stores and cafes this morning. Along the main streets of the Latin quarter, carcasses of burned and overturned cars were pulled to the sides of the road and piles of rubble were swept away by sanitation workers.

Officials such as conservative Prime Minister Jacques Chirac and Interior Minister Pasqua seemed to be taking a hard-line position on the violence of the last few days, blaming it not on the police, as most students have, but on what Pasqua today called "professionals of destabilization, leftists and anarchists of all stripes and nationalities..." Pasqua said French police would "not again tolerate" such an outburst.

In what he called an "appeal to calm" Chirac said "we will accept neither disorder nor efforts at destabilization led by helmeted minorities." He referred to bands of young people in motorcycle helmets who have tried to provoke the police

during student demonstrations that have been otherwise peaceful.

On the other hand, TFI, one of the Government's television channels, identified most of the troublemakers as right-wingers who boasted on camera of their hatred for communists and immigrants before running down the street smashing cars and shop windows.

The TV film also showed police doing nothing about the troublemakers even they stood within easy grasp. One sequence of film showed police allowing some to move through police ranks to regroup on the other side.

**Monday, 12/8:** Chirac under intense political pressure capitulated to protesting students yesterday and withdrew the university reform bill. Chirac cited the "the demonstrations under way, with all the risks and dangers of violence that they entail, are the proof of this." as the reason for withdrawing the university plan.

The violence of the past few days, and particularly the death of Oussékine, threatened to broaden the scope of the

student movement by adding charges of repression and brutality to the already strong complaints about the university plan.

Throughout France, schools and businesses halted for up to an hour to protest the death of Oussékine. Subway motormen walked off the job in Paris, and air traffic controllers held up a dozen flights. More than 30,000 students marched through the streets of Paris.

Chirac's announcement came an hour before the march. In the emotionally charged atmosphere, it seemed too late.

"The life of a student against a piece of legislation," one student said. "The account is not good."

**Tuesday, 12/9:** A day after withdrawing a plan for a university shake-up in the face of violent protests, Chirac postponed other legislation today as students prepared to renew demonstrations. Chirac told supporters that he was cancelling a special parliamentary session next month in which the Government hoped to push through several contentious measures which included steps to make it more difficult for immigrants to acquire French nationality, the legalization of private prisons, and a five-year military spending program.

**Wednesday, 12/10:** Tens of thousands of students marched through the streets of Paris behind a black, wordless banner that signaled the mourning in their triumph in

forcing Chirac to give in to their demands. Though Chirac had capitulated on Monday, the students had decided to stage the previously scheduled march anyway, not as a celebration of victory but as a protest against what they insist is police repression.

Crowd estimates varied from 126,000 to 500,000 people. Marching at the head of the demonstration were families of students wounded the previous week. Many family members and other marchers wore buttons with the slogan, "Never again." High school and university students joined by parents' associations and members of Communist and socialist labor unions walked in silence.

A student call for a general strike to accompany the march went largely unheeded. Most union members apparently saw little point in a strike after the main battle was won.

To prevent any outbreaks of violence similar to that of the last week, the paraders had their own private guard made up of students and members of the Communist-run General Confederation of Labor.

*(This article has been compiled from the New York Times and the S.F. Chronicle from the past week. It does not claim to be an objective report, being based on the conservative media nor does it presume to be an analysis.)*



## CRITIQUE OF CRITICISM, CRITICISM OF CRITIQUE Redundance of Pleonasm, Pleonasm of Redundance

### *Part One: Definition of Terms*

Surprisingly enough, the word "anarchist" means "without government." I always thought it meant "against government." Surely most people think it means "against each other," but this may be only a regional variant. The provincial anarchist press (New York, London, etc.) takes delight at critiquing the Bay Area's colorful native infighting as if it were the main bulwark of the state. Would that it were. However, the state (as closer examination reveals) is actually encased in a bulwark of cleverly woven lies, lead, paper, and apathy. Our renowned mudslinging is largely irrelevant. We ourselves are largely irrelevant. Nevertheless, I have nothing better to do at the moment so now I'm going to put in my own two cents worth. Skip ahead if you're bored.

### *Part Two: Historical Background*

Several issues back, Freddie wrote an article criticizing an anti-gentrification rally on the next block. (If you don't know Freddie or the others referred to herein, not to worry. Just substitute the name of your local corresponding personalities. The story will make just as much sense. Maybe more.) Before I had a chance to read this article, even before I knew it existed, I heard it criticized by Joey. Now Joey is one of the very few people on earth who is both smarter than I am and better read. (He's also a "nicer person", but that and six bits buys him one cup of coffee.) When Joey talks, I listen. He had invited me to this demo, but I had shined it on. He didn't gripe about my absence. Freddie's critique he objected to strongly though. His objections fell into two categories. First of all, a flawed and inadequate action is better than sitting on apathetic hands. He's right. Secondly, "Freddie is a compulsive

fault-finder for whom **nothing** is perfect or pure enough and if **only** people like that would have read the relevant passage in Bakunin they would **know** that the truest Ideals are not those founded on Air, somewhere far above the clouds and beyond our reach but instead are those Grounded in stolid Earth." Well it may be.

Normally one would assume that Joey's criticism smacked of personality attack. ("Slag" we say in these parts, since such an important concept needs to be expressed in monosyllabic brevity.) Did Joey "slag" Freddie? I think not. Freddie is in fact a compulsive fault-finder, but, hey, Somebody's gotta do it. (More on that later.)

To really understand what goes on in any rap, it is necessary to look not only into, but beyond the personalities involved. It is necessary to examine the relationships involved. Society is not composed of people. It is composed of relationships. Due to the near universal colonisation of the particular by the general that pervades human consciousness, we ourselves are composed primarily of the relationships in which we engage.

In short we are what we do. We do what we think (though we are seldom fully conscious of our thoughts). Mainly we think about people and things, especially as to how they relate to us. This is a function of ego, our main window on the world.

Enough philosophy. Back to the point.

Joey and Freddie are neither lovers nor rivals. They don't owe each other money or take turns doing the dishes. One has not borrowed the other's book and returned it festooned with jelly and fingerprints. Neither do they have feuding friends with whom honor dictates they must take sides. They have made no long distance calls on each other's phones, and they are not wearing the same dress. Neither has an axe to grind or a secret to sweep under the other's rug. Basically they get along

Pope John Paul II will be touring California in September of 1987 to propagate his reactionary views and institutions. He will visit the grave of Father Junipero Serra and conduct a Mass in Candlestick Park, among other local activities, during his swing through the U.S.A.

Pope John Paul II is attempting to restore the discipline and outlook that the Roman Catholic church possessed before the outbreak of various forms of modern liberal and revolutionary theology and practice. By suppressing dissent, insisting on his personal rule over the worldwide church, and constantly laying down a

reactionary and authoritarian line he seeks to persuade Catholics to abandon all ethical questioning and activity he does not sanction, and he uses his international position and the power of the church to repress movements and opinions contrary to his.

The church has always actively opposed movements of freedom since its organization, always finding the interests of its rulers the same as the most repressive governments. When European rape of the New World began, missionaries eradicated native culture, forcing lifeless submission to God and the State upon "Indians" as



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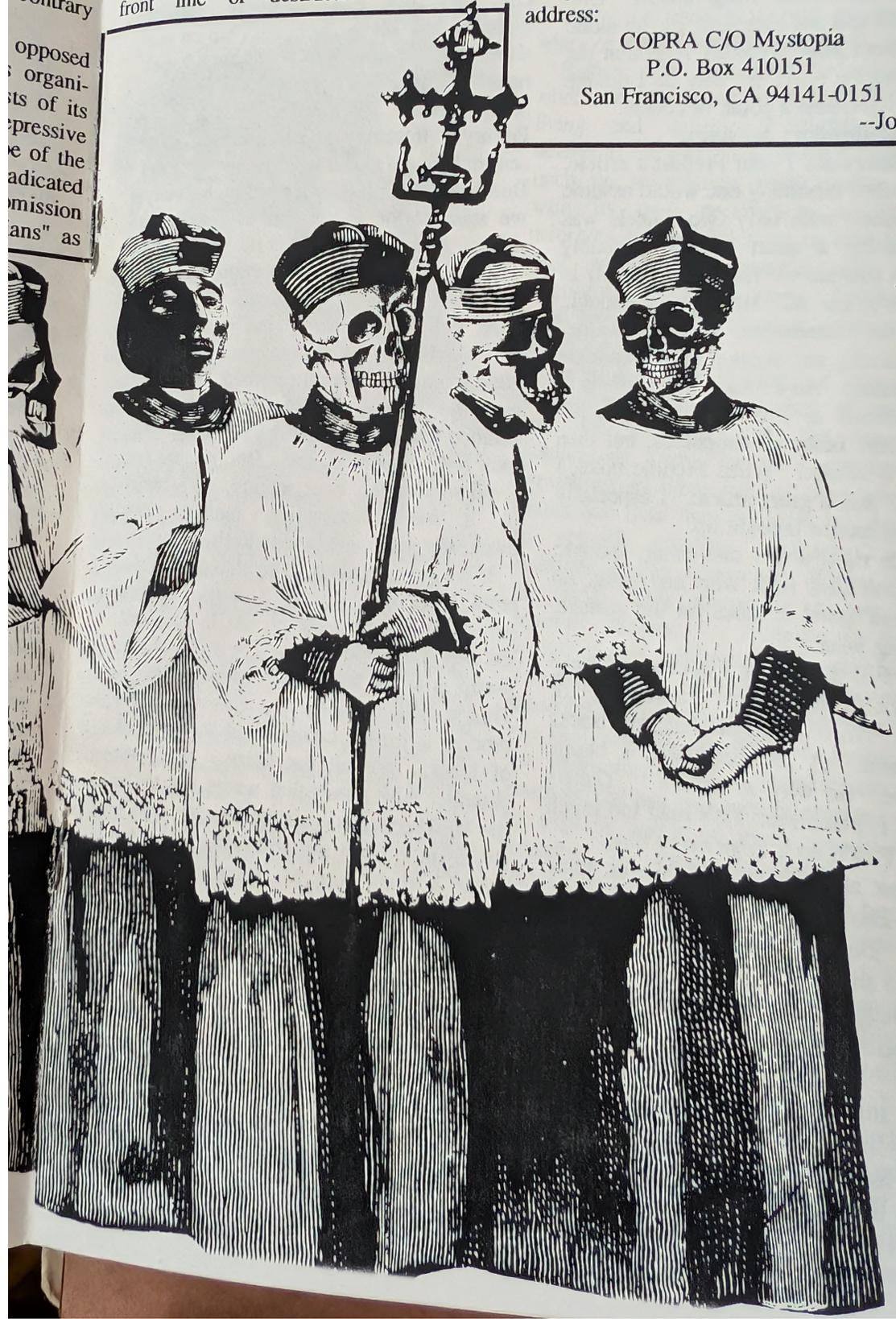
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effectively as they had centuries before upon those living in Europe. By visiting Father Serra's grave, the Pope will express his admiration for the man who organized and administered Western syphilisation's front line of destruction of native

Californians, the Missions.  
All who are interested in opposing Pope John Paul II's unhindered travel (i.e., giving the dude shit) are requested to write the Collation of Opposition to Papal Religious Authority (COPRA) at this address:

COPRA C/O Mystopia  
P.O. Box 410151  
San Francisco, CA 94141-0151

--Johann



despite being different people.

So what have we here? It must be that rarest of scarcities, an Actual Ideological Difference, untainted by petty interpersonal bullshit. Amazing. Right here in San Francisco. Who could have imagined.

True, it is a small disagreement: One over tactics and not over strategy, let alone goals. Both have probably forgotten the whole thing by now. So why do I dredge it up? To illustrate a point, of course.

### *Part Two: Random Musings*

Soon afterward I read Freddie's article. Pretty astute. Normally one would assume that someone with only two wheels was also "running a quart low." (Probably "with the idle set too high" and "no air in the spare.") But no. Surprisingly enough, despite the stereotype, Freddie neither grunts, drools, nor drags a single knuckle on the ground. Au contraire. Freddie is at least as smart as I am and **much** better read; a little neurotic sometimes, but then who am I to talk? When Freddie talks, I listen. It was a great article. I especially like the questions brought up.

Joey is right about one thing, though: Freddie can find fault with **anything**, no matter how good it looks on the surface. So fucking what.

We are blessed with a number of these characters. How about Lawrence, for example. No lines on his face nor tracks on his arm. A full belly and a happy home life. So why so cynical? There's only one explanation: He's read too much history. That'll do it to ya every time.

Or what about Sara or Kevin or some one you know? What's wrong with these people? Don't they ever have anything positive to say?

Surprisingly enough, negative can very well be positive.

Huh?

In a milieu composed entirely of Freddie's, how much would get done? Imagine half a dozen of these people writing a leaflet. Months go by while a comma is moved. And the State grinds

on. Everything must be perfect before it begins. Purity of line subordinates pragmatics of implementation. No questionable allies ever. Etc. Etc.

But on the other hand, the rest of us, Desperately Seeking Utopia, grasp straws, chase shadows, and "willingly suspend disbelief." Without the cynic's tap on our shoulder to warn us, we would (and have) rused off in circles when there was no straight path. We nearly succumbed to Petlurya's treachery at Peragrinofka. We sent half Spain's gold to Moscow. We did Business as Usual. Twice bitten, half shy, we stare at the finger, but not where it points. And the state grinds on.

None of us seem smart enough to get through life with only one brain.

As individuals we are but dust, bright dust maybe, clever perhaps, perhaps even good looking and nattily garbed. But dust none the less, swept under the state's rug. Bonded together we could be a sharp little rock embedded in its sole. But, no, we are a mass of motes, ever so tiny. We swirl in a most fascinating manner but eventually settle one by one to the floor.

If we are ever again to be able to act as a team, however so briefly, we must become able to reason as a group. At least about the action we undertake. The mind of the group is much larger than our own egos. This is difficult to accept. But true. The process is further complicated by division of labor. We all specialize. Well we should. Any group that wants me to be the bookkeeper is inviting disaster. So is any team without someone along who has made it their duty to figure out what's going wrong.

We are doing **something** wrong. We haven't figured out exactly what yet.

Personally, I don't even think about it much. I prefer to think about what we're doing right. But, hey, that's me. Others prefer to concentrate in other areas. Together, we are thinking up our future. An entire team of me's are just not going

to be able to think as much or as far as all of us thinking together. A team composed entirely of *me's* is just not going to get as far without someone to occasionally abort some impending plunge with a gentle but firm, **conclusion:** "Wise up chumps!"

--Lee



I am no longer able to consider or call myself an anarchist. Rather than define myself as one who adheres to the ideology of anarchism, I merely profess a desire to help achieve anarchy. Having been involved in several anarchist projects, I have come to the conclusion that anarchists are as rigid and inflexible as any other group of people who congregate on the basis of a common self-identification. Participants in anarchist or anti-authoritarian projects come into them with a pre-experience solidarity based only on their identification with anarchism. Instead of interacting on a less superficial level than that of involvement in an external project and thereby possibly becoming more aware of people's daily desires and priorities, anarchists seem to prefer the forced camaraderie associated with "being part of something productive."<sup>1</sup> The notion that goals can be shared simply due to an ideological label is seriously flawed, yet this assumption is pervasive among people who get involved with various projects that are called "anarchist" or "anti-authoritarian."

The majority of anarchists come into the anarchist *scene*<sup>2</sup> accepting pre-package ideas on how to behave and what sorts of social interactions to adopt. For instance, there is the understanding that electoral politics are a waste of time, but many individuals either don't (or can't) offer a

coherent critique of democratic representation or else lapse into their liberalism by voting for "special cases" (as happened recently for the No on 64 campaign). There is also a reflexive rejection of Marx and marxism, largely without understanding or even bothering to read any Marx or the libertarian marxists.<sup>3</sup>

Rather than analyzing *for themselves* what obstacles stand in the way of them *living* and developing (fulfilling their desires as opposed to *surviving*), anarchists latch on to existing (static) ideas, each with its own particularist worldview, priorities, and prescriptions on how best to deal with new situations and social relations. The various hyphenated anarchisms are the obvious examples of this phenomenon.

Anarchism is an ideology of opposition to the capitalist organization of society, and the defenders of the ideology (anarchists) are more comfortable remaining in their role of opposing the status quo than they are with the thought of actually creating egalitarian social relations among themselves (forget about "others"). This posture is the result of several factors: Adherence to a minoritarian philosophy (anarchism); Timidity (a lack of conviction toward the ideology precisely because anarchists have not analyzed the premises of Civilization *for themselves*); and, Defensiveness (the result of the last two factors plus the need to explain away or make excuses for mistakes by other anarchists). The manifestations of this posture can be seen in the lack of confrontation when someone does something that is perceived to be unanarchistic and in the acceptance of hierarchical relations and authoritarian behavior in their own lives and in the lives of their associates.

When someone has the audacity to point out apparent contradictions among people in the scene, that person is labelled "too critical", "sectarian", "dogmatic", "purist", or in the case of calling attention to

unacceptable activities within anti-authoritarian institutions, the critic is reviled as a "kook", "psychopath"<sup>4</sup>, and even "police snitch" or "FBI". During and after s/he has been properly scolded and stigmatized, s/he is reminded that "the State is the *real* enemy." This statement shows clearly that the anti-critical thinkers/anti-purists hold the true anarchist revolutionary priority which allows the most absurd toleration for unquestionably authoritarian behavior on the part of "anti-authoritarians"<sup>5</sup>. It also implicitly ignores the complicity of anarchists in maintaining and reproducing the dominant modes of oppression: Whether they work or get welfare they are part of the money economy, whether they purchase or steal they still consume commodities that have been produced under the alienated conditions of capital. Anarchists (even though they refuse to recognize themselves accordingly) are as alienated by capital as anyone else; and as such they are part of "the State."

The disappointing part of this analysis is the fact that anarchists, and anti-authoritarians in general, fail to hold themselves up to the standards of the non-hierarchical relations they profess. Their barbed critiques are saved for the political mainstream, the ultra-right, and the various leninist sects (this is not to imply that these creeps don't need to be scathed); but why immunize anyone? Anarchists promote self-organization, self-activity, and self-reliance, but where is the self-critique?

My analysis is not complete by any means. I would like to use it as a departure point for further discussion with the aim of developing a more critical perspective toward daily activity within the heart of the last great bastion of capital. It is my hope that such a discussion can lead to a more coherent praxis by fracturing all ideological constraints.

--Lawrence

1. This is usually taken to mean involvement in the printed medium. After being called "sectarian" (see below) for criticizing magazines (most notably **No Middle Ground** and **Processed World**--see also **Rabies**), the "purists" are told to write their "own magazines" as if printing were the only acceptable (or most effective) method of communicating. Achievement (and prestige) is measured by how often you are published; this is why Murray Bookchin is considered to be the top American anarchist in Europe and among many American anarchists as well.

2. Not by any stretch of the imagination can it be referred to as a "movement" or a "community", and "milieu" (besides being French) is too good a word to waste on what is essentially a bunch of people *acting* for each other.

3. Obviously there is a shitload of Marx's and marxist literature that can (and should) be rejected in terms of its authoritarianism, but how can you know what to reject--or accept--without reading and/or discussing it?

4. Any time heretical behavior is labelled "psychotic" or any other variant of "mental illness", you know that the person is being characterized as a threat to the power (no matter how little the threat or the power) of the labeller. Psychiatry has always been used as a method of social control, the same as penology and pedagogy, and as such it has no place on any truly anti-authoritarian discourse or practice.

5. You can always expect cops to fuck with you (in the bad sense) if they catch you because it's their job, but when "your comrades" engage in the same kinds of things, who is the greater threat? The more immediate the invasion, the greater the threat--obviously; "the State" hardly ever comes looking for you, but cops in the guise of anti-authoritarians are always looking for the individuals who tamper with their printed (*sacred* because it is "productive"--see note 1) propaganda.

The following letter was received by Howard Besser two weeks after an intervention at the showing of *Le film est déjà commencé* at the Pacific Film Archive on 10/14/86 (as reported in the last *BTN* #9. It is being reprinted here for the reader's amusement and further edification in understanding the archaic sub-dialect of pro-situationese. Howard's response follows.

**An Appreciation of the Besserite Popular Front in the Form of a Public Letter to Howard Besser, Neoist Pro-Situ Quadruple Agent, Publisher of the Anonymous Work Entitled "Le film est déjà terminé," Hipsterist, Vulgar Trotskyist Collaborator, and Petit Institutional Bureaucrat of the Pacific Film Archive As Well As to His Vulgar Trotskyist and Hipsterist Colleagues:**

With the issuing of a work anonymously criticizing alleged conditions with which you are daily complicit--as paid stooge of the Pacific Film Archive--you have demonstrated a lack of faith which undercuts even the crude outlines of random accuracy in your analysis. You could do worse than to read (or re-read if in fact you have read so carelessly) nearly any issue of the *Internationale Situationiste*; for, by concerning yourself with organizational tactics instead of narrow academic issues, you would realize that your role as coordinator of pro-situ, old world vulgar trotskyist and neoist hipster groups has been to promote the establishment of a school-boy popular front. This academic eclecticism--let alone your paid complicity with your declared institutional nemesis--not only compromised your intellectual integrity but muddled your analytic vision as well.

For while you, O voice of the front in pseudo-anonymity, claim equal disdain for situationistes and lettristes, Surrealism and Dada, banker and soldier, you imitate

Situationist style in your unwitting, school-boyish self-parody. And you, O noble Besser, play the petit bureaucrat in the day-time and abet vulgar trotskyist tactics on your afternoon *café au lait* break through the inside-jobism of tampering with the locks on institutional doors. This fashionable intellectual eclecticism lead to analytic flaccidity, while the vulgar trotskyist tactics of priapic storm trooper over-discipline lead to a lack of flexibility of response in a situation which far from predictably plodding forward according to a predetermined homework assignment schema, evolved integrally by decentering the quixotic attacks on the institutional windmills provided by the muddled pro-situ analysis. Your vulgar trotskyist colleagues would do well to leave off their rote memorization of 1960s manuals for student revolutionaries, to devote more time to thinking on their feet. This tactical inflexibility lead to a failure to suppress even the stick-figure of academic avant-garde spectacle, and instead of realizing original insights, they simply helped to realize a spectacle of pseudo-opposition. But this result was all too predictable; for only the most paranoid, decadent and slavishly gallicist political aesthete could perceive the introduction of a 35 year old film to any public as an act of institutional disinformation. It is not a question of institutional necrophilia; it is rather, in your case, a question of neoist coprophagy thrice-removed.

The fundamental error which leads to the collapse of your homework assignment rhetoric of supersession is your failure to realise the specific nature of the bankruptcy of the modernist rhetoric of the New. For while you claim to criticize the hunger "for a taste of the cold body of the new," i.e., formalist spectacularity, you indulge yourself in an orgy of outdated analytic and tactical devices, offering nothing whatsoever of your own on any terrain. You boldly call for the supersession of the dichotomies of the past while failing to

# SITUATIONIST LIBERATION FRONT

"Parlez vous français?" — G-E. Debord

The Situationese are an oppressed minority of intellectuals, shop-lifters, publishers, students and even workers. Every day we find increasing resistance to the free practice of our native situationist cultural heritage. We must be allowed to practice the role which comes to us naturally—that of a radical jade and ardent esoteric.

Situationism is being attacked from precisely two sides—those who wish to ignore us, and those who wish to shoot us. Both stem from the failure to comprehend the need for an ideological supersession of ideology. The ignoring of situationists proceeds from a defecatory reification; the shooting of situationists becomes a reificatory defecation.

To our oppressors we merely quote the profound self-reflexive challenge which Frederick Engels, in 1831, once posed to an acquaintance of his: "Go fuck yourself."

We hereby issue this minimal set of demands necessary for the reproduction of our existence:

We demand the right to fulfill the requirements of our intrinsic character structure by the production and revision of detailed critical theories concerning the poverty of the critiques of other situationists. (See our forthcoming work on this matter: "Theses on the Sensuous Nature of the Night of the Generalized Qualitative Transformation of Potatoes into a State of Unitary Rottenness (*Fäulnis*).")

We demand the right to carry out our dialogs by means of bookstore shelves and P.O. Boxes, rather than being forced to face each other directly.

We demand that a cure be found for the crippling disease of hammer-and-sickle cell anemia, which attacks situationists causing a deterioration of their appearances and making them resemble awkward leftists.

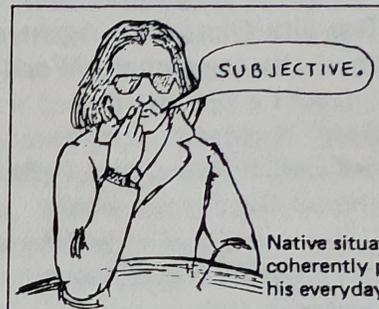
We demand de-fetishized sexual fetishes.

We wish to emphasize the genocidal nature of the attempts to suppress the realization of our demands. Our activities are aimed within the limits of our ethnic group and are thus *harmless*. We do not threaten the functioning of any external social relations.

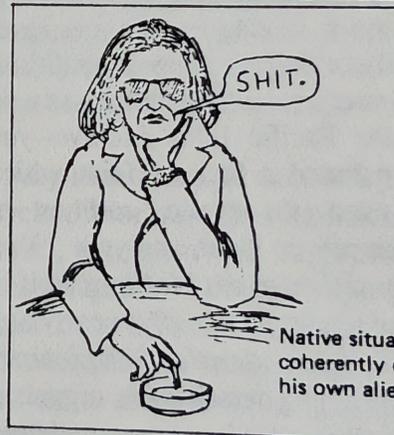
(With regards to those illusory bigots who feel that our critiques of critiques of critiques are counter-revolutionary, and who would say that our traditional coherent critical dialogs and denunciations are merely sit-picking inquiries; they might be better off abandoning sit. forms altogether and communicating with each other on how to go about changing what-in-the-world it is that seems to be bothering them. Carried to an extreme, such incoherent malcontents might even find themselves communicating with a miscellany of persons, including some who even admit to not having read Marx!!)

We are an ad-hoc coalition of concerned situationist committees struggling against our oppression. To this end we have temporarily ignored our fundamental differences to publish this leaflet. Tomorrow we start calling each other pro-situs again:

- Classified Situationism\*  
Box 1044, Berk. 94704
- Autoapothecotic Situationism\*  
Box 14221, S.F. 94114
- Saprogenic Situationism  
Box 2233 Sta. A, Berk. 94702
- Infantile Situationism\*  
Box 950, Berk. 94701
- Superseded Situationism\*  
Box 4502, Berk. 94701
- Meglomanical Situationism  
Box 754, Berk. 94701
- Pseudo-Situationism  
Sproul Plaza table, Berk.
- Eclectic Situationism  
Box 1213, Berk. 94701
- Egomanical Situationism  
Box 1503, P.A. 94302
- National Situationism  
Box 24112, Oakl. 94623
- Lewd Situationism  
Box 6461, S.F. 94101
- Billboard Situationism  
Box 2141, S.J. 95109
- Journalistic Situationism  
Box 531, Berk. 94701
- Musical Situationism  
Box 282, P.A. 94302



Native situationist coherently practicing his everyday life.



Native situationist coherently expressing his own alienation.

\*We used to ask you to write us—now we ask you not to... This way we can feel more successful when ignored.

realise that the universe of discourse divided into the dualist categorizations of Lettriste and Situationiste, Dada and Surrealism, banker and soldier dooms you to imprisonment in an old-world mentality. You offer only the spectacle of bad faith tricked out with the Walter Mitty eclecticism of a political aesthete on his day off from his role as a petit bureaucrat.

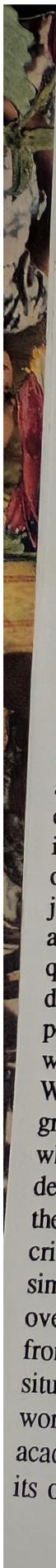
You thus miss entirely the important distinction between old world and new world conditions, between the 1960s and the 1980s. You would do well to study the documents pertaining to the history of the U.S. Section of the Situationist International, instead of confining yourself to a narrow regional variant of gallicist insularity.

You err in matters of fact by saying that the Situationist International has been exhibited before an admiring audience: Even your quotation from Jorn exists in English only in your pamphlet, that section having been omitted from the only substantial translation of its source, presumably on the basis of its lack of relevance to American conditions. And excepting the ridiculous claims of Malcolm McClaren and the relatively recent publication of the valuable *Situationist International Anthology* by the Bureau of Public Secrets (which omits the passage you quote by Jorn) and *The Revolution of Everyday Life* in England, Situationist work has been generally available in English only in the form of a few isolated pamphlets also published by the Bureau of Public Secrets and the spotty translation of *Society of the Spectacle* published by Black and Red. The film work of Debord, to give only one example, has never been seen in the United States. It alone offers the potential to annihilate the bourgeois recuperations of the gallic Woody Allen--Godard--which would remove billions of tons of dead weight from academic study of film. The number of trees spared by such an eventuality

would justify by itself the showing of the film, not that the attempts to recuperate Debord by pro-situ critics like the author of the *terminé* pamphlet would spare any less. Even then, the question persists whether we should remain ignorant of that work as well in order to respect the decorum of your neoist posturing?

The work of Lemaitre is hardly know in the United States at all; the front might do well to actually credit an audience at the PFA with the intelligence to see the film and evaluate it themselves critically instead of simply parroting in advance the judgment of Asger Jorn--however accurate it may have been when made nine years afthe the making of *Le film est déjà commencé* and which did not even refer to this particular work but to Lemaitre as a cult figure. In order to critically evaluate the old world limitations of both the Lettristes and Situationistes we must first familiarize ourselves with a slightly broader range of material. Indeed, had you been more historically insightful and better informed you might have appreciated the irony of the projection of a Chaplin film outside the theater--for it was the attack on the Chaplin press conference which lead to the split in the Lettriste movement and the formation of the Lettriste International by Debord and the later formation of the Situationist International.

The failure of your popular frontism to suppress this screening, was due to a basic misapprehension of the cultural politics of the situation. It was never a matter of the fragmentary recuperation of a historically moribund work, but rather the detournement of the work in its contextual entirety. Your blurry eclecticism lead you to pseudo-prophetically mispercieve the dimensions of the event in advance. Instead of creating a situation which would supercede the limitations of an academic spectacle, you added the dramatization of the surrealist error of demonstrating a solidarity with Stalinism, helping to



realize the work without suppressing it. This dramatization thus remained within the frame created for the event by the presenters--a frame which you grossly misunderstood both in scope and flexibility. That framework included the decentering of the messianic rhetoric of the Lettristes; a rhetoric which inheres in Stalinist, Maoist, Trotskyist, Hitlerist and other fan-magazine mentality groups given to the cultivation of hierchical rhetoric and the cult of personality. Here, ironically, your anonymity pays homage to that very cult. Thus, the attacks directed against my person as a stand-in for Lemaitre and other academic boogeymen, missed the mark, for I had no intention of impersonating or defending such stick figures of authority. I acted only to provide an unexpected third term, a Trojan Horse to invade the bastions of petit gallicism.

And as a matter of public record, none of the group of presenters, including me, were paid except for the employees of the PFA and the Cinematheque; none were under any compulsion to participate. The group consisted of independent individuals acting in concert, each responding to the situation on the basis of his or her individual judgment. The event thus retained its ability to place every aspect of itself in quotation marks, to provide the critical distancing necessary for a non-hierarchical perspective to everyone at the event, whatever their degree of participation. While the actions of the popular front group did undeniably energize a situation which should have collapsed of its own dead weight had it rigidly conformed to their preconceptions, it failed to function critically even to frame the event simplistically as a victory of anti-anti-art over anti-art. The actions of the popular front group simply introduced into the situation the spectacle of a vulgar old world trotskyism in a regional suburban academic sub-variant shadow-boxing with its own projected image, with all the elan

but none of the intellectual integrity of a campus panty raid.

Let me thank you, Curly stooge Besser, and your neoist collaborators for your enrichment of the events of last Tuesday with the spectacle of pseudo-opposition. But allow me to suggest that you would all do well to seek careers among the eclectic jesuits of the state bureaucracy of academia instead of as professional revolutionaries, for institutional tonsure has at least the virtue of eliminating the visible traces of the vulgar trotskyist compromise which discredits even the most studied pro-situ posing.

--Keith Sanborn, 10/20/86

Dear Keith,

I don't really have the time, energy, or desire to respond to your "clever" hip lingoed letter in a like manner so I will make my remarks brief and to the point. First of all, you engineered a performance piece that was supposed to look spontaneous. When you got a real spontaneous intervention in response, you refused to believe it existed and could only see it as an intervention engineered by someone. As you knew that I was acquainted with situationist theory, the someone you blamed for this was me. To tell you the truth, I had no prior knowledge of what was going to transpire that evening beyond what was printed in the PFA Calender. What you don't seem to realize is that I'm not the only one in the Bay Area who is acquainted with situationist, lettrist, surrealist, and dadaist history and theory. Consequently, I find the leveling of charges against me simply because I have talked to you about Guy Debord in the past rather ridiculous. Besides, the very thought that one needs to be acquainted with theory and history in order to engage in an intervention is silly. When you put on a provacative piece like that, you're just inviting some kind of spontanenous reaction. But beyond that, there's a more fundamental flaw in your

thinking. You seem to be so involved in your own engineered pseudo-disruptions that when a real spontaneous disruption literally smacks you in the face, you look for some kind of invisible hand controlling and engineering this. I find it really ironic that you spent so much time creating a performance piece that looked spontaneous, and yet when confronted with real spontaneity, you just don't know how to handle it.

As for your charges (that I have only just recently heard) that someone engineered an "inside" job by locking doors or distributing scripts: I'm afraid you should look at your own circle of "actors." After subsequent conversations with about two dozen members of the local anarcho-situationist milieu who attended your performance, I am convinced that none of my acquaintances who I saw being disruptive that evening had any prior plan for disruption (let alone any kind of access to your script). And, to tell you the truth, I was unaware of the very existence of a written script until several weeks after the performance.

As for my own contradictions: Of course I'm well aware that I work a regular 40 hour week job that involves a certain amount of basic sell-out. But if I was to act as a "double-agent" in my workplace, I would certainly engage in more creative activity than what you accuse me of. Furthermore, any kind of radical activity I engage in, I own up to in a very clear way. I believe in the necessity of two way communication in radical activity and any activity I engage in, I provide a means for resuming later dialog with people.

--Howard Besser

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### NEW BOOKS IN THE STORE

**SEDUCED AND ABANDONED:  
THE BAUDRILLARD SCENE.**  
Edited by André Frankouits. 117 pages.  
\$7.95. A book of essays about the

"Baudrillard Phenomenon."

**RADICAL PRIORITIES.** By Noam Chomsky. 307 pages. \$14.95. A revised collection of political writings covering a broad range of subjects with a view to alerting people about the problems humanity is facing, and possible solutions to undertake.

**THE ANARCHIST PAPERS.**  
Edited by D. Roussopoulos. 175 pages.  
\$12.95. Essays by M. Bookchin,  
C. Castoriadis, Chomsky and others.

**THE ABOLITION OF WORK AND  
OTHER ESSAYS.** By Bob Black.  
159 pages. \$6.00. Text of Last International flyers from '77-'83 and other essays.

**FROM SATORI TO SILICON  
VALLEY: SAN FRANCISCO  
AND THE AMERICAN COUNTER-  
CULTURE.** By Theodore Roszak. 64  
pages. \$3.95. A succinct appreciation of  
the radical changes that have enveloped the  
Bay Area--and in a larger sense, the whole  
of so-called American counter-culture in  
the past 20 years.

**Back in stock:**

**THE ANARCHIST READER.**  
Edited by George Woodcock. 383 pages.  
\$5.00.

**FLOODGATES OF ANARCHY.**  
Stuart Christie and Albert Meltzer. 160  
pages. \$6.50.

**ANARCHISM.** By George Woodcock.  
492 pages. \$6.50.

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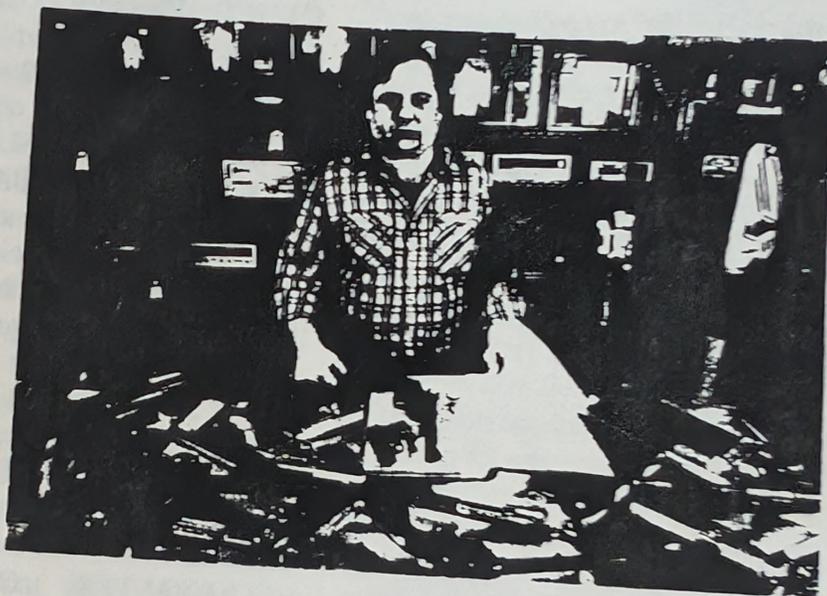
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# STOP THE WELFARE STATE

We believe that our social welfare system is undermining the moral fiber of the poor by reinforcing passivity and dependence on the state.

**NO MORE HANDOUTS!  
WE WANT HANDGUNS!**

**NO MORE FOODSTAMPS!  
Give us guns and we'll get  
our own butter...**



With these tools, we can rediscover the joy of initiative and the thrill of open competition in the private sector. You can bet no well-armed red-blooded American will let their family starve. We'll take back not only the night, but everything we've been denied, and we'll have the satisfaction of knowing we've done it on our own.

## **We Demand:**

- 1.) Revolvers for able-bodied adults!
- 2.) Automatics for the elderly!
- 3.) Machine guns and mortars for the handicapped!

**This country was formed on the basis of equality  
—we want equalizers!**

Remember, the cheapest form of civil defense against any hostile power, foreign or domestic, is an armed population.

This leaflet brought to you by the American Patriot Protective Association