Chaz Bufe
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The only way in which population growth can be checked in a humane manner is through social justice — through abolition of (private and state) capitalism with its inherent tendencies toward environmental degradation; through fairer distribution of resources; through the emancipation of women and the abandonment of patriarchal religions; and through the utilization of appropriate technologies to provide cheap, easy access to birth control and to provide a comfortable level of material wealth for everyone.[4]

[4] Of course I am not implying that all technologies are desirable — far from it. "Technology" is not a monolith. It is composed of a great number of separate technologies, all with different environmental and social effects. Some are beneficial, such as medical and sewage disposal technologies; some are neutral (in that they lend themselves to both socially useful and socially damaging uses), an example being radio communications technology, which can be used to dispatch ambulances or for political surveillance; and some technologies, such as nuclear technology, are inherently destructive. Even these classifications are gross simplifications, though, as even the most useful technology will have some negative effects; and even the worst technology might have some beneficial aspects. And the various technologies (steel production and semiconductor production, for example) used in supporting other technologies (such as automotive and computer technologies) will all have their own positive and negative aspects. Blind rejection of "technology" is, to put it mildly, simplistic at best.

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ease and the related problem of infant mortality. Returning to the preindustrial technological level of 500 years ago would not only eliminate the "means" of combatting disease but also (relatively) safe, effective means of birth control. The birth rate would soar, and many women would die at an early age, worn out from childbearing. But not to worry — population balance would be maintained the way it was in the good old days: Most children would die from disease before adulthood; and if "enough" of them didn't die, population would increase to the point where famine would stabilize the population.

Still another question never addressed by neo-primitive romantics is whether a majority of the population (let alone the entire population) would ever _want_ to renounce the many benefits of technological civilization. I for one would not, whether we speak of music, food, medicine, or books. I doubt that my feelings are atypical. Considering that most people almost certainly enjoy the benefits of living in an advanced technological society, and want to continue to do so, returning to a low-tech or no-tech society would necessarily involve the use of coercion against large numbers of people, probably against a large majority of the population.

These are the implications which the primitivists and "neo-primitivists" have dodged until now, usually by insisting upon "natural" checks on population growth, such as the AIDS epidemic and famine, to achieve their desired huntergatherer society. They haven't dared advocate what would really be required to achieve their vision: wholesale coercion and mass murder.

If any good is to come from this controversy it will be that it has provoked many people to take a closer look at the questions of technology and population growth, and their relation to the prevailing politico-economic systems. One hopes that environmentalists will go beyond the crude theories and intellectual posturing of "deep ecologists" and those who blindly hate "technology." The questions of population and technology require a more sophisticated approach than primitivism.

derdeveloped" countries, accompanied by redistribution of wealth and abandonment of misogynist religions and attitudes, fertility there would certainly decrease, probably quite rapidly.

The primitivists at least have the honesty to accept some of the conclusions of their Malthusian arguments. They acknowledge that reversion to our "natural role" of hunter-gatherers would require a massive depopulation of the Earth. For "Miss Ann Thropy," "Ecotopia would be a planet with about 50 million people who are hunting and gathering for subsistence."[3] Other primitivists have postulated a population of only five to ten million as the maximum, and in *Atlas of World Population History*, Colin McEvedy and Richard Jones state that the prehistoric population of huntergatherers was probably in the neighborhood of four million.

Other "neo-primitivists" (it sounds classier with the prefix) have advocated an agrarian society using no technology beyond that of simple hand tools. Reaching a "no-tech" agricultural society would involve almost as many deaths as reaching a hunter-gatherer society. The last period in which a large majority of the population lived a pastoral existence, using for the most part nothing beyond hand tools, was the Middle Ages, when the world population was about 300 million. Let's assume a technological level of the year1500 (perhaps acceptable to no or low-tech advocates, and at which point world population was roughly 400 million), and that, due to improved agricultural techniques, enough food could be grown and distributed to support five times the population that lived then. That would leave us with a population of 2 billion people (which would require a modest 60 percent reduction in population to achieve). [Today, it would require a 65% reduction.] Whether even this population figure could be maintained at that level of technology is highly questionable.

Historically, the ability to grow food has _not_ been the limiting factor in population growth. The limiting factors have been dis-

[3] "Miss Ann Thropy," *Earth First!*, December 22, 1987.

Introduction by Janet Biehl

The republication of *Anarchist!*, 13 years after its first appearance is a particularly welcome event. In only a few pages Chaz Bufe succeeds in diagnosing many of the ills of North American anarchism, both in ideas and activities. The power of the pamphlet derives not only from the pithiness of its insights and its unpretentious style, but from its clear and forceful exposition and its willingness to speak out against immorality and injustice within the movement.

Lamentably, the intervening years since 1987 have not cured the malaises Bufe diagnosed. On the contrary, they have acquired greater virulence. *Fifth Estate*, for example, has continued propagating its anti-technological, primitivistic, and mystical doctrines. David Watson (aka George Bradford, among other pseudonyms) has even tried, in *Bookchin*, to appropriate the term "social ecology" for these regressive notions, attempting to supplant a body of forward-looking, rational, and humanistic libertarian ideas with his own benighted primitivism.

At about the same time that Watson's essay appeared, an editor of the English magazine *Green Anarchist* came out in support of the Unabomber, the Oklahoma City bombing, and the Aum Shinrikyo cult, which released sarin nerve gas in the Tokyo subway. (*Green Anarchist* is an anarcho-primitivist periodical that regards *Fifth Estate* as one of its precursors.) This appalling development showed, among other things, the merit of Bufe's criticism of primitivism and mysticism: "if anarchists reject rationality and revert to mysticism, it's a safe bet that they too will go goosestepping off in increasingly authoritarian directions." Only in the fall of 1997, in a discussion of *Green Anarchist*, did Watson finally begin to retreat from his primitivist views.

In the meantime, Robert C. Black has gone on to celebrate *Anarchy After Leftism*, in a book whose smokescreen of insult and vitriol hides a basic lack of ideas about what "anarchy after leftism" really

represents, apart perhaps from the supremacy of self-interest. In these writings anarchism's longstanding socialist dimension is jettisoned in favor of individual escapades. Black's personal conduct has mirrored his amoral views. In 1996, he acted as a police narcotics informant against Seattle author Jim Hogshire, resulting in a police raid on Hogshire's home.

Many of the ills Bufe documents in *Listen, Anarchist!* derive ultimately from anarchism's individualistic tendency, whose animating spirit is the 19th-century anarcho-egoist Max Stirner. From the dragon's teeth that Stirner sowed have sprung, most recently, a legion of "fashion" or "lifestyle" anarchists who appear to be unfamiliar with anarchism's claim to constitute an ethical socialism.

In fact, one of the most disquieting observations that Bufe makes is that some anarchists have reacted to incidents of immorality and even violence with indifference: "Sure Bob Black is a destructive nut,"he quotes one as saying, "but he hasn't attacked us." Similarly, a comrade in the Netherlands — where Black's writings have, astonishingly, gained some popularity — has told me that when he tells Black's local fans of his violent and unethical activities, they respond with equal indifference. Currently in the U.S., despite Black's narcing on Jim Hogshire — a widely known betrayal of anarchist principles (contact Loompanics for details) — at least a few vocal "anarchists" continue to support Black and his brand of amoral egoism.

Such unconcern is a far cry from the left-libertarian ethos that once proclaimed, "An injury to one is an injury to all!" Apathy in the face of immoral and unjust behavior toward one's fellow anarchists, let alone toward one's fellow human beings, reflects a grave breach of the ethical standards with which anarchists have long identified themselves, in contrast to many marxists and, especially, leninists.

Ethics lies at the heart of a truly libertarian movement that offers a vision of a cooperative and humane society. An anarchism that dismisses even gross violations of basic ethical standards with

duce at least as much food as destructive, chemically-based methods in the short run; and in the long run, they can increase the "value" of land and preserve high levels of production.

In some of the European countries, notably Germany, population "decline" through lowering of the birth rate has already begun. In his article "Fertility in Transition," in the Spring 1986 issue of *World Focus* (journal of the American Geographical Society), James L. Newman traces the causes of the decline in fertility in the European countries. He concludes that there were three reasons for a decline in the birth rate. One was industrialization: "Out of it came the public health discoveries that reduced mortality, followed by a new lifestyle which no longer necessitated large families… Whereas on farms and in cottage industries children contributed their labor to the family enterprise, in the city they became consumers. Only a few offspring could be afforded if the family was to maintain or…improve its standard of living."[2] The second reason for the decline in fertility was birth control. It "was the answer to these new social and economic realities."

The third element in lowering the birth rate was the relative emancipation of women. In the developed countries, birth rates tend to be high only among economically deprived groups with little hope and relatively little access to birth control devices and information, and among patriarchal religious groups whose members believe that it is a woman's "duty" to have a large number of children. (A case in point is the Mormon church; among active Mormons, nuclear families with "at least" four children are the norm.)

If there were a more equal distribution of wealth and income, and if misogynistic, patriarchal religions declined, the birth rate in the developed countries would almost certainly be lower than it already is; and if there were relatively rapid development in the "un-

[2] Newman, of course, is not implying that all aspects of European industrialization were beneficial. He's merely noting that the rising standard of living attributable to industrialization was instrumental in lowering the birth rate.

less hassle for beverage manufacturers and distributors to use plastic bottles rather than recyclable glass. Still another example is the toxic waste problem. One reads almost daily reports of companies dumping dangerous wastes into streams and rivers rather than going to the expense of treating and properly disposing of them.

This tendency of the capitalist, profit-based system toward environmental destruction exists regardless of the size of the population. In terms of the profit-motive tendency toward environmental destruction, it would make no difference if the population of the United States was 24 million rather than 244 million [in 1988, when this was written]. At the lower population figure, the motivation for beverage manufacturers and distributors to use plastic bottles, for example, would be the same as it is now. A large population magnifies the damage rooted in the profit motive, but population size itself is not "at the root of every environmental problem we face."

The conclusions the misanthropic "deep ecologists" draw from their faulty premises are breathtaking. They want us to return to our "natural role" as hunter-gatherers, because, according to their faulty reasoning, "Earth simply cannot support five billion large mammals of the species Homo sapiens." This argument has been demolished elsewhere; the best work on the subject, is Frances Moore Lappe's and Joseph Collins' *Food First*. For our purposes, suffice it to say that there is actually a huge surplus of food at present. According to Lappe, approximately 3600 calories of grain alone is produced on a daily per capita basis.[1] That doesn't even take into account fruits, vegetables and grass-fed meat. This is enough food that, if the grain alone were equally distributed and all — or even two-thirds — of it consumed, most of us would be as fat as pigs. It should also be emphasized that production of this amount of food does not "necessarily" involve environmental degradation: Non-environmentally harmful, organic methods of agriculture can pro-

[1] "The Politics of Food," TV documentary.

an anemic shrug has not only lost its moral high ground as the libertarian alternative to authoritarian or state socialism; it has undermined its claim to represent a movement for basic change, individual as well as social. Instead it has become a pseudo-rebellious conceit, a self-serving gloss, a passing stage of late childhood development, or as Bufe puts it very well, a fashion trend.

The diffusion of such moral indifference among anarchists would transform anarchism itself into something that most of those who once proudly used that label would scarcely recognize. Libertarians today who cherish ideas of a cooperative and just society would do well to express their outrage at immorality and violence in their own milieu as well as in the larger society, reaffirming anarchism's call for ethical renovation. Only then will we have a movement that deserves to gain wider support.

Listen Anarchist!

ANARCHISM has never found wide acceptance in North America. Neglecting the reasons why this did not happen in the past, it's necessary to ask why anarchism remains a marginal, misunderstood philosophy. Conditions certainly seem ripe for a flowering of anarchist ideas and activity. Popular mistrust of government and business, as measured by public opinion polls, is much higher than it was 25 years ago. Official unemployment figures continue to hover near seven percent, while actual unemployment is probably far higher. The suicidal madness of the arms race could hardly be plainer. And the bankruptcy of marxism is all too obvious. Marxist regimes the world over have utterly and abjectly failed to create anything approaching free, equalitarian societies.

Yet interest in anarchism and the amount of anarchist activity in North America remain pitifully small. Why? A large part of the blame must be assigned to the educational system, the mass media, organized religion, and the hierarchically structured unions which have strangled the labor movement. But external factors provide only a partial explanation. Internal factors must also be considered.

Marginalization

One major problem is the deliberate self-marginalization of a relatively large number of American anarchists. Anyone who has been around the U.S./Canadian anarchist movement for any length of time quickly becomes familiar with the "marginals" and the "fashion anarchists." (Marginals consider themselves anarchists, while "fashion anarchists" simply use anarchist — and punk —

In a similar vein, "Miss Ann Thropy," a regular contributor to *Earth First!*, has argued that AIDS is a "good" thing, because it will reduce population. In the May 1, 1987 issue of that paper, "Miss Throp" stated: "…if the AIDS epidemic didn't exist, radical environmentalists would have to invent one [an epidemic]." In the Dec. 22, 1987 issue of *Earth First!*, he or she adds that "…the AIDS epidemic, rather than being a scourge, is a welcome development in the inevitable reduction of human population."

The connecting thread between the arguments in favor of AIDS and starvation is a crude Malthusianism. (The 19thcentury British parson Thomas Malthus argued, in his *Essay on the Principle of Population*, that unlimited population growth was the primary danger to humanity; that population increased geometrically while food supply increased arithmetically.) A latter day disciple of the good parson, Daniel Conner, a "deep ecologist," self-aggrandizingly expressed his faith in Malthus' principle in the Dec. 22, 1987 issue of *Earth First!*: "Population pressure, they ['thoughtful environmentalists'] claim, lies at the root of every environmental problem we face."

Contrary to what Conner would have us believe, there is nothing "thoughtful" in the belief that population "lies at the root of every environmental problem." That idea is on a par with the simplistic belief that "technology" is the sole cause of environmental destruction. It ignores the key element in environmental destruction: profit. For example, coal burning power plants are a primary cause of acid rain, yet utilities have invariably put up resistance to installing scrubbers, which would greatly reduce the amount of pollutants emitted by their plants. The reason? Installing scrubbers would reduce their profits. Another example: Plastic beverage containers become non-recyclable trash, are a visual blight, take hundreds, if not thousands of years to break down, and a particularly toxic type of plastic, polyvinyl chloride (PVC), is often used in their manufacture. (PVCs leach into beverages.) Why are they used? The answer is what you'd expect: It's cheaper and involves

engaging in or condoning such practices as making anonymous death threats, vandalizing the offices of political opponents, using the state legal apparatus against political opponents, and violently physically assaulting political opponents. Those who commit or condone such acts see nothing inherently wrong with them when directed at those of us whom they see as obstacles to the achievement of their screwball conception of Anarchy — if, in fact, they're interested in achieving anything beyond ideology-driven howling. They believe the end (chaos/amoral egoism) justifies the means. Thus they end up not only proclaiming the worst authoritarian lies about anarchism (that it consists of unbridled egoism and rejection of organization), but they also end up adopting the philosophical foundation of the capitalist society they profess to hate so much, as their guiding principle — that the ends justify the means.

The belief that the ends justify the means is the cornerstone of authoritarianism. It's the antithesis of anarchism. The cornerstone of anarchism is the belief that means determine ends.

If anarchism is ever to be a real force in this society it must be based on ethical behavior — not on that sick parody of anarchism, amoral individualism.

Primitive Thought

One of the hottest topics in "progressive" circles these days is the Earth First! controversy. Prominent members of Earth First!, such as Dave Foreman, the organization's founder and the editor of its newspaper, have recently undertaken polemics in favor of famine and AIDS.

In the Australian magazine *Simply Living*, Foreman stated that, "the best thing would be to just let the people there [Ethiopia] starve…" He has made similar statements to the local media in Tucson, where Earth First! (the organ of Earth First!) is published. [This was in 1988; the paper is no longer published in Tucson.]

trappings.) These people often run around with huge circle-"A"s painted on their jackets; loudly proclaim themselves to be anarchists, and for the most part have never studied anarchist theory and couldn't offer a coherent definition of anarchism to save their lives.

The reason why such people (both marginals and "fashion anarchists") choose to label themselves as anarchists is undoubtedly, in many cases, that they believe the worst bourgeois lies about anarchism — that it's a synonym for chaos and an extreme everyone-else-be-damned form of individualism. They use "anarchism" as a blanket justification for irresponsible, antisocial behavior. (I've even heard "anarchism" used as an excuse for smoking in public places.) It's unfortunate, to say the least, that such people are the most publicly visible proponents of (what they consider) anarchism.

Anti-Work(er) Bias

A troubling aspect of the marginalized milieu is the anti-work (and often anti-worker) attitude frequently displayed by the marginals. This is un-fortunate for two reasons. One is that work must be performed in order for society to exist, and adoption of in anti-work, anti-worker attitude simply begs the crucial question of how work should be organized. It's all well and good to say that work should be replaced by play, but how do we get from here to there?

The other problem is that most ablebodied people work, and it would be difficult to find a more alienating approach to those of us who work than the anti-work attitude, which in effect states: "What you're doing (work) is worse than useless, and you're stupid for doing it," while offering no alternative whatsoever. This problem is aggravated by the fact that some anti-work advocates, who could work but choose not to, practice a form of parasitism — they receive

money from the government (extorted from those who work). It's rather difficult to take seriously those who rail against work while grasping a black flag in one hand and a welfare check in the other. (However, these comments should not be construed as an attack on welfare recipients. Unemployment is built into the economy, and it's undeniably fortunate that forms of relief are available to its victims. But for those who most stringently condemn the state — anarchists — to deliberately rely on it as their means of support, robs them of credibility.)

Anti-Organizational Bias

An extreme anti-organizational bias often goes hand in hand with deliberate self-marginalization and an anti-work attitude. This often comes from lack of study of anarchist theory. Virtually _all_ of the most prominent anarchist theoreticians and activists, Bakunin, Kropotkin, Berkman, and Goldman among them, have been in favor of organization. What these thinkers were concerned with was not whether there should be organization but rather how things should be organized.

But that doesn't matter to rabid anti-organizationalists. Several years ago a writer in the *Fifth Estate* labeled my advocacy of the classic anarchist position (that it's how, not whether, things should be organized) as "leninist"; and I recently heard another anti-organizational type claim that all organization is inherently "capitalist." Such persons cannot be taken seriously — they have no concern for the real meanings of the terms they employ and merely throw them around as epithets — but one shudders to think of the impression they leave with anyone coming in casual contact with them. (A politically active friend recently told me that after encounters with several of the local marginalists she had the impression that anarchists were uncooperative, irresponsible, and selfish.)

extremely odd conceptions of anarchism and of "the personal as political."

To me that phrase means that in our daily lives we should be honest, respect the rights of others, practice the principle of mutual aid, and generally do our best to live up to our values. (I'm no saint and do not always live up to those ideals, but neither does anyone else; all that we can do is to try our best.) My attacker's concept of "the personal as political" is quite evidently very different. He conceives of it not as a guidepost for personal behavior, but rather as a justification to personally attack anyone with whom he or his ideology-driven cohorts happen to disagree.

Behind this disagreement over the meaning of "the personal as political" lie totally opposed interpretations of the meaning of anarchism. To me anarchism means the renunciation of government and all other forms of coercive authority, and the embracement of the principles of voluntarism, mutual aid, and ethical personal conduct. My attackers have accused me of "moralizing," and in a sense they're right. I consider ethical behavior to be the bedrock of anarchism. For without ethical behavior trust becomes impossible. Without trust there is no basis for free association or mutual aid. And without free association and mutual aid, the possibility of an anarchist society vanishes.

Those who have attacked me totally discount the importance of ethics. They proudly proclaim themselves "egoists" and renounce ethics of any type. In other words, they proudly proclaim that they've swallowed the worst authoritarian lies about anarchism, hook, line, and sinker — that anarchism consists of rejection of ethics, rejection of all forms of organization, and the embracement of an extreme form of egoism, or individualism, which recognizes no one's rights other than the egoist's. They've swallowed the lie that Anarchy equals chaos.

Given their rejection of ethics, it was entirely predictable that they would react to my writings with personal trashing rather than discussion of issues. This is entirely in line with their history of

icizing other anarchists who are as powerless as you. That's simple cowardice.

9. We should accept the fact that freedom of association implies freedom to disassociate. If we can't work with others, or they can't work with us, we should accept it and move on. We have better things to do than to attack each other. Our real enemies are still the state, capitalism and religion.

10. We should attempt to live our lives as nearly in accord with anarchist ideals as we can. It's not possible to live a completely anarchist life in capitalist society, but we can try. Those around us will take us — and anarchism — more seriously if they see that we do our best to practice what we preach.

Afterword *(to the 1987 printing)*

Reaction to my recent writings, particularly to *Listen, Anarchist!* and to my review of Fredy Perlman's eccentric tract, *Against His-Story*, has been predictable. While many have made favorable comments, I've also become, as Fred Woodworth predicted in his review of my pamphlet, a "bitterly hated ... and denounced" person. What is interesting about these denunciations is that none contradict any statements of fact that I made, some were produced by people hiding behind pseudonyms, and all consist of personal attacks primarily, along with a few outright lies.

When I complained of this — personal abuse instead of discussion of issues — to *Fifth Estate* devotee, Brian Kane, who had produced, xeroxed and distributed a particularly nasty bit of personal trashing titled, appropriately enough, "Turning a Deaf Ear," his reply was highly revealing: (this is a paraphrase, but the meaning is preserved): "You've got to expect it. After all, don't you think the personal is political?" This reply speaks volumes. Behind it lie

Preaching rejection of organization is suicidal for the anarchist movement. Most people have the common sense to realize that some form of organization is necessary for society to survive. When they hear those who publicly identify themselves as anarchists loudly intoning against organization of any type, they tend to dismiss not only the anti-organizational position, but also anarchism, as being hopelessly unrealistic. This, of course, makes it far more difficult to reach people no matter how reasonable your arguments are if you call yourself an anarchist — they'll simply lump you in with the anti-organizational fringe.

Anti-organizational bias also has a destructive effect within the anarchist community. It makes it difficult to organize major projects. When through dint of hard work and investment of your limited free time and money you do succeed in organizing a project, you'll almost certainly be attacked by the anti-organizational fringe as being "leninist," "stalinist," "capitalist," etc. (Pick your own abusive adjective, never mind what it really means.)

Violence

Violence is another major problem in anarchist circles. Fortunately, very little actual violence is being perpetrated by anarchists at present, but a casual observer of the anarchist scene would probably conclude the exact opposite. There are several reasons for this. One, which we can't do much about, is the media's constant misuse of the term "anarchist" to describe leftist terrorism of any type. Another equally maddening reason is the tendency of certain anarchist publications to praise leftist political violence no matter who is engaging in it or for what reasons, as long as those committing the violence mouth "anti-imperialist" rhetoric. *Open Road* has even recently begun to carry as an enclosure a publication called Resistance, which uncritically praises authoritarian, avowedly marxist-leninist groups such as ETA and the Red Brigades.

A couple of years ago an even more appalling piece of writing appeared in a now defunct periodical called *The Spark*. In the piece, a writer named G. Michael O'Hara rambled on about how it might be necessary to blow up Washington D.C. with a nuclear bomb even though a few innocent people might get hurt. From reading such drivel the uninformed could easily conclude that anarchists are completely amoral and that the main thrust of anarchism is violence for its own sake. The harm such writing does is incalculable.

Another regrettable fact is that the linkage of violence and anarchism can be profitable. The worst example of this profiteering is *The Anarchist Cookbook*, a publication which combines incredibly muddled and misleading comments about anarchism with hazardous (to the maker) explosive formulas and drug recipes which simply don't work. The publisher of this dangerous, misleading book continues to produce it year after year simply because it sells — it makes a nice coffee table ornament.

A more ominous reason why anarchism is linked to violence is that occasionally well-meaning people read articles romanticizing violence in publications such as *The Spark* or *Open Road*, and then, out of desperation or misplaced idealism, go out and commit violent acts, almost always getting themselves busted in the process. The Vancouver Five are a recent example. After pulling off several bombings and arson attacks, they were arrested. What did they accomplish? They're all rotting in jail at the moment and will be for years to come. Thousands of dollars and thousands of hours of time were wasted on defense committee work. The media circus surrounding their acts and trials helped to further identify anarchism with violence and helped to create an atmosphere of hysteria which gave the Canadian government a perfect excuse to ram through repressive legislation. The only people who benefited from the Vancouver Five case, besides those in power, were, presumably, those who batten off the legal process.

against Processed World. Even if we're not directly attacked, we need to realize that such attacks poison the political and social atmosphere and make it much more difficult to do effective work. An injury to one is still an injury to all.

5. We should take great care — especially in printed matter — to employ simple, clear language. Idiosyncratic use of terms should be avoided. Use of abstractions should be avoided where, possible. And verbal grandstanding and use of contorted situationist terminology _must_ be avoided. If you have something worth saying, say it so that it can be easily understood: in plain English.

6. We should look askance at those who attack other anarchists using emotionally loaded terms such as "leninist," "stalinist," "purge," and "censorship." What such attacks reveal at least nine times out of ten — and at least 99 times out of 100 when abusive scatological terms are also used — is that those who make them are destructive sectarians pursuing personal vendettas. Such persons should be ignored when possible and exposed when necessary.

7. We should not tolerate dishonesty and personal attacks. There's a huge difference between attacking a person's ideas and attacking that person. The first is healthy and enlivens debate; the second is unhealthy, poisons the atmosphere and leads to splits and infighting.

8. We should not cower behind pseudonyms or anonymity when we criticize the ideas of other anarchists — and especially if we're stupidly launching personal attacks. Regrettably, it's sometimes necessary to employ a pseudonym or to remain anonymous when attacking the rich and powerful. But there's never an excuse for such behavior when crit-

example, it obviously "felt right" to a large segment of the German working class to support Hitler during the 1920s and '30s. But was it in their self-interest to do so? Without rationally analyzing the question, how could they have known that what "felt right" to them was absolutely contrary to their own interests. Without rationality there was no way they could have known. Rational thinking was necessary, but they didn't do it. Instead, they goosestepped into the holocaust with the mystical abstractions of god and fatherland dancing in their heads.

And if anarchists reject rationality and revert to mysticism, it's a safe bet that they too will go goosestepping off in increasingly authoritarian directions.

What Can Be Done?

1. We should avoid the use of violence except in self-defense and in revolutionary situations. We should especially avoid the use of violence in its most vanguardist and elitist form: urban guerrillaism. This will help make plain who the real terrorists are (the state and religious and marxist bomb throwers).

2. We should avoid deliberate self-marginalization. If we ever want anarchism to become a mass movement rather than some type of exclusive club, we need to listen to and to address mainstream people, people who for the most part are turned off by marginalization.

3. We should attack irrationality and mysticism wherever and whenever they arise. If people are ever to break free of the chains of mystical abstractions such as god and country, they'll need to think clearly, rationally.

4. We must refuse to tolerate personal abuse, physical harassment and outright violence of the type recently directed

(Those interested in further discussion of the question of violence would do well to read *You Can't Blow Up A Social Relationship* and Luigi Fabbri's classic, *Bourgeois Influences on Anarchism.*)

Sectarianism

Internal relations within the anarchist movement are in terrible shape. In addition to open disagreement, which is only to be expected, we're also faced with fractious sectarianism. There are several aspects to this. One is that those who are openly sectarian often spend most, if not all, of their energy attacking other anarchists. A second is that sectarians make personal attacks and usually couch them in abusive, often scatological language. A third is that sectarians deliberately misuse emotionally charged terms such as "purge" and "censorship" in order to justify their actions and to manipulate others.

An incident involving *No Middle Ground* provides an unfortunate example of sectarianism at work. The last several meetings before the publication of the most recent issue were nightmares of ranting, screaming infighting In fact, the situation was so bad that after the last issue of the magazine hit the streets in February 1985, there was an unspoken consensus that the project was dead.

But many of us who worked on NMG felt that Latin American solidarity work is too important to abandon, so in April of 1985 we held a couple of meetings to discuss reviving the magazine or starting a new project. We made no secret of these meetings, but we did not invite the person whom a majority of us held responsible for most of the infighting. In retrospect, it might have made things easier in the long run if we had invited her; but at the time we were so burned out from the prolonged infighting that we couldn't stand the thought of more anger, screaming and personal abuse — things which would have been a certainty had she been present. When she discovered that we had discussed reviving the magazine, but with-

out her, she wouldn't accept the fact that we found her so abusive and disruptive that we chose to disassociate ourselves from her. Instead of accepting that fact and going to work on another anti-authoritarian project, she chose to spend seemingly all her time and energy attacking those of us who want nothing to do with her. In one particularly reprehensible act she posted leaflets in the financial district naming two *Processed World* people (one a current office worker involved with *No Middle Ground*) which stated that they advocated sabotage of office equipment; apparently the fact that employers could have seen those leaflets mattered not a whit to her.

Her reason for attacking us? We "purged" her. Evidently she feels that because she was once part of the NMG project, she has a proprietary interest in it, and that if the project continues, we must include her in it regardless of our wishes to the contrary. That is, because of her perceived proprietary interest, she feels that the rest of us who worked on the project should not have full freedom over how and with whom we spend our time and energy. And this from a "rabid anti-authoritarian."

In this context, the use of the term "purge" can be seen for what it is: emotional manipulation. "Purge" conjures up all sorts of nasty images of Stalin, show trials and firing squads. To use it as a synonym for simple disassociation is grotesque.

Another example of deliberate misuse of terms is the habit of anarcho-sectarians to label those with whom they disagree as "leninists." This accusation has recently been leveled against *Processed World*. A brief look at the facts will show the stupidity and dishonesty of this accusation:

Do the *Processed World* staff advocate vanguard parties? No. Do they advocate a "workers' state" or the "dictatorship of the proletariat"? No. Do they advocate hierarchical structure of any type? No. In fact, they advocate direct action and direct democracy. If that's "leninism," I'm the Antichrist.

easiest possible technological targets, and to continue to dishonestly dismiss those who disagree with them as Chamber of Commerce booster types. And all this while they continue to make use of computers and modern printing technology, and continue to live comfortably in heavily industrialized areas.

Reversion to Mysticism

As bad as all this is, it's made much worse by a rejection of rationality and what Fred Woodworth has aptly termed "a very serious and almost unbelievable trend in modern radicalism: the reversion to mysticism and superstition." Again, the *Fifth Estate* is in the forefront. An article in the above mentioned issue of the *Fifth Estate* baldly states: "Rationality is a curse since it can cause humans to forget the natural order of things. A wolf never forgets his or her place in the natural order. Europeans do." Other examples of irrationality and mystical maunderings abound in Fredy Perlman's recent tract, *Against His-Story, Against Leviathan*, a large portion of which was printed in the *Fifth Estate*. In it, Perlman babbles on about such things as "orgiastic communion with the beyond," and being "possessed by the spirit of a tree."

While this may appear to be harmless lunacy, it's not. Rejection of rationality and reversion to mysticism are serious problems. For once you abandon rationality, how do you determine right from wrong? How do you determine what's in your self interest from what isn't? Without rationality you have two choices: you can follow the leader and obey the prescriptions of others; or, you can follow your impulses — do what "feels right" — a choice that more often than not leads back to the first.

Using unexamined impulse as a means of decision making is very dangerous because we've all been subjected to constant authoritarian conditioning since birth, and our impulses will inevitably be influenced to some degree by that conditioning. For

A notable feature of the anti-technology fringe is their refusal to get down to specifics. They'll spend thousands upon thousands of words attacking technology in the abstract, but will rarely discuss specific aspects of it. When they do, they invariably pick the easiest possible targets, things such as nuclear and automotive technologies, technologies which are so obviously and overwhelmingly harmful that they would be drastically reduced if not eliminated outright in any type of sane society.

And yet, while they blanketly condemn technology, the antitech fringe assert that it's unfair to paint them as wanting to go back and live in caves, that they "never" have advocated "destroying all machines." (*Fifth Estate*, December 31, 1980.) That's fine. But where do they draw the line? Which technologies — machines, if you prefer — do they want to keep? Which do they want to get rid of? And why? Those are tough questions, yet the anti-tech "neo-primitivist" faction, of which the *Fifth Estate* is the leading voice, refuses to answer them. Tellingly, after denying that they advocate destruction of all machines, the *Fifth Estate* writers quoted above launched off into generalized denunciations of technology, never once getting down to specifics as to what they wish to retain and what they wish to jettison. The anti-technology fringe will deserve serious consideration when they answer those tough questions. But chances are they never will. If they'd admit that any aspect of technology is beneficial, their blanket critique would fall apart. It'd be extremely difficult, for example, to make a case that we'd be better off without antibiotics and carpentry, and that we'd be better off if smallpox were still rampant. (Smallpox has been eradicated by medical technology.)

Rather than produce a meaningful (specific) critique, we can expect our anti-technology ranters to continue to produce blanket denunciations of technology, science and rationality couched in obscure situationist jargon, to continue to produce obsequious odes to "primitive peoples" which ignore or downplay the defects (patriarchy, for example) in primitive societies, to continue to attack the

A very disturbing development is the deliberate attempt to mislead, above and beyond the leveling of false accusations. A recent incident involving "George Bradford" (David Watson) of the *Fifth Estate*, is illustrative. "Bradford" wrote an abusive and irrational letter to the editor of *The Match* (issue 79). Match editor Fred Woodworth demolished "Bradford's" arguments in a reply. Rather than attempt to openly answer what Woodworth had to say (which would have been a difficult task), the *Fifth Estate* staff decided to mislead their readers. They printed no direct reply to Fred's comments. Instead, "Bradford" fabricated (he's admitted this), and *Fifth Estate* printed, a "letter to the editor" which badly distorted Fred Woodworth's position; and *Fifth Estate* headed, signed and return-addressed the letter in such a way that it could easily have misled readers familiar with the U.S. anarchist scene into thinking that Fred wrote it. What makes this especially reprehensible is that the fake "letter to the editor" made racist statements.

Upon seeing this fabrication, Fred immediately wrote a letter marked "intended for publication" to the *Fifth Estate*. His letter pointed out the dishonesty and destructive effects of publishing fabrications.

The *Fifth Estate* didn't print Fred's letter. Instead, it printed the following "clarification": "Fred Woodworth, editor of *The Match!*, P.O. Box 3488, Tucson, AZ wrote recently to inform us that he was NOT the author of a letter which appeared in our last issue signed Tall King AZ Hole.' We are sorry if this created any confusion."

The hypocrisy of this "clarification" is astounding. If they didn't want to create confusion, why did "Bradford" fabricate the "letter to the editor"? Why did he head it, sign it and return address it (using Fred Woodworth's zip code) in such a way that suspicion could easily have been aroused that Fred wrote it? Why did *Fifth Estate* print it?

And why didn't they want to print Woodworth's comments about the fabrication? In all probability it's because they would have shown what type of dirty, dishonest game "Bradford" and the

Fifth Estate were playing. So, the *Fifth Estate* staff lied and said they were "sorry,"and conveniently forgot to tell readers that "Bradford" had forged the "letter."

Violent Attacks

As unethical as the *Fifth Estate's* actions have been, however, the *Fifth Estate* staff have not physically assaulted those with whom they disagree. Others have. Over the last two years a relentless campaign of verbal abuse, physical harassment and violent attacks has been carried out against *Processed World* (PW).

Two years ago, Robert C. Black, Jr., attorney at law (also known as Bob Black and "The Last International") began to attack Processed World in various publications, among them *Bluff*, the *SRAF Bulletin*, and San Francisco's *Appeal to Reason*. Shortly after these printed attacks began, flyers were posted in the San Francisco financial district revealing the names of writers using pseudonyms in *Processed World*; this appears to have been an attempt to cause them to lose employment. (Most of the people who work on the magazine are office workers.) Flyers were also posted in staffers' neighborhoods vilifying them and listing their home addresses and telephone numbers. When staff members removed these violations of their privacy, there were immediate cries of "censorship" from Black's cronies. (There was, of course, no indication on the leaflets as to who produced or posted them.)

In 1984 the attacks were stepped up. *Processed World's* office lock was epoxied and in September a worker on the magazine received a middle-of-the-night death threat against her and her baby. In October, Robert C. Black, Jr., attorney at law, filed a complaint with the San Francisco Planning Commission over alleged zoning violations in *Processed World's* office. The following month, PW was forced to move after the Planning Commission discovered that the roof in its office was only seven feet high rather than the required eight. PW

> [A]s I've noted, in social life at its (con)sensual and satisfying best-sex, conversation, creation-taking from and giving to others constitute a single play-activity rich with multiplier effects. For the lucid and ludic egoist, anything less than generalized egoism is just not enough. In other words, "All Aboard!"

This statement looks impressive. It sounds impressive. But what on earth does it actually mean? Who knows? It's hard to imagine a piece of writing further removed from George Orwell's dictum that political writing should be as transparent as a pane of glass.

Examples of muddy, situationist-influenced writing can also be found with great frequency in the pages of the *Fifth Estate*. An example (which they chose to highlight) from the July 1981 issue is typical: "Technology is capital, the triumph of the inorganic, humanity separated from its tools and universally dependent on the apparatus." I showed this statement to several of my coworkers and none of them could make head or tail of it. Several thought it was typical academic blather; and not one thought it had anything to do with day-to-day life.

Back to the Caves

The preceding quotation illustrates yet another serious problem in the North American anarchist movement — a blind rejection of science, rationality and technology. Those who hold this position rarely bother to differentiate between the three; but technology is their primary whipping boy.

There are several disturbing aspects to this position. Foremost is the fact that those who are most vehement in their opposition to technology can't even provide a coherent definition of what it is. When pressed, they'll generally say something about a "system of global domination," or the like, as if that imparted any real information.

use of language, and, ultimately, make it more difficult to combat the evil of real censorship. For both uses trivialize the term.

The central problem with both of these uses is that they ignore the defining characteristic of censorship: coercion. My dictionary defines censorship as the "act of censoring," and it defines censor as "an official who examines books, plays, news programs, etc., for the purpose of suppressing parts deemed objectionable on moral, political, military, or other grounds." So, censorship is defined here as a state activity, and what is the state other than organized force, violence and coercion?

Most people, however, would probably prefer a slightly broader definition. A reasonable common usage definition would be: "Censorship: the prevention of anyone from freely expressing him or herself, and/or the prevention of anyone seeing, hearing, or reading any form of expression, through the use of coercion or force." Of course, if you enjoy playing the "what if" game, you can probably come up with a few cases in which this definition might not yield a clear decision on whether some hypothetical act constitutes censorship. But in real life this definition will provide a clear test in virtually all instances.

Obscurantism

One major reason why anarchist, "antiauthoritarian" if you will, publications are often all but unreadable is the use of obscurantist terminology. All too many pamphlets and periodicals read as if they were written by sociologists. The guiding principle — which could be termed the "academic writing syndrome" — in this type of writing is to never use a single, simple word when an ambiguous, but pretentious, seven-word phrase is available. An example of this type of verbal exhibitionism can be found in Bob Black's letter to the editor in issue no. 79 of *The Match!*:

then moved to its present location in a warehouse shared with several other people. That same month an ax was placed through the magazine's office door in the middle of the night.

In 1985 things really got nasty. During the spring someone began slashing copies of the magazine with razor blades in bookstores in San Francisco and the East Bay. In April, flyers (again bearing no indication of their origin) urging that PW's new office be "torched," and which listed the new address, were posted in the financial district. In the same month Robert C. Black produced a xeroxed tract noteworthy primarily for his vicious personal attacks and disgusting vulgarity (calling one person whom he doesn't even know a "butt fuckee," for example). The next step was physical assault. On April 19, Black was arrested for physically assaulting a *Processed World* staff member hawking copies of the magazine on the sidewalks of the financial district. His arrest came about in a curious way. After the incident occurred, Black went running to the cops in an attempt to get the PW staffer arrested for assault. But fortunately, several passersby had witnessed the incident and identified Black as the assailant. So Black was arrested, hauled off and booked. In May he failed to show up for his arraignment on the battery charge and a warrant was issued for his arrest. Finally, in June, one of the residents of the warehouse in which *Processed World* has its office was returning home from a show at 3:00 a.m., and when he got home he found a person pouring gasoline all over the front of the building.

All of this is very disturbing. The reaction (more accurately, nonreaction) of many San Francisco anarchists, is perhaps even more disturbing. While all of these extremely vicious, FBI provocateur-type actions were being perpetrated, one continually heard comments among anarchists, such as: "Why should we worry about it? They're (the PW staff) not really anarchists"; "Fuck both sides. I've heard [a PW staffer] badmouthing us. Why should we help them?" And, perhaps most revealingly: "Sure, Bob Black is a destructive nut. But he hasn't attacked us." So, many anarchists just sat on

their hands. After all, it wasn't their problem. Instead of sticking to the principle, "An injury to one is an injury to all," they adopted the more convenient "Every man for himself!"

Even worse, a few marginalist anarcho-sectarians, because of personal feuds with *Processed World* staff members, actually sided against them. One individual took a cue from the "right to life" honchos' comments about abortion clinic bombings, and wrote in the journal of the Bound Together Bookstore that he wouldn't do such things himself, but that he could "understand" the motivations of those who make anonymous death threats. It speaks volumes of the destructive effects of sectarianism that it can lead any anarchist to condone such cowardly, provocateur-like acts.

Misuse of Terms

An underlying reason for much of the confusion and bickering in the North American anarchist movement is the imprecise use and misuse of terminology. We've already seen examples of it in which the terms "leninist" and "purge" were deliberately misused by sectarians. They're also in the habit of misusing the term "censorship." On one hand we find those who feel (they never define the terms they use) that censorship somehow consists of withholding one's cooperation from publications — in not lending one's time, labor, space, and money to selling or distributing certain publications. On the other, we find those who feel that "Censorship is something we do all the time, so what's the big deal about censoring something?" (Those who operate under this definition never, of course, define their terms either.) An incident at Bound Together Books involved the first usage. Two of Bob Black's allies strongly urged that the bookstore carry the crude, scatological tract Bob Black had published. Their reason? It would be "censorship" not to carry it.

The stupidity of this use of the term is obvious. If "censorship" consists of withholding cooperation, the term loses all real meaning. It's obviously impossible to lend one's efforts to the distribution of all available publications (or even all those which would like you to assist them — which would probably include all extant marxist publications), so under this definition everyone, everywhere is constantly practicing "censorship," and the term becomes completely meaningless. It turns into nothing more than a frightening buzzword useful only as a means of sowing confusion and intimidating those with whom one disagrees.

An interesting instance of the "what's the big deal?" use of the term can be found in issue number eight of an Australian tabloid called *Everything*. In an article titled "Censorship & Pornography," an anonymous writer maintains that "Censorship is common all through our society. Children are censored by adults ..." etc., etc., in an attempt to justify the use of censorship by anarchists. Naturally, she never defines what she means by "censorship." What do these "anarchist" advocates of censorship mean by this word? I recently heard one state that "Every time you turn off the radio or TV you're committing censorship." (Again, notice that he doesn't define the term.) The interesting thing about this usage is that, like the other, it renders "censorship" completely meaningless in that everyone, everywhere is constantly practicing "censorship."

The real difference between those who feel that censorship consists of withholding cooperation and those who are of the what's-the-big-deal school lies in the way they employ the term. The first group uses it as a means of manipulation and intimidation, of bludgeoning those with whom they disagree into submission. The second group uses it as a license to do anything they want, no matter how coercive or violent (such as bombing adult bookstores). When those who misuse the term in this manner run into real censorship, all they can do is impotently howl, "We're right. You're wrong" in the face of the censors. And that's not a convincing argument. Both uses of the term sow confusion, sow contempt for the anarchist movement among those concerned with civil liberties and correct