

LOOKOUT!

July 1986

Number 19

HAPPY FOURTH OF JULY!

Do You Feel Free?

The rockets' red glare and the bombs bursting in air may symbolize freedom for the more martially minded among us, but for most Americans, the 4th of July means little more than a midsummer blowout celebrating the patriotic over-consumption of food, alcohol, and gasoline.

This is not to say that Americans don't treasure their freedom, such as it is, if and when they stop to think about it. But I'd have to guess that people are not giving a whole lot of thought these days to what it means to be free. One sure sign of this is the way that symbols of liberty have become far more important than the real thing.

The crocodile tears flooding our electronic and print media over what the Statue of Liberty has meant to generations of immigrants make it easy to forget that today's immigrants are unwanted and hunted down like animals. The incessant flagwaving and militaristic posturing of the neo-fascist Reagan Right have become so synonymous with love of country that it's no wonder people fail to remember that the revolutionaries who started this country did so in large part to get away from that sort of murderous flapdoodle.

"Freedom" in and of itself is a meaningless abstract, useful mainly as a rhetorical device for politicians and would-be dictators on the make. It is only when we talk about freedom relative to specific conditions of our daily lives that it takes on a vital significance. Freedom from hunger, freedom from fear,



By Lis Hafala
Larry Wrightman, a San Francisco boy, held a rifle and wore a helmet and combat vest from a Missouri display.

The CHRONICLE saw fit to print this "cute" picture of a little boy playing war in front of the battleship Missouri. I wonder if they'll publish a follow-up a few years from now when he gets shipped back home to his mother as a flag-draped box of bloody guts.

those are easy enough to understand. But what about one of our most hallowed rights, the freedom of speech? What does it mean if our brains are so numbed by ignorance and lies that we truly have nothing to say?

The crimes perpetrated in the name of freedom of religion daily make it clear that the framers of the constitution should have phrased it, "Freedom from religion." The slavish adherence of the great majority of citizens to even the most brutish and pig-headed of governments make one wonder whether it is within human nature to be self-governing.

And that's what it comes down to, isn't it, human nature? If people don't have it in them to take control of their lives, then all the revolutionaries of history labor in vain. Theologians and philosophers debated for centuries over whether *homo sapiens* indeed has a free will or is merely an unreasoning products of its environment. To the best of my knowledge, they never reached a satisfactory conclusion.

But this sounds excessively cynical, doesn't it? After all, our species has made some progress. Outright slavery is virtually a thing of the past, and while human rights are notably absent from many countries, they no longer constitute an alien concept.

But slavery of the body can be supplemented and even replaced by slavery of the mind. The United States of America, for all its relative openness and freedom of movement, is becoming a vast intellectual *gulag*; our experiment in democracy is giving way to an experiment in the control and manipulation of the collective consciousness unlike anything ever seen in history.

Who can escape the pervasive waves of stupidity that appear to be sweeping away everything that we have gained from history and experience? We can attempt to ignore the corrosive misinformation and the hideously distorted values proffered by the mass media. But unless we live as true hermits, something becoming nearly impossible on this tiny planet, we come in constant contact with those whose every action and idea is merely a reflection of a system so extensive that it now controls even the would-be controllers.

You may laugh at the psychotic drivel spewed forth by a Ronald Reagan and regurgitated by his ubiquitous disciples, but just as the air is polluted by chemical emissions that none of us can avoid breathing, so is the realm of the mind irretrievably poisoned by endlessly repeated falsehoods.

So how free are *you* feeling this Independence Day? Are you still waiting for the revolution to free you from this madness? Or, like many more, are you just waiting for America, or the world, for that matter, to come back to its senses? If so, I hope you packed a lunch; freedom will never be gained or preserved as part of a mass movement.

That's not to say that mass movements aren't sometimes necessary and even desirable; we're certainly going to need one soon to stop our government's war on much of the third world. But in becoming part of any movement we surrender freedom rather than gain it. That's precisely the root of our problem today: society itself has become a mass movement so vast that no one feels capable of detaching him or herself from it.

But still within ourselves there is a place where no one else can follow. That ultimate isolation is the source of the sometimes suppressed, sometimes overwhelming loneliness that makes itself felt in every aspect of our lives, whether or not we are aware of it. But it is also the source of the one freedom that can never be taken from us. That is the freedom of the individual, and in these days of deadly conformity, it is a freedom that many would sooner do without.

Still, we can no more avoid the reality of individual freedom than we can the burden of collective responsibility. What happens to all of us is very much, perhaps completely the result of what happens deep inside of each one of us. When we abandon our own unique awareness, whether it be to wallow in drugs, in ideologies, or merely something as banal and insidious as television, we in a very real sense draw the shades on all our fellow beings as well.

Being free isn't always easy, as even the ersatz patriots love to remind us. But the struggle is not one to be fought with guns and bombs, but with conscience and will. And of course, a sense of humor, always a good thing to keep handy in matters of life and death.

Can You Recognize A TERRORIST?

Do You Know The Difference Between:



A Terrorist,



and...
A Freedom-Fighter?



Hostages,



and...
Political Prisoners?



Bombing An Embassy,



and...
Mining A
reign Harbor?



Nationalist Fanatics,



and...
Patriotic Citizens?

For More Information, Contact the Terrorist Hotline (415) 986-0145

¿Yo, Señor, Can You Spare 90 Trillion Pesos?

I was cleaning out my dresser and miraculously found a little bit of foreign currency left over from a European trip a few years back. At my first opportunity I took it downtown to turn it into Yankee dollars. While the exchange clerk was going through his counting and paperwork shuffle, another employee came up whispered something in his ear. "It's a good thing you're not trying to change Mexican pesos," the clerk told me a moment later. "We've just been ordered not to buy any more pesos; the government of Mexico can't pay its bills."

So what else is new, I wondered to myself. Of course Mexico couldn't pay off its almost-100 billion dollar foreign debt, much of which is owed to U.S. banks, any more than the United States is ever likely to pay off its \$2 trillion debt owed to just about everyone. The only difference is that no one has the nerve (at least not yet) to go around calling Uncle Sam a deadbeat.

No such reticence obtains when dealing with our star-crossed (double-crossed might be more appropriate) neighbor to the south. The banks who were shuttling truckloads of newly minted petrodollars off to Mexico throughout the 1970s are now warning that if our government doesn't Do Something, the whole system is liable to come tumbling down around our (well, at least their) ears. Of course, these warnings are not targeted for universal consumption; the banking business is in essence a confidence game, and when too many people lose confidence, the game is up.

The banks' ideal solution, the one they're pushing for, would be to take U.S. taxpayers' money and give it to the Mexican government, which would in turn hand it over to the *norteamericano* banks to pay off its debts. In the name of efficiency, of course, we could just mail our checks directly to the Bank of America and Citicorp and cut out the middlemen.

On the surface at least, our financial institutions would appear to have a strong case. A total default by Mexico and/or, say, Brazil, would almost certainly bring about the near-total collapse of the banking system. Forget that nonsense about your account being "insured by an agency of the federal government." One or two major bank failures (B of A, for example) would wipe out the Federal

Deposit Insurance Corporation and set in motion a chain reaction that would leave few, if any, banks untouched.

What isn't made clear in economics class (as if anything ever was) is that the apparent multiplicity of banks is an illusion of convenience; there is in essence only one bank, and it is one and the same with the Treasury Department of the United States Government. Your friendly neighborhood bank is a franchise operation, just like McDonald's, cranking our dollars instead of burgers. The purpose of making it appear otherwise is to allow the Feds to juggle, manipulate, and ultimately skim off the money supply in a series of byzantine machinations that they don't even fully understand themselves.

But while it's easy to smile at the spectacle of millions of supposedly rational people making a living, indeed, growing rich and powerful, by shuffling arcane bits of paper back and forth, to those who count their wealth in tortillas and beans rather than in stock options and leveraged buyouts, it is nothing short of tragic.

While money *per se* is one of those collectively agreed upon delusions that make our current version of civilization possible, it is in terms of human lives and the quality thereof that the real legal tender is calculated. Bank of America's "reasonable" return on its investment finally adds up not to percentage points on a spread sheet, but to how many Mexican children will grow up malnourished, how many Brazilians will never know anything but the desperate squalor of the *favelas*, and, lest it be forgotten, how many young men will lose their lives in futile neo-colonial wars attempting to maintain North America's parasitic dependence on its South American neighbors.

In the past of course, when one of the Latin fiefdoms lagged too far behind in its payments, it was a simple matter of sending in the Marines to bring things up to date. But even in today's era of TV and movie-bred blood lust masquerading as patriotism, no one with an IQ beyond that of a devoted Sylvester Stallone fan seriously believes that we could successfully return to the days of gunboat collection agency.

Besides, despite all the sanctimonious blather about third world basket cases, no country in the history of the known world has ever owed so much to so many as our own United States. Forget about Mexico, Argentina, or Brazil defaulting; the likelihood of the USA ever being able to pay off its bills is roughly the same as that of Ronald Reagan appointing Jesse Jackson to the Supreme Court. This country is in every normal sense of the word bankrupt, flat broke, busted beyond belief.

So what's to stop the rest of the world from cashing in its chips and taking smarty-pants Uncle Sam down a few pegs? Two things, really. As the planet's largest organized crime syndicate, the U.S. government is pretty much impervious to bill collectors. But more importantly, all the currencies of the world are now so inextricably linked that the failure of the U.S. dollar would soon threaten the very existence of money itself.

And what would be so bad about that, you might well ask? It would of course be an inconvenience trying

to figure out how to compensate the shopkeeper or the landlord for the necessities of life without those easily negotiable pieces of paper that have come to represent the ultimate definition of value. And for the people who, by virtue of having a pocket or a vault full of those pieces of paper, haven't had to do anything useful with themselves in more years than they can remember, it would be considerably more than an inconvenience; it would be disastrous.

But to the vast majority of the world's population, it would make little difference at all; in a hand-to-mouth existence, money is at best irrelevant. Here in the United States, of course, where even the most hopeless denizens of the underclass have been conditioned to believe that there is nothing wrong with their lives that a quick infusion of greenbacks couldn't cure, the abolition of money would probably have janitors vying with stockbrokers for the window exits. But there's no reason to believe that we couldn't survive and in fact be better off without the weighty apparatus of banks, brokerages, insurance companies and their endless permutations whose marginally useful functions were long ago eclipsed by the manipulation of dollar values as an end in itself, regardless of the human consequences.

One could make a good case for, say, every 50 years, turning the whole system upside down and making everyone start over from scratch. Those with real talent and ability would have no trouble making it on their own, and the incompetent would at least be evenly matched. So if I were the president of Mexico, or one of the other third world countries in hock to U.S. banks, my solution to the debt crisis would be an easy one. First I'd get all of my country's people to line up along the U.S. border where we would collectively thumb our noses at Uncle Sam and his stupid bankers. Then I'd use the money that would have been wasted on the next loan payment to throw a great big *fiesta*.

Mexican politicians as a breed being no more imaginative or sensible than their U.S. counterparts, I don't expect this eminently practical solution to come about any time soon. But some less pleasant version of it will almost certainly be dictated by economic necessities within the next few years. In the meantime, I wouldn't leave too much money on deposit with the Bank of America.

Wall Street to North Coast Timber: "You've Had It, Pal"

Mexico's not the only place having its economy and quality of life drastically altered by decisions made in faraway financial centers. When a bunch of greedy parasites ("investors" in 80s newspeak) known as the Maxxam Group bought out Humboldt County's family-owned Pacific Lumber Co., local observers predicted the worst. As it turns out, they may not have been pessimistic enough.

At the beginning of July, the east coast-based consortium of brokers and similar riffraff, most of whom

have never even seen Humboldt County, ordered its new vassalage to immediately *double* its cutting of old growth redwood. Pacific had been one of the handful of loggers in the north state practicing sustained yield forestry, where you don't cut trees down faster than new ones can grow to replace them. Already in business for 100 years, Pacific could have continued to harvest at its current rate for generations to come; under its new management the trees will, by their own admission, be gone in 20 years or less.

Of course, by that time the white-collar thugs of Maxxam will have slunk away with their profits, leaving still more unemployment and environmental disaster in their wake. The courts have already refused to intervene; it's just the normal functioning of the free enterprise system, they say. A little free ecotage may be the only solution here. Some Earth First-style tree spiking would put some crimps into the Maxxam sawmills.

ALL CRANKED UP IN LITTLE OLD LAYTONVILLE

In the wide world of drug abuse, amphetamine, or "crank", as its local users so charmingly, and accurately, call it, is a pretty low-class item, barely a step or two up the social ladder from airplane glue or horse tranquilizers (PCP). Nevertheless, owing to its relatively low cost and its ability to confer a sense of self-importance on those most lacking one, the drug has become wildly popular.

The duller-witted elements of the hippie and punk subcultures discovered speed a long time ago, but it has only recently hit Mendocino in a big way. It was probably introduced locally by incompetent pot growers whose harvests weren't large enough to support a more expensive cocaine habit, but it has now spread to mill workers, deputy sheriffs, bored housewives, and that group of devoted individuals who have made it their life work to make sure that no Mendocino drinking establishment ever goes out of business for want of customers. Lately speed, or crank has been seen to be turning a number of Laytonville teenagers into zombies, though admittedly it's hard to tell the difference in some cases.

Correction/Addendum

In LOOKOUT # 18 I wrote about a show that happened at the Farm back in April and featured MDC as well as a number of other poets, musicians, and theatrical performers. What I neglected to mention was that the entire event was organized as a benefit for the movement to stop the Green River killings.

For those who aren't aware of the situation, for several years now in the Seattle area, someone has been kidnapping and killing young women, nearly all of them poor, and many of them prostitutes. Those familiar with the case claim that the police have been less than diligent in tracking down the murderer(s) because of the nature of the victims.

LETTERS TO THE LOOKOUT

Dear Particle Accelerator,

Thanks a lot for the LOOKOUTs and the kind words. Out here in the vast wasteland, well, OK, backwoods New England provincial backwaters is perhaps more accurate, I'm pretty isolated as far as certain cultural tendencies go. It's really strengthening to connect with someone else who sees things in a similar light.

I used to put out a little rag of my own called BAD ATTITUDE, which I gave up because of the amount of time and energy it drained from me, to say nothing of the sore upper backs I would get doing the typing and paste-up. You mentioned in one of the issues you sent that you had been a journalism student, and it shows; the quality of writing in the LOOKOUT is really outstanding in this fledgling *samizdat* that has been one of the major advances brought about through punk. Naturally, in keeping with most of punk, the vast majority of "zines" (how I hate that word, almost as much as "lifestyle") are mere ego trips, put out for exhibitionist self-gratification rather than to inform or entertain. That solipsism which has always characterized punk even in its most creative periods was the natural, and perhaps desirable feature of a countercultural movement in response to the youth culture of the Me/Disco era of the mid-to-late-70s.

It is now also another example of how "the march of time" has rendered the punk vision obsolete. As compared to the 70s the 80s present a much more collectivist mentality, usually of course in terms of jingoistic nationalism or racial bonding, and the reprise of the "Family". While I was probably pretty hard on punk in my letter to MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL (#36 ...Ed.), that was mainly for shock effect, to drive home the point that a new breakthrough is now necessary. I still listen to some of the hoary old chestnuts, and have a few fond memories; it is merely the fact that punk is now irrelevant, it's no longer the band that matters, that is my point. After all, there were many "hippies" in 77-78 who tried very hard to hold onto their old ideals; time had simply passed them by (hell, for that matter, there are still a lot of old hippies "doing their things" out in the hill towns of Western Massachusetts).

I think I came to my punk Rubicon several years ago, on the night in November of 1980 when Reagan was elected. There was supposed to be a show at a place called the Hatch up at the University of Massachusetts, but for some reason or other it didn't happen, so a whole bunch of the punks "on the scene" at the time hung around, drinking beer, gossiping, a few of us occasionally turning an eye to the election returns on the tube. When the network declared Reagan the winner, I turned to them and said, "Well, now you've got *California Uber Alles* and it doesn't have a damn thing to do with Jerry Brown," and they stared at me in blank incomprehension. Nonetheless, I've remained drifting in near-punk circles, because it remained the closest thing to anything interesting going on.

Now the 80s have shaped a new paradigm of their own, one of intellectual dislocation, fantasy, brainwashing, propaganda, media mind-massage; it is truly the Reagan Era, because his cavalier disregard for facts, the happy little dream world he lives in, are the central symbol of a decade

where people have queued up to the belief that "what you don't know can't hurt you." But, of course, as always, it does; this is especially dangerous in an information age.

There is another prominent reality of America in the 1980s, which is that we are an aging nation. This, in its turn, must be reflected in any new counterculture. Beatnik, hippie, even the early years of punk were essentially related to the Baby Boom generation, when youth was the central myth of the mainstream culture. What we see a lot of in the 80s is older people chasing after lost youth, middle-aged men with Madonna fantasies, etc., etc., etc. A new counterculture does not necessarily have to be youth-centered. In fact, the ability to think without coaching from a cathode-ray tube would seem to be a prerequisite for entrance into a stream of consciousness subversive to dominant society, and that leaves out the overwhelming number of people of all ages, but young people in particular.

Maybe before I babble on a little further, I should tell you a little about myself. I'm 30, grew up here in Holyoke, a decaying mill town of about 50,000; I'm a vet, having spent four years in that greatest of oxymorons, military intelligence (perhaps penultimate; there's always "military justice"). I just got a degree in accounting from the local community college and I'm looking for work with some kind of socially useful non-profit organization; after all, groups contemplating social change probably require more attention to the details of how their money is handled than do exploiters who can always come up with more. I'm a nut about sci-fi, *Solidarnosc*, play chess and guitar, and my favorite musicians at different phases of my life have included HAYDN, the BYRDS, the GRATEFUL DEAD, JOHNNY CASH, the CLASH, WOODY GUTHRIE, ORCHESTRAL MANEUVERS IN THE DARK, and currently I am infatuated with a fellow named BILLY BRAGG. I consider myself a "refugee from the disco generation", too young to have been a hippie, and too old to have really "come of age" with punk. This is the age group of the truest yuppies (it's an unfairness to the hippie generation to lay that phenomenon at their feet. Put me near a hoop and I instinctively start throwing elbows. Go Celts!

Anyway, back to the thesis at hand. There is an interesting characteristic of the 20th century in America, that every decade except the 40s which were dominated by war, has produced a unique underground and/or counterculture. In the first decade was the Smart Set, then the Wobblies and Bohemians of the teens, rumrunners, gangsters, and flappers in the 20s, commies in the 30s, beats in the 50s, hippies in the 60s, punks in the 70s. This seems to have corresponded with Mr. F.J. Turner's thesis on the closing of the frontier and the turn inward. It has always featured artistic license, new musical forms, and varying degrees of radical political consciousness. It is almost as though these phenomena were inseparable.

This is where the punk rocker as Henry Ford, saying, "History is bunk!" misses the point. In fact, the very fact that they are repeating Ford shows that a historical awareness allows for few things that are truly new. The Bomb is new. There really isn't much else.

We've reached an interesting point where people who grew up under the bomb are now in turn having children and bringing them up. Whereas the parents of the first generation growing up under the threat of nuclear annihilation had no essential grasp of what this means to a child, what the "nukemare" is like to a six year-old, now there's a generation of parents who have experienced it. What are the implications? I don't know, but it's fascinating.

A little philosophical digression, if I may? We bumped off God some time around the turn of the century, but we lost one thing that the Bible had always had in it for us, the threat of sudden and

unpredictable mass annihilation. So we promptly replaced fear of the mystical apocalypse with one of our own manufacture. Peculiar, how we humans demand to have that fear in our "anxiety closet", to borrow from Mr. Breathed. I wonder why. Maybe it's one way of coping with individual mortality, the thought that maybe we won't die alone, that when I die, everybody else will die, too.

The gulf between men and women is getting greater, the ability to truly communicate across that gap diminishing proportionately. There have been too many excesses in recent years, from the so-called "sexual revolution" to the most extreme aspects of feminism, to the backlash glorification of violence against women; what major box office success of recent years, what hit miniseries, hasn't featured at least one scene where a man clobbers a woman? Not to mention that old motif, the woman who falls in love with her rapist, getting high play. Madonna is an archetype; she is so very successful because she has grabbed hold of the objectification of sexuality that grows daily, the pornographicizing of sexual energy. I'm not anti-porn, but I'm alarmed at the number of people who have copped inot believing that such fantasy material should translate into behavior in the real world; men and women have both succumbed to this.

The only other response which has been manifested to this sexual disruption is the "New Romance", the harlequinized Valentine Day fantasy, the return of the "big wedding", etc., etc., etc. With the record number of marriages at this time, I'd hate to be the clerk of courts 3-5 years down the line in charge of the dockets for Probate and Family Courts. Gonna be pretty busy down country-and- western-song-road.

Well, I'd be interested in hearing your ideas on these or any other topics, if you can find the time. It's unusual for me to come across someone whom I can immediately recognize as *simpatico*. One thing that is most important for those of us who intend to survive the 80s with our wits and senses intact is to seek out and communicate with each other. If we fall in this, we will have been victimized by the TV-CIA-multinational project of atomizing, alienating, and isolating us, the necessary preconditions for brainwashing.

Liberté, Egalité, Solidarité
Larry Howes
74 Knollwood Circle
Holyoke MA 01040

Lawrence,

I recently read your article on the anti-apartheid protests in Berkeley (LOOKOUT #17) and some of the letters responding to it, so here is another with a slightly different perspective.

Naturally, I oppose apartheid as vehemently as any form of control, racism, and authority, but (and) I also oppose discrimination here in the States and especially in San Francisco, which is where I live. I just have a few quick points to make:

1. When the shanty town (the real one full of real people and not symbols) at 7th and Berry Sts. in S.F. was bulldozed in January '86, where were the protestors? That was here, not in Johannesburg. Was it just too close to see, feel, or hear about?

2. I realize that not all the activists at the anti-apartheid demos in Berkeley are students, but for those who are, the \$10,000 per year they spend to go there is the money the regents use to invest in South Africa in the first place (*I think the actual figure is less, but the principle is sound nonetheless ...Ed.*). It's sort of like opening an account in the Bank of America and then expecting to be able to tell them what to do with the money.

3. And for those activists who aren't students, I will concede that fighting repression in South Africa is a great cause, but the best thing that could happen to South Africa (and Nicaragua, the Philippines, Haiti, Puerto Rico, Mexico, etc., etc.) is to get rid of the American government, business and power center, and remember that the controlled media (*I hope you don't mean the LOOKOUT ...Ed.*) will always lie and distort facts and positions no matter what the size of the print or picture.

Hilary
San Francisco

Greetings,

Hopefully these words find you (all) in the best of health and determined spirits...

Perhaps you'll not mind a few words in regards to *The Vanishing Frontier* and *Make the Borders Go Away!* (LOOKOUT #15 and #16). My interest here is essentially an attempt to maintain a consciousness of things/matters other than prison and its mentality.

It is very encouraging to occasionally see alternative methods of communication address the more meaningful aspects of this strange but amazing existence. However, it seems that words are not sufficient to effect substantial change -- indeed, the words themselves can lead to the confusion and disorientation -- and so comes the ever more anxious "gnashing of teeth" in the milieu of popular opinion...

"Where do we go next?" depends on whom you regard as 'we'. If it is the we who continue to consume and cooperate (nonetheless) with that process of institutionalization it is very likely that while the dissenting words may be heard, their value will be lost in the apathy of intellectual symbolism. We, the disenfranchised and powerless, are going nowhere -- indeed, most have long since arrived in captivity -- and the only real choice we of these underclasses have is actually about degrees of security; this maximum, your minimum... The vanishing frontier is more real to those who become domesticated, while they who choose to continue, even in self-imposed socialization, make ready for the journey into space. At some point in the near future of this evolution, the matter of borders will very likely be resolved by force (perhaps by those who return from an oppressive extraterrestrial existence.

Meanwhile, you who would "lookout" should take special care not to waste this period of grace. Otherwise your potpourri of words is most welcome. Thank you.

Onward - *Obiter Dicta*
John F.
Folsom State Prison
Reprea CA (*how's that for an appropriate place name? ...Ed.*)

Dear Lawrence,

I think it was an unreasonable thing to do, to publish that letter I sent you (*Letters to the LOOKOUT, #18*), considering I specifically asked you not to. (*Sorry, I was hard up for good letters that month ...Ed.*) The reason I didn't want it published was that I considered it embarrassingly badly written, like most private letters I write; if you'd wanted a "publishable" letter, I could've written you one. (*But you did; you just didn't realize it ...Ed.*)

That said, I don't really care one way or the other; I just wanted to complain, having heard you were slightly guilty about it. Please publish this letter in full. (*If I can find the room ...Ed.*)

Actually, I thought your readers might be interested in what the English think of Americans. (*I can't imagine why, but go on ...Ed.*) Of course there are hardly any Americans "vacationing" in Europe this year because of "terrorism" fears. (Actually, I met a few people in the U.S. who said they'd just be too embarrassed to show up in Europe because of the Libyan bombing). The press in the UK reports on attempts to bring U.S. tourists to England, but most English people I've spoken to say, "Who wants to fuckin' attract them anyway?"

Most American things are thoroughly scorned, just because they are from the USA. I used to be like this four or five years ago, but I grew out of it. Oh well, I hate generalising about nations, so I won't go on. Probably not news to you, anyway.

This most recent LOOKOUT (#18) is very good, I feel. Still preaching to the converted, obviously, but at least with a whole lot more wit and intelligence than the usual dunderhead politically oriented fanzines. (*N.B.: The LOOKOUT is a zine, not a fanzine; in case you haven't noticed; I haven't found much to be a fan of ...Ed.*) Oh, that's another thing the English people I speak to completely refuse to consider - the idea that U.S. fanzines can be any good (*Illiteracy is obviously rampant over there ...Ed.*) They are the best!

This Winston Smith person is incredibly obvious, though, and the two works in LOOKOUT #18 credited to him are thoroughly unsubtle. Hmmm, well, I guess there's a market for it (*Not to hear poor Winston tell it ...Ed.*)

By the way, English TV is brilliant, but it finishes around midnight. Apart from that, England is not much different from Australia, except I know less people.

Yours,
David Nichols
London

Dear David,

Thanks for your international commentary and please try to forgive me for my recurring interruptions; sometimes I just can't help myself.

Lawrence

Diary of an Anarchist Junkie

Am pissed off because I want to write the lyrics to *God Assassin* but I can't find them anywhere. All I remember is:

*I can't believe in a God who'd let me
be a junkie
Can't believe in a God that makes
fools like me
Can't believe in a God who'd let me be
A junkie! A junkie!
Kill the God who'd let me be a junkie
Kill the God that makes fools like me
I'll be a God Assassin, God Assassin,
God Assassin for you and me
I'll be a God Assassin, God Assassin
Fuck you, God! Fuck me!*

One of my many acapella lyrics I wish someone would put instruments behind. Needless to say, I was quite bitter and young and out of control at the time. DRUGS, DRUGS, DRUGS! Can't we get away from that subject once in a while? I once argued with Lawrence that they should spend less money on stopping them at the borders (*I don't think they should spend any money stopping them at the borders; I think the government should provide free drugs to anyone who thinks he or she really needs them ...Ed.*) and more on removing the reasons that so many people turn to drugs. He then asked me why

I did them, which stumped my already most-of-the-time dumbfounded and bedazzled brain.

However, thanks to young Andrew in Wisconsin (*Letters to the LOOKOUT, #18*), I now have a clear idea and excuse for my bad habits. (*Gee, good work, Andrew ...Ed.*) I am totally and utterly surprised that you printed his letter in your straightedge zine. I, also, don't go around hating people who don't do drugs, and I'm sick to death of feeling self-conscious and guilty about something I like doing occasionally. The best art work and writing I've ever done were created when I was totally messed up... See? Look, even the terms used for drug users are negative. "Mind expansion," gee, thanks, Andrew.

When I first read your brilliant letter over the shoulder of my husband (who steals the LOOKOUT away from me before I get a chance to read it properly), I thought you were insinuating that all of your 17 years were a "self-destructive phase." I feel like every breath I take, every day that passes is a step closer to shaking hands with the reaper. And what the hell is anarchy but self-government as long as one isn't hurting oneself or others? ...yet it is so hard to define whether what one does has a negative social impact. For instance, my job: is mass production of tourist items (T-shirts) harmful or helpful to Sweet Sister San Francisco? While we're on the subject, would they fire me if they knew I was a part-time addict, even though I maintain a high rate of efficiency and do as well or better than everybody else there? I'm just asking for a little tolerance. All around. Religion, sexual preferences, eating habits, bell bottoms, whatever. I wonder sometimes (boy, am I dumb) if maybe it would be a human effort to tolerate our dear President. After all, he's just another guy out to make a buck.

Short note on mass communications systems: maybe it's my gullible imagination, but a lot of the time I think those DJs on the radio and news guys on TV are on our side about nuclear waste, jingoism, military spending, etc. I can't understand why what I feel to be a widespread enlightenment has yet to make noticeable changes in the way things are going (going, gone - "Clear cut that island, boys, I won't be here next year to look at it). To think that the Miwok Indians used to live right here along this creek... How can anyone own land? I have to get some sleep now. I love everybody (but not always what they do).

Love and Light from
Linda Lou
Petaluma CA



Chairman Ronbo smiles as he reviews the patriotic legions of heroic troops holding high the banner of correct political thought and preparing to smite the running dog lackeys of the Communist aggressors.

WAR AGAINST KIDS

For a while I thought I was just being paranoid, or rather that the young people who were always complaining to me of persecution by their local authorities were being paranoid. I mean a plot to suppress alternative youth culture? Why bother? The vast majority of kids were contentedly watching TV, drinking and drugging themselves into oblivion, and unquestioningly preparing themselves to be dutiful consumers of whatever products or ideologies society had in store for them.

So why should the cops, or more specifically, the politicians and corpocrats who control them, be concerned with a handful of kids with funny haircuts hanging out here and there, listening to weird music, riding around on skateboards, in general doing nothing more serious than refusing to *stay out of sight?*

It made more sense, from an authoritarian point of view, to go after the counterculture types back in the 1960s; there were a hell of a lot more of them then, and they really did appear to threaten the traditional American Way of Life (who could have foreseen that most of them were just understudies for yuppiehood and/or permanent brain damage?).

But no one seriously thinks the country is any danger of being taken over by the infinitesimal minority of punk rockers, do they, or by the far tinier minority of punks who actually care about anything beyond having a good time. Then why have there arisen whole legions of civil servants whose sole purpose in life is apparently to ensure that no kid anywhere, anytime will engage in activities outside the aegis of the One Corporation Under God state church?

Take the simple matter of getting together with some friends to enjoy some live music. As long as it's the sort of music that doesn't challenge anyone's assumptions, that can't be employed with equal facility to sell beer and cars along with sex and complacency, no problem. You just plunk down your 10 or 20 dollars and you're provided with a professionally packaged musical "experience".

But suppose you're not satisfied with what's being offered and decide you want to do things your own way. Simple, right? Just find yourself a suitable space, get some bands, do a little advertising, have a ball...

But in reality, you're entering a labyrinth whose every twist and turn leads you to one inevitable conclusion: somebody up there doesn't like you. In the first place, in nearly every city in the land, you need a permit from the police to present live music. Let's overlook the obvious question of why the police are in the business of deciding where and when people should be allowed to practice the right of free expression guaranteed them by the First Amendment and go on to the next step: try

getting one of those permits. Not only are the police unwilling to grant new permits; in many places, San Francisco, included, they're busily engaged in trying to revoke the ones that already exist.

I never realized how ridiculous (though that's far too mild a word) the situation was until I became involved in the mechanics of putting on some small shows. If we'd gone "by the book", none of those shows would have ever happened; we'd still be waiting for official permission. Ludicrous as it may sound, punk rockers in communist countries like Poland and Yugoslavia have an easier time of getting their music heard than in many American cities.

Seattle has just passed an ordinance requiring any musical entertainment open to teenagers to have a million dollars worth of liability insurance, effectively removing all but large corporate promoters from the field. The San Antonio City Council, in a show of blatant contempt for the U.S. Constitution, has arrogated to itself the power to ban any rock and roll show it deems "unsuitable" for young people. In San Luis Obispo, Los Angeles, and dozens of other cities, police have arbitrarily closed down punk shows and attacked the kids in attendance with a brutality once reserved for civil rights and peace marchers.

What has got the authorities in such an uproar? Sure, the lyrics of many punk songs are overtly political; and challenge the very foundations of government and society, but they're sung/shouted so fast that half the kids, let alone outsiders, don't even get the vaguest idea what they're about. And I have yet to see even the rudiments of a Punk Revolutionary Army threatening to run wild in the streets.

But look at it this way: with thug-like cops, obstreperous bureaucrats, kleptocratic businessmen, and religious pinheads and profiteers all allied against us, we must be doing something right.

We Hold These Truths to be Self-Evident...

In related developments: In "liberal" San Francisco, local police joined with the antediluvian Los Angeles vice squad to stage thoughtcrime raids on the home of DEAD KENNEDYS singer and former S.F. mayoral candidate Jello Biafra, as well as on the offices of Alternative Tentacles, his record company.

The target of this police vigilance: a poster included with the most recent DKs album, Frankenchrist, which was judged to be offensive by the mother of a San Fernando Valley schoolgirl. Result: Biafra and four others are facing up to a year in jail for "distributing harmful material to minors". This from a society in which the average child sees 17,000 televised murders by the time he or she graduates from high school.

Not in our Town You Don't...

Back to the dreary subject of trying to find a place for live music (how would Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland have fared in the 80s?): the dream of the Maximum Rockroll Warehouse (LOOKOUT #18) may have already foundered on the shoals of civic obstructionism. Specifically, the City of Berkeley, once noted for its openness and tolerance,

ZINE REVIEWS

but more recently preoccupied with gourmet restaurants and arcane political power plays, has decided to drag its feet on the MRR application for a permit, with the likely result being that MRR will run out of money before it's ever allowed to present a single show.

The earliest the city will even consider the application is mid-October, with no guarantee that it will be acted upon then. Meanwhile, MRR would have to pay \$2000 a month rent for a warehouse they're not allowed to use. The only hope is if city officials can be persuaded somehow (my suggestion is a mob of music-lovers disassembling the city hall brick by brick) to consider issuing at least a temporary permit so that the warehouse can stay in business while the city engages in its official foot-dragging. Letters to the mayor or city council might help, but I'm not holding my breath. Another course of action should be to take these clowns to the Supreme Court before Reagan gets a chance to appoint any more dull-witted psychotics to that still occasionally responsive tribunal.

SKATEBOARDS: TOOL OF THE DEVIL

Yet another entry in the "America eats its young" department: George Anderson, the corporate bagman who bought and proceeded to destroy by sterilization the Mendocino Coast's only decent radio station, has embarked on a new crusade to purge the Mendocino Village Theme Park of the grave menace posed to decent American merchants by youthful skateboarders.

It seems that the the hordes of BMW and Winnebago-borne zombies who have turned the once picturesque town into a Dawn of the Dead-style shopping mall are being impeded in their never-ending plod on the art boufique to tourist gallery treadmill by the juvenile miscreants who occasionally come zooming down the sidewalks (one of the relative handful of places in Mendocino County level enough for skateboarding to be possible. There's Ukiah, of course, but kids thereabouts are more likely to amuse themselves by sniffing toxic waste fumes or chain-sawing little sister).

So the shopkeepers demand that something be done. Their solution: ban all skateboards. Period. And since the town of Mendocino is unincorporated and has no local government, the only way to accomplish this is to ban them from the entire county. Well, as Calvin Coolidge (boy, would he go over big today!) put it, the business of America is business. It's time you skateboarding kids grew up and learned what life is really about. Shopping, apparently.

And They Nourished Their Fields With the Blood of Their Children...

Oh, and hey, kids, in case you didn't know it, they don't just want to take away your skateboard, they want to *kill* you. With war in Nicaragua and the return of the draft ever more certain (my guess is by the spring of '87) young men in the target age group of the Selective Slavery System would be well advised to learn about their options, what there are of them. MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL #38 (July '86) has an excellent article summing up how best to deal with those who would forcibly turn you into a kill-or-be-killed machine.

By Joe Britz

PUNK JUNK Box 25315, Newark NJ 07101

If I were to describe this zine in one word, it would be "controversial". Editor John Liberté criticizes hippies, contras, TV's distorted view of punk, drugs, the feminist movement, "black urban sellouts," conformity, the LOOKOUT (according to John, "this Livermore guy seems like the William Buckley of punk, using big words which only the pseudo-intellectuals understand"), sexism, homosexuals, Live Aid, Donny the Punk, the face branding of cows, Reagan, infiltration by the political right into punk, nazi hunting, kids, and a few other odds and ends (all in only four issues to date). I have some major disagreements, but also learn, laugh, and enjoy reading PJ for the most part. It definitely stirs some opinions (but he's not fond of letter bombs, either).

NOT FOR PROFIT PO Box 40956, St. Petersburg FL 33743

NFP is a gnarly, crucial, truly ruling, radical, kick-ass zine (just kidding; they'd hate that "harcore" description). Actually, though, the radical adjective is accurate and that can only lead to one response in the "Land of Liberty": Censor it! Which is exactly what's being done in a St. Petersburg high school where the staff distributes it (unfortunately the matter is up to the courts at the moment) (*What's the matter, Joe, don't you trust the duly appointed courts of our land to uphold the constitution?-- Ed.*). Anyway, NFP contains lots of great letters, cartoons, and opinions, so write away for it or die.

RECORDS

By Joe Britz

A STATE OF MIND/CHUMBAWAMBA, *We Are The World?* 7" Split EP

I probably shouldn't review this EP because I'm not very objective when one of my favorite bands (CHUMBA) is involved. The problem is that Lawrence would lift the needle after sampling it for 10 seconds (one of those narrow-minded "oh, it's not fast all the time, therefore it's boring" critics) so I'd better handle it. As I expected, the sleeve/booklet contains loads of intelligent and interesting information about the "Distortion Box" (TV), how past and current atrocities committed by the US/UK "nice guys" are conveniently whitewashed in the media, and a personal note that tells us how the record was made between friends living thousands of miles apart. The vinyl itself is equally great. CHUMBAWAMBA have a unique sound exchanging vocals between female and male leads while combining a folky/fast sound. A STATE OF MIND also have nice harmonies and entertaining music on two of their three songs (I could live without *...Is Not Enough*, though). Good stuff!

A Bite of the Apple (ASOM): "The grasp of want keeps us in line, we're afraid to come out from what we're hiding behind"

THE PROLETARIAT *Marketplace* 7" Single

A few years ago this band put on possibly the best live show I've ever seen (they even inspired an introverted guy like yours truly to jump on stage and shout a couple of lines into the mike along with the singer) so I'm thrilled to discover that they're still together after a long period without recording anything. This single continues the classic PROLES thump/grind sound and angry, concerned lyrics, which is fine by me. No apolitical, kick-ass metal on this one! Hope there's more coming!

Marketplace: "Believe me it's not envy or petty jealousy that makes me despise the lifestyle of decadence and wealth"

BILLY BRAGG *Days Like These* 7" EP

BB isn't for everyone, so I'll pigeonhole him as such: English socialist folk-punk soloist with a biting edge. I like this one a lot, but the 'soft' music (in fact one of the three songs has no music at all) would probably offend the 'hardcore' crowd. Might appeal to the more mellow LOOKOUT readers (just kidding; I hate that adjective).

Days Like These: "The better dead than red brigade are listening on the line"

OTIS REDDING *Dock of the Bay* Single

I know this one's from 1968, but I'm a little behind the times. Anyhow, *Dock of the Bay* is one of those perfect tunes that seems like it was written for my benefit. When I was unsure about moving to San Francisco from New York, I would play this single and realize what I needed to do. The part that goes, "I left my home in Georgia (NY), heading for the Frisco Bay; cause I had nothing to live for..." and all that sad stuff combined with the non-conformist spirit makes this one of my all-time favorite songs. A root of punk, which passes the test of time (by the way, I've sat by the Bay and heard that eerie seagull cry).

Dock of the Bay: "I can't do what ten people tell me to do, so I guess I'll remain the same"

**HOW MUCH IS THAT DOGGIE
IN THE TEST TUBE?**

As anyone who follows politics at all could have predicted, nearly all the candidates who should have won last month's election lost and those who should have been put in jail for lengthy terms won landslide victories. I can live with that; I'm certainly used to it by now. But what still turns my stomach every time I think about it is that the voters of Mendocino County said loud and clear, "Yes, we think it's fine to go on torturing animals to death."

Of all the issues on the ballot, this was one that should have been no contest. In a county overflowing with vegetarian sproutheads, old-fashioned peaceniks, and hippies so non-aggressive that they won't even swat the flies laying eggs in their hair, who could imagine that the cretins and sadists down in Ukiah would be allowed to continue shipping unclaimed pets off to the Dachaus of modern medical science?

I'm sure you've heard enough horror stories by now, so I won't bore you with tales of how the "scientists" conduct their vital "research" through tactics such as dropping animals off of high buildings to see how widely they splatter, or shooting them with small caliber rifles to see how long it will take them to die of their wounds (this last was dreamed up by the U.S. Army: the victims were changed from

dogs to pigs when too many canine lovers in high places complained. Too bad for the pigs that they don't have such good PR).

The pro-torture forces, led by the appropriately named Chairperson of the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors, Marilyn Butcher, argued that it was necessary to sacrifice the animals for the sake of saving human lives. Ms. Butcher, who was recently operated on for cancer, presented herself as Exhibit A, though when I contrast her contributions to the making of a better world with those of numerous domestic animals I have known, I must admit to being surprised that anyone found such evidence convincing.

On the other hand, in a world that still treats vast numbers of its *people* with murderous indifference and overt brutality, does it make sense to be worrying about the fate of a few small animals in some backwoods northern California county?

Yes, it does, for a couple of reasons. First, though the torture and slaughter of our own kind quite naturally strikes us as more appalling than that of other species, the same energy is at work, regardless of the number or shape of the victim's limbs. The willful ignorance that lets us turn our backs while Rover or Fido is dissected without benefit of anesthesia is not at its essence different from the sedate acceptance of millions of African people starving to death for the sake of propping up the world economy. What is lacking in both cases is the most elementary respect for life.

That ties into my second point. "Think globally, act locally," is a popular slogan hereabouts. We don't often get a chance to directly affect the barbarous policies of the world's governments, but here was an opportunity to actually change one of those policies. Admittedly, on the scale of things, it's a pretty small step, but it's better than no step at all.

But instead, the animals go on being tortured, and so do the people. Sometimes I'm not so proud of being human.

PROGRESS, AUSTRALIAN STYLE...

"...this is a sign to the natives that the dawn of liberty, civilization, and Christianity is about to break

upon them." John McDouall Stuart describing his planting of the Union Jack in the center of Australia in 1860. The aboriginal peoples who had thrived there for centuries probably would have preferred an uncivilized heathen darkness to Stuart's "dawn"; within a few years as many as half of them had been massacred and most of the others had been forced into government or missionary-run reservations. But we Americans know all about that sort of thing, don't we?

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