

Love & Rage

Revolutionary Anarchist Federation

New York Local

Member Handbook



August 1997 ★ First Edition



Demonstration to free Mumia Abu-Jamal, Philadelphia, PA

Table of Contents

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---------|
| What is Love & Rage? | 2 - 3 |
| The Revolutionary Anarchist Tradition | 4 - 9 |
| History of Love & Rage | 10 - 22 |
| L&R Political Statement | 23 - 34 |
| L&R Structure | |
| Bylaws & Conf. Decisionmaking | 39 - 43 |
| L&R Membership | |
| Organizing in Locals | 44 - 45 |
| Work Expectations & Dues Chart | 46 |

Introduction

This *Members Handbook* brings together some of the basic documents necessary to understand what it means to be a member of Love & Rage. It is for new members and older members alike to read and to use as a resource and reference. New members should read and discuss these things with L&R members in the process of deciding whether to join the federation. This is the first edition of this handbook; it is essentially still a draft, and is only applicable thusfar to the New York City Love and Rage local. It is certainly incomplete and unclear in spots. The intention of this manual is to introduce new members and potential members to what Love & Rage is, what Love & Rage does, where Love & Rage came from, and how to get involved. Input and criticisms from new members will shape future revisions of this handbook, so please let others know how useful this handbook is and how it can be improved.



A Zapatista reads Amor y Rabia

What is Love & Rage?

Love & Rage is an organization of revolutionary anarchists who are opposed to all forms of oppression, including capitalism, racism, patriarchy and the state. We are working for the creation of a multi-racial, anti-authoritarian, classless society. We work for a society based on mutual aid, voluntary cooperation, solidarity, and collective economics.

We live in an authoritarian society. We live in a capitalist system where a tiny few make profits off of the misery and sweat of the vast majority. This system needs to be destroyed. We also live in a society where men dominate women, queers get bashed, and some people are oppressed because they are of the “wrong” race. These injustices will not just disappear if capitalism is overthrown. Capitalism depends on white supremacy and male domination to function, but these systems of everyday terror have lives of their own. Love and Rage attacks these systems of oppression because they are evil and because we believe that smashing them will bring the whole system crashing down, too.

REVOLUTION REQUIRES ORGANIZATION

Transforming a society based on domination to one based on equality requires a fight. Racism, sexism and class domination cannot be reformed away because the powers that be won't voluntarily give up their wealth and comfort for others' freedom. That's why Love and Rage is a revolutionary organization.

Revolution is not the act of a leader or political party seizing state power. It is a movement of millions acting to change their lives for the better. Such a movement will inevitably be diverse and complex. The revolutionary challenge is to build alliances among the many alienated, exploited and oppressed parts of society in order to fight for change.

What is the role of a revolutionary organization in this kind of mass movement? Obviously, it should not aim to force the entire movement to conform to its ideology. That's why Love and Rage does not see itself as the organization that will “lead” a revolutionary movement. While we certainly put forward our politics and hope that our politics influence the direction of mass movements, we aim to help build movements and to participate in them as equals with other organizations and people who have different ideologies and strategies. Within mass movements we argue for the most democratic and militant politics possible, and we encourage struggle against all forms of oppression.

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

Love and Rage began in 1989 as a continental anarchist newspaper project and became a network of local groups in 1991. In 1993, the network became the Love & Rage Revolutionary Anarchist Federation with clear terms of membership and a commitment to developing a common politics.

As a federation, Love and Rage is composed of local groups in numerous cities and some individual members. We publish two newspapers (one in English and one in Spanish in Mexico). We have three main areas of work that we coordinate together as a federation: Anti-Fascism, Anti-Police, and Anti-Poverty / Neo-Liberalism.

In our Anti-Fascist work we build anti-racist groups, campaigns and direct action. We have actively participated in building the Anti-Racist Action Network. We also mobilize efforts to counter the growing Religious Right and its patriarchal and oppressive agendas. We have participated in mobilizations against Columbus Day celebrations; anti-Klan demonstrations throughout the Midwest, South and East Coast; in mobilizations against Christian Right groups such as Human Life International (HLI); and in mobilizations and campaigns for reproductive freedom and against violence against women.

We do Anti-Police work in varying ways. Some of us are involved in Copwatch programs that confront the police on the beat and raise public opposition to the cops as they perform their dastardly duties. Many of us are involved in specific police brutality cases, mobilizing public outrage against the cops and support for the victims, their families and communities. We do work against the police, not just against police brutality. Police are agents of the state who protect the powerful and their property.

Our Anti-Poverty / Neo-liberalism work has a feminist perspective and focuses on fighting budget cuts to education and welfare, fighting workfare, and building campaigns for a living wage. We have also made international links, showing the connections between neo-liberal economic policies of privatization and austerity in the US and in Third World countries, especially

Mexico.

Love and Rage has a branch in Mexico, called Amor y Rabia. Amor y Rabia is active in Mexico City, and also helped initiate a Direct Solidarity Encampment in a village of Chiapas in Zapatista territory. There they have helped open a women's center, a libertarian school, and a health clinic. Our US and Canadian members mobilize material aid and political support for Amor y Rabia and for the Direct Solidarity Encampment by building Direct Solidarity Committees.

The most important work Love and Rage members do is local organizing. Each member is expected to participate in mass organizing. The bulk of our work is done locally in larger grassroots groups such as Anti-Racist Action, Student Liberation Action Movement, Anarchist Black Cross, and other locally-based organizations and campaigns. We believe in building sustainable, radical, democratically-run mass organizations.

The purpose of Love and Rage is to connect this local work to similar efforts throughout the continent and to work for the most democratic politics within local organizations. We can also help local work by providing resources, ideas, a place to debate and develop strategy, and organizers.

Love and Rage is a directly democratic organization. Major decisions are made by the entire membership at bi-annual conferences.

Smaller decisions in between conferences are made by the Federation Council, a delegate council composed of representatives of each Love and Rage local group. Administrative activities are carried out by the Federation Office and an elected Coordinating Committee. Open debate is encouraged; we have no party line and no party bosses. We are organized in this way because we believe that the structure of our organization should reflect the kind of society we want to live in: democratic, participatory, accountable, and anti-authoritarian.

GETTING INVOLVED

Love and Rage has two types of involvement: Member and Supporter. Love and Rage members are active in building mass movements; participating in the internal life of the organization; studying revolutionary history and theory; and promoting our revolutionary anarchist politics. People who, for whatever reason, can't maintain a high level of activity can join Love and Rage at the Supporter level. Supporters can come to meetings, participate in internal debate, contribute financially, and work on projects of the organization, but do not have votes at the continental conferences.

To become a member or a supporter you need to be endorsed by two current members. If you are interested in joining but don't know two members, write the Federation Office or your local group and we can help you out.

Creating a truly free society means building a grassroots movement that fights all forms of oppression. It requires acting locally and globally. It means fighting against injustice while creating a just society now. If you are a part of this struggle and like what we have to say, get in touch.★



The Revolutionary Anarchist Tradition

(A slightly different version of this article, written by Chris Day, originally appeared in Love & Rage, June / July 1996. Some of the points in the article were controversial within the organization, as reflected by the fact that another L&R member, Wayne Price, wrote a letter in response to the article, which was printed in the next issue of the paper. The controversies in this article mirrored controversies over internal documents circulating at the same time. Despite the controversy, this piece is the best we have for laying out the historical tradition with which Love & Rage most closely identifies. The version of the article printed here was edited to incorporate the criticisms and comments made about the original article. -the editor)

For most of this century the revolutionary struggle for human liberation has stood in the shadow of the Bolshevik victory in the Russian Revolution and the regime it established. The Collapse of the Soviet Empire in Eastern Europe, repression of the Chinese democracy movement, and the electoral defeat of the Sandinistas in 1989 revealed the decay within Marxism as a supposed ideology of human freedom. The ensuing collapse of much of the Marxist left created an opening for a renewal of the revolutionary project.

Love and Rage was the creation of a layer of mainly young anarchists who were frustrated with the disorganization and lack of serious revolutionary politics within the anarchist movement. We were committed to building a serious revolutionary anarchist movement. While we came from a variety of political backgrounds and perspectives we did not collectively identify ourselves with any single tradition within anarchism. Surveying the various trends in anarchism (anarchist communism, anarcho-syndicalism, anarcho-feminism) as well as the libertarian trends that did not identify themselves explicitly as anarchist (council communism, the situationists) we did not see any single current as answering all of our questions. Furthermore many of us drew considerable inspiration from the anti-authoritarianism of the New Left of the 1960s, and from the new social movements that arose in the 70s and 80s. We also identified strongly with anti-colonial struggles for national liberation that, in spite of their authoritarian organization, fundamentally challenged imperialism and raised the hopes of hundreds of millions of people for a world without oppression and exploitation.

Not only were none of the already existing currents within anarchism satisfactory to us, but we understood that our vitality as an organization depended on an atmosphere of open debate and discussion. This didn't mean that as an organization we would be agnostic on every political question, but rather that our politics would be developed through a process of collective practice and discussion. And this is pretty much what has happened — Love and Rage has developed a body of not always explicitly stated common politics by working together for so many years.

While our politics have remained consistently anti-authoritarian, Love and Rage has from its inception been defined by our disregard for anarchist orthodoxies. This is a good thing. If anarchism is to

become a serious revolutionary movement it must develop a whole new body of theory and analysis for confronting the new realities of the 21st century, and that will require the transcendence of various cherished anarchist prejudices. The revolutionary anarchism of the future must be a living synthesis of all the useful thinking that has been created in the course of the struggle for human freedom.

At the same time we have been guilty of not looking closely enough at the debates within the anarchist movement of the past century. While the different currents defined by those debates are still an inadequate foundation on which to build a new body of revolutionary theory, we are not the first group of anarchists to be deeply frustrated by the deep structural problems of anarchism. In this sense we are part of a revolutionary anarchist tradition — a small but vital current within anarchism that has sought to learn new lessons from our defeats, that has struggled to raise anarchist politics above the level of naive moralism, that has confronted head on contradictions within anarchist thinking, that has fought for tighter forms of organization, that has sought to develop a coherent strategy for actually making an anarchist revolution. Revolutionary anarchism speaks to the fundamental failure of Marxism's authoritarian reliance on the state as an instrument for revolutionizing society. But just as Marxism has been tested by history and found wanting, so too has anarchism failed to deliver real human liberation. Therefore we must be particularly attentive to the distinct current of revolutionary anarchist practice that has sought to confront these historic failures of anarchism. This article is an attempt to trace the course of that current through anarchist history.

This current has asserted itself most strongly when new historical conditions have demanded a rethinking of past anarchist assumptions. So at the beginning of this century the anarchist movement was still dominated by the theory of "propaganda of the deed." Small anarchist groups or individuals would carry out bombings or assassinations in the vain hope that by revealing the vulnerability of the system they would inspire the masses to rise up and throw off their chains. Anarcho-syndicalism was simultaneously a recognition of the futility of this approach and a turn towards the mass revolutionary potential of the increasingly insurgent workers movement that was chafing under the largely middle-class leadership of the various socialist parties. The early anarcho-syndicalists were roundly denounced by the rest of the anarchist movement for abandoning the "anarchist principles" of individualist terror.

Similarly Love and Rage and the broader revolutionary anarchist current of which it is part is a response to new conditions. The collapse of the Soviet Union and with it the prestige of marxism as a theory of human liberation created an opening for revolutionary anti-authoritarian ideas. But the anarchist movement was too accustomed to its role as the gadfly of the authoritarian left to break out of that role and put forward a positive vision of a new revolutionary movement. Contemporary revolutionary anarchism is the effort to do that.

In between the early anarcho-syndicalists and the collapse of the Soviet Union, there have been a series of other expressions of the revolutionary anarchist impatience with anarchist orthodoxy.

MALATESTA

Errico Malatesta was an Italian anarchist who spent half of his life in exile. His most important period of activism was during the first thirty years of the 20th century up to his death in 1932. While he participated in a variety of groups and struggles his main significance was as an agitator and propagandist. Malatesta didn't so much break with prevailing anarchist thinking as push it as far as it could go without a thorough critical re-examination. Malatesta's writings on organization are still crucial reading for all revolutionary anarchists. He was unabashedly pro-organization and divided the discussion of organization into three parts:

“organization in general as a principle of and condition of social life today and in a future society; the organization of the anarchist movement; and the organization of the popular forces and especially of the working masses for resistance to government and capitalism...”

Malatesta: Life and Ideas
p. 84 (Freedom Press, 1984, London)

Malatesta argued for a sharp distinction between popular organizations like labor unions and organizations of the anarchist movement. In contrast to the mainstream of anarcho-syndicalism Malatesta recognized the inherently reformist character of the unions, even unions with avowedly revolutionary programs, that grows out of their daily struggle for modest improvements in the lives of the workers. He argued that anarchists should not hesitate to work within such organizations, that it is precisely their openness to non-anarchists that makes them such fertile fields for anarchist agitation. Malatesta's arguments laid the theoretical groundwork for the organization of the Iberian Anarchist Federation (FAI), an organization of anarchist militants working within the larger popular movements.

Malatesta was also critical of the attempts to claim that anarchism rested on a scientific foundation. He used his obituary of Peter Kropotkin to polemicize against Kropotkin's efforts in this direction. The claims of political ideologies (like Marxism) to scientific truth have consistently had authoritarian implications.

Malatesta strove to ground anarchist activity in political reality. Unfortunately his writings remain trapped in a method of speculative politics that seems to dominate anarchist theory. There is a timelessness to his arguments. That means that they can be easily applied to the present. But it also means that they are not based on any sort of systematic investigation of the actual conditions then confronting the anarchist movement. His arguments would be as well reasoned in the 19th, 20th or 21st centuries, but they are a limited guide to practical action precisely because of this timelessness.

What is missing from Malatesta's thinking is a dialectical method. His conclusions are not based on investigation of the actual conditions within society (or within the anarchist movement) and they are not tested against the results of their application. Rather they flow from a set of abstract principles and if they don't coincide with current reality eventually, the reasoning seems to go, reality will just have to catch up.

The limits of Malatesta's methodology come out most sharply only when he is finally confronted with a new current in the anarchist movement that seeks to root its practice in a concrete analysis of the current conditions. The revolutionary upsurges in the wake of World

War I exposed in practice the limitations of certain aspects of the prevailing thinking within the anarchist movement. Anarchists participated in many of these upsurges, but the most significant achievements were in Ukraine. When the Ukrainian anarchists summed up their experiences and called for some changes in the anarchist movement in light of theme Malatesta defended the prevailing orthodoxy.

THE MAKHNOVCHINA

The Ukrainian Revolution is a seriously underappreciated chapter in anarchist history. Unlike Spain where over 60 years of anarchist educational work had shaped the thinking of much of the Spanish peasantry and proletariat, the Ukraine did not have a strong well organized anarchist movement when the February 1917 revolution toppled the Russian Czar and opened up the whole Russian Empire, including Ukraine, to the pent-up revolutionary forces of peasant and worker discontent.

The Bolsheviks came to power in Russia on a program of Bread, Land and Peace. They obtained peace with the German and Austro-Hungarian Empires through the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk which handed over Ukraine to the imperialists. The relatively small Ukrainian anarchist movement seized the moment and built a revolutionary anarchist army around a nucleus of guerrilla partisans commanded by Nestor Makhno. The peasants were already seizing the land largely without the help of the anarchists. Makhno's army defended their gains and argued for the voluntary collectivization of the land while they fought the Austrians, the Germans, and the White armies of Deniken and Wrangel. After defeating the first three the Makhnovchina joined forces with the Bolshevik Red Army to defeat Wrangel. After the defeat of Wrangel the Bolsheviks turned around and crushed Makhno's army, retaking the Ukrainian lands they had given away in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk.

Makhno was openly contemptuous of the “dithering” and disorganization of most of the anarchist movement. While he didn't let the Bolsheviks off the hook for their crimes he correctly identified a number of the anarchist movement's weaknesses that he saw as responsible for the ease with which the Bolsheviks consolidated power. Makhno's two primary virtues as a revolutionary thinker are his lack of sentimentality and his willingness to radically reassess prevailing anarchist orthodoxies in light of actual experience. He describes the original military organization of the anarchists in Ukraine, the “free battalions”:

“It quickly transpired that that organization was powerless to survive internal provocations of every sort, given that, without adequate vetting, political or social, it took in all volunteers provided only that they wanted to take up weapons and fight. This was why the armed units established by that organization were treacherously delivered to the enemy, a fact that prevented it from seeing through its historical mission in the fight against the foreign counter-revolution. . . Elsewhere the practical requirements of the struggle induced our movement to establish an operational and organizational Staff to share the oversight of all the fighting units. It is because of this practice that I find myself unable to subscribe to the view that revolutionary anarchists reject the need for such a Staff to oversee the armed revolutionary struggle strategically. I am convinced that any revo-

lutionary anarchist finding himself in the same circumstances as those I encountered in the civil war in the Ukraine will, of necessity, be impelled to do as we did. If in the course of the coming authentic social revolution, there are anarchists who rebut these organizational principles, then in our movement we will have only empty chatters or dead-weight, harmful elements who will be rejected in short order.”

“On Defense of the Revolution”
from The Struggle Against the State and Other Essays
by Nestor Mahkno (AK Press, 1996, San Francisco)

Mahkno understood that revolutionary anarchists had to operate in the real world of imperfect circumstances. If anarchist ideas were to mean anything they had to be applied in the struggles of the day. And if they were inadequate to the tasks of the struggle then they needed to be modified.

THE PLATFORMISTS

Unfortunately the Bolshevik victory in Russia gave their authoritarian politics enormous prestige amongst revolutionary minded people all around the world. Huge sections of the anarchist movement went over to Bolshevism in country after country. And it wasn't necessarily the worst elements that left either. In many cases the anarchists who remained true to their principles were the most dogmatic, the least interested in what actually worked in practice, the most unconcerned with making anarchism relevant to the majority of humanity. Outside of Spain and Latin America where the mass character of the anarchist movement delayed this development, anarchism was rapidly replaced by Bolshevism as the “revolutionary wing” of the workers movement. In the face of Bolshevik hegemony the anarchist movement became increasingly sectarian and oddly resistant to any challenges to its theoretical orthodoxies.

In the face of military disaster Nestor Mahkno drew the appropriate lessons and reorganized his forces to go on to beat the imperialist and White armies in Ukraine. After his defeat at the hands of the Red Army he and many of his Russian and Ukrainian comrades were forced into exile in Western Europe. There they found the same dogmatism and disorganization that had doomed the anarchists in the Russian Revolution.

Just as they had sought to apply the lessons of the defeat of the “free battalions” in building a revolutionary army, Mahkno and his comrades in exile sought to apply the political lessons they had drawn from their experience and to create a new kind of revolutionary anarchist organization — one capable of the profound organizational tasks involved in carrying a revolution through to victory. Their call for the formation of such an organization was a pamphlet entitled “The Organizational Platform of the Libertarian Communists.” The Platform, as it came to be known was published in 1926 and quickly became an object of controversy within the anarchist movement. Reading its opening paragraphs it is not hard to see why:

“It is very significant that, in spite of the strength and incontestably positive character of libertarian ideas, and in spite of the forthrightness and integrity of anarchist positions in facing up to the social revolution, and finally the heroism

and innumerable sacrifices borne by the anarchists in the struggle for libertarian communism, the anarchist movement remains weak despite everything, and has appeared, very often, in the history of working class struggles as a small event, an episode, and not an important factor.

“This contradiction between the positive and incontestable substance of libertarian ideas, and the miserable state in which the anarchist movement vegetates, has its explanation in a number of causes, of which the most important, the principal, is the absence of organizational principles and practices in the anarchist movement.”

The introduction goes on to say that :

“(I)t is nevertheless beyond doubt that this disorganization derives from some defects of theory: notably the false interpretation of the principle of individuality in anarchism; this theory being too often confused with the absence of all responsibility. The lovers of assertion of ‘self,’ solely with a view to personal pleasure, obstinately cling to the chaotic state of the anarchist movement, and refer in its defense to the innumerable principles of anarchism and its teachers.”

The Platform had three sections. The first or “General” section was a basic exposition of revolutionary anarchist thinking concerning the process of revolution. The second “Constructive” section elaborated an anarchist program for the reorganization of industry, agriculture, and consumption. This section also addressed the question of how the gains of the revolution would be defended by a revolutionary army. The final “Organizational” section called for the creation of a “General Union of Anarchists” on the basis of four organizational principles:

1. Theoretical Unity
2. Tactical Unity or the Collective Method of Action
3. Collective Responsibility, and
4. Federalism

The Platform was widely attacked within the anarchist movement in terms that would be familiar to those who have followed the controversies around Love and Rage. The Platformists were accused of being crypto-Leninists and of attempting to dominate the whole anarchist movement in their effort to build an effective organization. The Platformists were pushed to the margins of the anarchist movement and their efforts to build an organization failed. But the ideas of the Platformists lived on and a variety of Platformist groups have come and gone over the years. Two Platformist organizations that are currently operating are the Anarchist Communist federation in England and the Workers Solidarity Movement in Ireland.

The political program of the Platformists was not as much of a break with anarchist orthodoxies as their organizational principles which Malatesta described as “the absolute negation of any individual independence and freedom of initiative and action.” In response to Malatesta's charges Mahkno noted how the absence of the spirit of collective responsibility had resulted in the chronic disorganization of the anarchist movement and its effective abdication of its revolutionary responsibilities. The sharp exchange between Malatesta and

Mahkno should be required reading for all anarchists today. (Fortunately it has recently become available again in English with the publication of *The Anarchist Revolution*, a collection of Malatesta's later writing by Freedom Press.) Malatesta's criticisms of the Platformists are ponderous and abstract, making no reference to the actual state of the anarchist movement. In contrast Mahkno's response raises the difficult questions that anarchism had up to that point effectively evaded.

One obvious error that the Platformists made was their overestimation of the potential for winning over the majority of anarchists to their position. Given the depth of their criticisms they should have understood that at least initially they would only be able to attract a minority of the anarchist movement. A General Union of Anarchists united around the sort of program advocated in the Platform would not be possible before an intense political struggle within the anarchist movement, a struggle that the Platformists were not in a position to win. Consequently, by tying their project to winning over the majority of anarchists they doomed it.

The Platformists also failed to develop a coherent analysis of imperialism and the profound influence that its global inequalities would have on the process of world revolution. Consequently their political program and their understanding of the class struggle reads today as very simplistic. But their critique of the organizational failings of the anarchist movement and the measures necessary to correct those failings has lost none of their resonance. Their organizational principles are simple and common sense. But they are a stake through the heart of anti-organizational thinking in anarchism. The intensely hostile response they generated is a profound testimony to the political irrelevance of much of the anarchist movement.

Tragically the Platformists were to have almost no influence on the Spanish anarchist movement. When the Spanish anarchists found themselves in a revolutionary situation they were considerably better positioned than their Russian and Ukrainian counterparts to give the revolution a libertarian character. But in the end they failed for many of the same reasons. J. Manuel Molinas, Secretary of the Iberian Anarchist Federation (FAI) in the early 1930s later wrote: "The platform of Arshinov and other Russian anarchists had very little influence on the movement in exile or within the country ... 'The Platform' was an attempt to renew, to give greater character and capacity to the international anarchist movement in light of the Russian Revolution ... Today, after our own experience, it seems to me that their effort was not fully appreciated." The Spanish Revolution offered the best opportunity to carry the anarchist revolution to completion. The failure of the Spanish anarchists to learn the lessons of the Russian and Ukrainian experiences before it was too late is perhaps the single greatest tragedy in the history of the anarchist movement.

THE FAI

The Iberian Anarchist Federation (FAI) was founded in the summer of 1927. Whereas the Platformists were the product of the experience of defeat of the Russian and Ukrainian anarchists, the FAI arose in response to the burgeoning revolutionary potential of Spain and some of the contradictions within the Spanish anarchist movement. Up until the formation of the FAI the main organizational form of the Spanish anarchist movement was the National Confederation of Labor (CNT). The dictatorship of General Primo de Rivera had broken up the CNT

as a functioning national organization. Under these conditions of repression powerful tendencies towards reformism asserted themselves within the scattered anarchist movement. The FAI brought together the most militant and determined revolutionaries in Spain under conditions of intense repression. The FAI was composed of small affinity groups federated locally, regionally, and nationally (including also Portuguese groups and exile groups in France). When the CNT was reorganized in 1928 the FAI came to exert a dominating influence on its orientation.

While the FAI constituted the most revolutionary forces within the anarchist movement they were not united around any sort of coherent program. Rather they were united in their opposition to any sort of collaboration with the reformist forces. Politically the FAI was heterogeneous in the extreme including a wide range of anarchist tendencies as well as groups organized to promote vegetarianism, Esperanto (an artificial language created for purposes of international communication), etc..

In opposition to Malatesta who argued that the unions should be ideologically non-sectarian in order to attract the broadest participation of the working class, the FAI declared itself in favor of explicitly anarchist unions because "working-class unity is not possible." The existence of widespread sympathy for anarchism among the Spanish proletariat and peasantry made it possible to build an explicitly anarchist mass union like the CNT, but the very existence of the FAI pointed to the contradictions involved in such a union. Malatesta argued that the need to meet the daily needs of the members under the existing system has a conservatizing influence on unions regardless of their origins or assertions of radical aims. The experience of the CNT prior to the founding of the FAI confirmed this position. In effect the FAI constituted itself as an organization of the most advanced elements that fought for (and won) revolutionary politics within the CNT. Opponents of the FAI's revolutionary orientation attacked the FAI for dominating the union. The FAI resisted this characterization of their role within the CNT and certainly non-FAI members were often influential, but an honest assessment of the FAI must acknowledge its leadership function within the Spanish anarchist movement.

While the FAI was undeniably composed of many of the most committed revolutionary anarchist fighters in Spain they fundamentally failed to cohere themselves around a program or strategy until it was too late. Reading Juan Gomez Casas' *Anarchist Organization, The History of the FAI* (Black Rose, 1986, Montreal), one can not help but be struck by this fact. Year in and year out the conferences and plenums of the FAI are dominated by discussions the most elementary organizational matters. The political resolutions are agonizingly vague and subject to the broadest possible range of interpretations. When a revolutionary situation fell into their hands they were utterly unprepared for the difficult choices involved.

On July 19, 1936 the CNT carried out a revolutionary general strike in response to a fascist military coup. They were joined in varying degrees by the socialist union (the UGT) and the political parties of the left. In Catalonia where the anarchists were dominant within the working class and among the peasants the CNT decisively smashed the military revolt, armed the workers and peasants, formed revolutionary committees and organized militias to fight the fascists. A similar pattern repeated itself, again in varying degrees, across those parts of Spain where the fascists were unable to establish control.

In Catalonia the revolutionary upheaval was so complete and the anarchist predominance within it so beyond dispute that on July 20 Luis Companys, the President of the semi-autonomous government of Catalonia (the Generalidad) summoned the leaders of the CNT and the FAI and offered to resign. The leaders of the CNT and FAI declined claiming that they did not want to establish an “anarchist and Confederal dictatorship.”

In this single moment we find distilled the historical anarchist abdication of political responsibility. The anarchist movement has no reason to expect to be presented with a better opportunity to reorganize society on libertarian lines than existed on July 20, 1936. While support for the CNT was not universal, they clearly had the allegiance of the majority of the oppressed classes in Catalonia. They had created a situation of dual power with the capitalist state. The choice before them was not one between collaboration with the capitalist state and an anarchist dictatorship. It was between the revolutionary creation of a federation of the popular committees and councils and collaboration. To take the first road would have required smashing the state not just militarily (as they already had) but politically by overthrowing Luis Companys and the Generalidad. Since the popular committees in Catalonia were largely initiated by the CNT’s defense committees established to prepare for the insurrection there is no reason such a program could not have been carried out. Dual power is not an end in itself, it is a condition under which an opportunity exists to smash the old power and replace it with a new organization of society. Situations of dual power are inherently unstable. Sooner or later the old power or the new power will smash the other one. The consequence of the CNT and FAI’s false fear of being party to an “anarchist dictatorship” was that they soon found themselves first under a dictatorship of the petty bourgeoisie and the Communist Party and then under Franco.

The FAI’s failure to unite around a comprehensive analysis of Spanish society and strategy for its revolutionary transformation meant that they were unable to seize the revolutionary moment when it presented itself. The workers and peasants were ahead of their leaders and accomplished profound things in terms of collectivizing industry and agriculture and reorganizing social life in the villages and cities under their control. But they lacked the organization or collective political experience to navigate the complicated political situation that confronted them. The organization that was best positioned to provide these things, the FAI, was unable to do so.

It was only after the revolutionary moment had passed and the Spanish state was reorganized with the generous assistance of Moscow that the FAI recognized the need to reorganize itself in accordance with its actual role. In July 1937 the FAI reorganized itself with clear standards of membership based on agreement with a common political orientation. The affinity groups were stripped of any “official role in the new FAI organization” and vote by simple majority was introduced to prevent small groups from obstructing the work of the organization as a whole. But the new political statement of the FAI was again hopelessly vague and the organization had been fundamentally compromised by their participation in the Republican government and their treacherous call for a cease-fire during the “May Days” in Barcelona two months earlier.

THE FRIENDS OF DURRUTI

The failure of the FAI to provide revolutionary leadership in spite of

the powerful revolutionary aspirations of the Spanish peasants and workers created a political vacuum. One organization that attempted to fill that space was the Friends of Durruti.

One of the central issues in the Spanish Revolution was the attempt to incorporate the militias into a new regular Republican army. Much of the impetus for this militarization came from the Communist Party, which by virtue of its connections with the Soviet Union, was prepared to dominate the command of such an army. The anarchist and POUM militias resisted this process in varying degrees. Ultimately most of the anarchist militias were either incorporated into the new army or broken up by it. One group that resisted militarization were the militias at the Gelsa front. Instead of joining the army many of their members returned to Barcelona and joined with some other dissidents in the CNT to constitute themselves as the Friends of Durruti.

The Friends of Durruti played a pivotal role in the May 1937 events in Barcelona, calling on the anarchist forces to maintain their barricades when the CNT leadership was preaching conciliation with the Communists. After these events the Friends of Durruti issued a pamphlet “Towards a Fresh Revolution” that analyzed the defeat of the Spanish Revolution and put forward proposals for its regeneration. Unlike anarchists today who see the Spanish militias as the model of anarchist military organization the Friends of Durruti had seen them in action and proposed in opposition to either the Republican army or an exclusive reliance on the militias the revolutionary army:

“With regard to the problem of the war, we back the idea of the army being under the absolute control of the working class. Officers with their origins in the capitalist regime do not deserve the slightest trust from us. Desertions have been numerous and most of the disasters we have encountered can be laid down to obvious betrayals by officers. As to the army, we want a revolutionary one led exclusively by workers; and should any officer be retained, it must be under the strictest supervision.”

The Friends of Durruti also proposed the creation of a Revolutionary Junta to be democratically elected by all of the revolutionary working class organizations that opposed further participation in the Republican government. The precise mechanism for forming the Junta (a word which does not have the same authoritarian implications in Spanish as it does in English; all the CNT unions were governed by *juntas*) varied in different statements of the Friends of Durruti, but the point should be emphasized that what they were proposing was a popular democratic structure, not a party-state like the one established by the Bolsheviks in Russia. This is similar to the program for workers’ and peasants councils, although not quite as good since it required working through the existing union structures. The Friends of Durruti also took some tentative steps to align themselves with anti-colonial forces in Morocco. As troops stationed in Morocco constituted the base for the fascist uprising, the question of support for Moroccan independence was a crucial one. This tentative anti-imperialism is indicative of the Friends of Durruti’s determination to confront the weaknesses of anarchist theory.

CONCLUSION

The Friends of Durruti continued to operate even after the ultimate

defeat of the Republic by the fascists, but in the final analysis their initiative clearly came too late. Like the Mahknovchina before them, they only came to understand the need for a different kind of revolutionary anarchist organization as a result of bitter defeats. Their abortive efforts to create such an organization did not get far enough to offer us much guidance today. What they do provide, however, is a desperately needed example of revolutionary anarchism confronting its errors head on and creating new forms in response to new conditions.

The experiences in Ukraine and Spain demonstrate that in the course of a revolution, a certain amount of centralization and repression of open counter-revolutionaries will be necessary. Of course anti-authoritarians must consciously strive to keep such centralization and repression down to the minimum level necessary and should deliberately work to keep the communal organization as decentralized and radically-democratic as possible. Exactly how to maintain this balance is a matter of political judgment, but there should be no ambiguity in our opposition to party-states.

One simple lesson from the experiences discussed here is that the attempt to build a serious revolutionary anarchist organization will inevitably encounter hostility from many quarters, including many sincere anarchists. Only a minority of the most serious and committed activists can be expected to join such an effort. And only in the context of profound social upheaval will the importance of their extended period of organizational and political preparation become clear. Only in the course of struggling to build such an organization on the basis of coherent politics can we hope to collectively confront and overcome the mistakes of the past.★

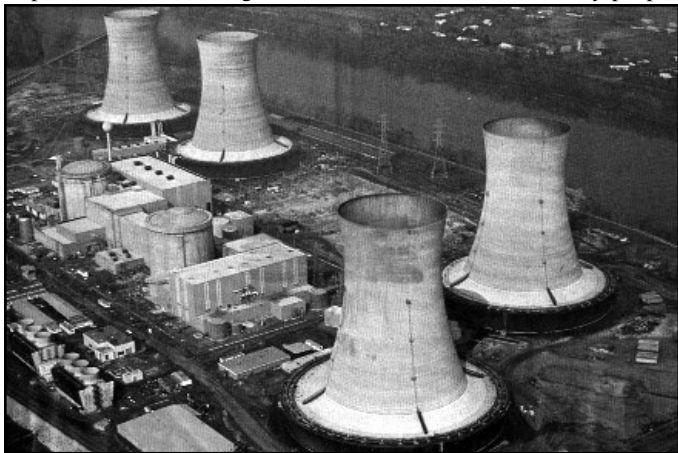
The Development of Love & Rage

When people ask what Love and Rage is we usually offer an answer like “the Love and Rage Federation is made up of anarchist groups and individuals scattered across the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. We publish two newspapers. We have engaged in such and such actions. And we share some basic politics which are...” This sort of answer is never satisfactory. The Love and Rage Federation, like any political formation, can not be understood simply as a collection of groups and individuals, nor even in terms of our actions, or even our stated politics. The Love and Rage Federation is the product of its history. Understanding that history is the only way to understand why the Federation is the way it is and how it can move forward.

This history of Love and Rage is a greatly revised version of an earlier history circulated at the 1993 Love and Rage Conference in San Diego. Much of the history is actually an account of the development of the anarchist movement in the 1980s. This history is important because it shaped the people who launched Love and Rage. The history since the San Diego conference is considerably less in depth for the simple reason that it is easier to get by looking through recent issues of the newspapers and the Federation Bulletin and because it is always more difficult to write a useful history of recent events. Time has yet to determine which events are important and which are extraneous. At any rate the San Diego Conference was turning point in the history of the organization and much that has happened since then grows out of the decisions that were made at that conference.

THE POLITICAL PRE-HISTORY OF LOVE AND RAGE

While a number of people involved in Love and Rage have histories that go back farther it is generally fair to say that Love and Rage has its roots in the social movements of the 1980s. Unlike the 1960s and 70s the social movements of the 1980s were relatively weak. While millions of people participated in the various movements (against nuclear weapons, against U.S. intervention in Central America, for divestment from South Africa, and so on), and these movements won some important victories, they did not succeed in reversing the general political turn to the right in the United States. While many people



*Three Mile Island nuclear power plant--
a target of the anti-nuclear power movement*

were radicalized to varying degrees, they did not establish a broad radical movement, and the struggles of the 1980s generally retained a single issue character.

Love and Rage is one of the very few revolutionary groups around today that did not come mainly out of the movements of the 1960s. It is a formation with an explicit commitment to revolutionary politics that is largely the creation of activists who became politically active in the 1980s and 90s. This has been both a strength and weakness. We have benefitted from not being defined by events and struggles that seem to many young activists to be ancient history. On the other hand that lack of historical connection has compelled us to reinvent the wheel sometimes. Many of the most elementary features of a functioning organization we had to discover by trial and error. Anarchism has a strong anti-organizational current within it that even influences the thinking of anarchists who have a general appreciation of the need for some sort of organization. Consequently there has been considerable resistance to each step Love and Rage has taken to become a more effective organization. An important part of Love and Rage's history is the painstaking process by which we developed into a functioning organization. Obviously this process is an ongoing one. So as we struggle to improve the organization it is useful to know where its been.

THE EARLY 80S

“The formally loose and unauthoritarian structure of the affinity groups and the organization as a whole is compensated by procedures of ideological and social pre-selection based on the consensus process. . . The process is formally democratic like minority/majority systems, delegation systems, and decision by lot. But on the level of class reality, it excludes the less qualified labor force or people who are forced into full-time jobs or are exhausted by work. Consensus, therefore, favors people with psychological and sociological education since physical power is not allowed to enter group decision making.”

from *Strange Victories*,
The Anti-Nuclear Movement in the U.S. and Europe
by Midnight Notes, 1979

The largest social movement of the early 1980s was the movement for nuclear disarmament that rose up in response to the escalation of the nuclear arms race that began under Jimmy Carter and was dramatically accelerated under Ronald Reagan. This movement had its roots in the anti-nuclear power movement of the late 1970s but succeeded in mobilizing a much broader coalition of forces. In general this movement was liberal and reformist, demanding a freeze in the production, testing and deployment of nuclear weapons. The direct action wing of the movement was overwhelmingly dominated by the pacifist ideology that had driven the anti-nuclear power movement.

In West Germany the movement developed a much more militant wing around the Autonomen, the anti authoritarian youth movement based mainly in the flourishing squatters scene of Berlin and other



“Die-in” at No Business As Usual protest in Atlanta, GA

cities. During the “Hot Autumn” of 1983 the Autonomen were able to carry out massive, militant and illegal demonstrations that dramatically challenged the deployment of U.S. missiles in Germany. The Autonomen were an important inspiration for the young activists in the U.S. and Canada who would be attracted to and who would reinvigorate the anarchist movement.

The anarchist movement of the 1970s was part of a larger radical/militant scene that was in many respects still propelled by the social explosions of the late 1960s and early 70s. That radical/militant scene was able to compose itself as a presence within the anti-nuclear power movement, but was effectively eclipsed by the reformism of the Nuclear Weapons Freeze campaign. Pacifism was a strong current among the anarchists within the anti-nuke movement and it heavily influenced the thinking of younger people attracted to the direct action orientation of that sector of the anti-nuke movement. It was several years before a new generation of radical activists, not tied to the 60s, was able to assert itself.

This new generation was more culturally rooted in the punk scene of the 80s than in the hippie scene of the 60s that still heavily influenced the ethos of radical politics. One of the earliest indications that there was a new generation of radical youth was outside the 1984 Democratic Party convention in San Francisco and the Republican Party convention in Dallas. At both conventions “Warchest Tours” moved through the downtown areas carrying out spirited and theatrical attacks on the buildings of the various corporate sponsors of the conventions. On several occasions the Warchest Tours turned into running battles with the cops. The Warchest Tour became a model for actions that would shape the anarchist movement for the next several years.

NO BUSINESS AS USUAL

*“They Won’t Listen to reason
They Won’t Be Bound By Votes
World War Three Must Be Stopped
No Matter What it Takes”*

From the **No Business As Usual**
Call for Actions on April 29, 1985

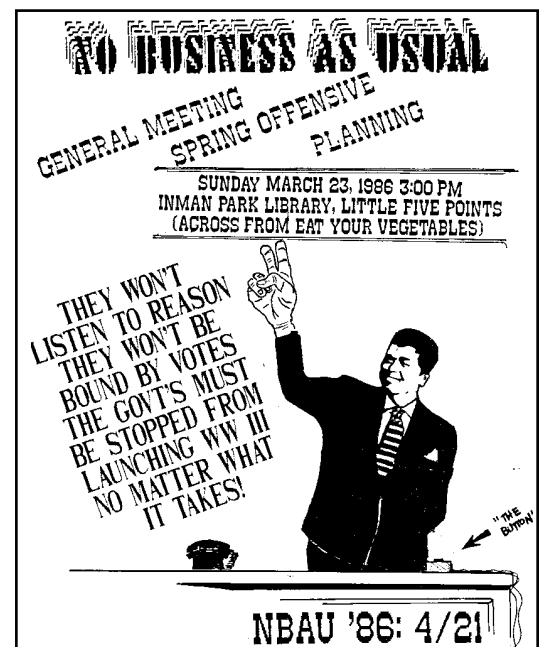
The Democratic and Republican Conventions attracted hundreds of

young, mainly anarchist youth from across the U.S. who came away with the feeling that they were on the cutting edge of a resistance movement and that similar actions should be organized everywhere. The form this took was No Business As Usual, an unholy alliance of anarchists, independent radicals and the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP). No Business As Usual (NBAU) started as a call for a day of militant direct action, April 29, 1985, against the nuclear arms race. NBAU was conceived of, at least by its anarchist participants, as an ad hoc and amorphous collection of groups committed to carrying out this day of actions. There was very little conception of NBAU as an ongoing formation.

That’s not how things went. NBAU quickly fell under the domination of the RCP. In the larger cities where NBAU was something of a coalition there was a constant struggle with the authoritarian and anti-democratic methods of the RCP. But just as important as their methods was the fact that the RCP, unlike anybody else in NBAU, was a national organization. That meant they had the resources to set up offices for NBAU, that they could send travelling organizers to various cities, and that they could use their newspaper, the Revolutionary Worker, to promote and report on NBAU actions everywhere. The effect of this was that while the anarchists were increasingly frustrated by the authoritarianism of the RCP, NBAU was dependent on them for its success as a nation wide action.

And NBAU was a success. Actions took place on April 29 in dozens of cities and towns. After April 29 the RCP was able to quickly consolidate its control of NBAU. The anarchists who had the skills to resist the RCP’s antics abandoned NBAU in droves. At the same time the RCP was able to take advantage of the predictable questions of “what next” among all the young radicals who had been brought into NBAU, and NBAU became an ongoing organization. Lots of young anti-authoritarian radicals would pass through NBAU. Some would go on to become effective anarchist activists, but many were burnt out by the experience and were alienated from politics forever.

The anarchist movement got burnt by NBAU. There were two main ways of looking at this experience. The first analysis focused on the authoritarianism of the RCP as the main problem. The main conclusion drawn from this analysis was to not work with the RCP. A secondary outcome of this analysis was to give up on nationally coordinated actions. Some people sought to justify this retreat by arguing that local work was more important than coordinated national actions. But





Divestment Coalition at Univ. of MD. takes over Board of Regents Meeting in March 1989 to demand divestment from South Africa.

in general the shift was not a conscious one.

The second analysis focused on the failure of the anarchist movement to organize itself. This analysis said that complaining about the RCP being authoritarian was like complaining about gravity. The anarchist movement should not expect to be taken seriously if it could be thwarted so easily. Nationally coordinated action was important in order to broaden the movement and bring in people who were isolated in smaller cities and towns. To retreat from it would be a mistake. Nationally coordinated actions should not be posed against local organizing. NBAU had already shown how a nationally coordinated action could provide crucial support for local activity, particularly in the most isolated communities. What we needed to do was to develop our own organizational capacities so that we would never be dependent on groups like the RCP again.

THE STUDENT MOVEMENT FOR DIVESTMENT FROM SOUTH AFRICA

In the spring of 1985 major demonstrations broke out on campuses across the U.S. demanding that the various colleges and universities sell off, or divest, their stocks in corporations doing business in South Africa.

There were several important elements to this struggle. First, it actively involved large numbers of African American and other students of color as well as white students. Consequently it forced many young white radical students to confront their own racist socialization and to grapple with the issues of racism in the U.S.

Second, the struggle was from the outset fairly militant. The campus movement began when students at Columbia University occupied a campus administration building. Similar actions took place on campuses across the country in the following weeks. On many campuses "shantytowns" of tents and makeshift shelters were erected and students lived in them, often in defiance of the campus administrations. Anarchists played significant roles in the divestment struggles on many campuses. In Berkeley, where some of the most militant demonstrations took place, the anarchists were among the most militant students.

The third significant element of the divestment struggle was that it exposed the direct complicity of local institutions (like colleges) in the oppression and exploitation of Third World peoples in a way that was much more immediate than the nuclear disarmament movement.

The divestment struggle forced the largely white anarchist move-

ment to try to think through how it would relate to the Black community and to communities of color in general, and their political organizations in particular. There were many heated disputes on many campuses as militant white students were accused of endangering students of color with reckless, and politically ineffective actions that brought down repression harder on the students of color than on the white students. A certain number of "anarchists" lumped together all the Black groups they didn't agree with as "authoritarian" instead of confronting the ways that racism operated within the divestment movement. Since anarchists participated in the divestment movement largely as individuals and not as members of a particular anarchist organization many found themselves lumped together with people they themselves viewed as at least unconsciously racist.

Out of this experience a number of young anarchists came to see the importance of distinguishing themselves by explicitly supporting the Black communities' right to set its own political agenda and by taking up the fight against racism in the white community.

THE CHICAGO ANARCHIST GATHERING

"Planning got underway with a May Day 1984 planning meeting called by Impossible Books (and endorsed by several groups around the country), held at Chicago's Autonomy Center, and drawing maybe 2 dozen anarchists from throughout the midwest. It was a disjointed meeting that suffered badly from its lack of organization — a problem that was to continue, albeit not in quite so extreme a fashion — and structure."

from Mob Action Against the State
Haymarket Remembered ... an Anarchist Convention

Five hundred anarchists gathered in Chicago over May Day weekend in 1986 to commemorate the anarchists involved in the Haymarket incident 100 years earlier, which had been the beginning of May Day as an international working class holiday. The organizers of the Gathering, Chicago Anarchists United, were largely motivated by the desire to challenge the leftists and liberals who were attempting to gloss over the anarchist character of the Haymarket incident. But most of the anarchists who came were younger and the question of setting the historical record straight was a secondary concern next to the opportunity to meet other anarchists.

The four day Gathering consisted of workshops, meals, entertainment and two demonstrations. The first demonstration was the official May Day march in which we were the single largest contingent but which we broke off from just as it



UC-Berkeley divestment shantytown in early 1980s attacked by cops.

was about to end. The breakaway lasted until we got in a confrontation with the cops. The second demonstration was a Warchest Tour through downtown Chicago. This demonstration was a spirited and theatrical action that ended when a section of people started trashing a ritzy hotel and a department store. 37 people were arrested and a lot of energies of the Gathering were diverted into getting them released.

There were workshops on every imaginable subject. One workshop on a continental anarchist newspaper attracted people from several of the major anarchist papers of that time (Fifth Estate, Open Road, and Bayou La Rose) and required several sessions. There was a strong sense that the movement was growing and needed a voice and a forum for communications that was not being met by the sporadic publication of any of the existing newspapers. The younger anarchists who were the most eager, were also the least experienced in publishing a newspaper and had the least resources to throw behind it. In the end none of the major papers, with the possible exception of Open Road, was prepared to sacrifice their local autonomy in order to make a continental paper accountable to the larger movement.

The Chicago Gathering was an important first step in developing lines of communication within the anarchist movement. A list of many of the people who attended was compiled and eventually copies were sent out to everybody on it. A collection of individual experiences of the Gathering, *Mob Action Against The State*, was published. But in terms of any coordinated activity for the next year or any kind of structure to facilitate coordinated activity, there was nothing. And so after the initial enthusiasm generated by the Gathering the anarchist movement returned to where it had been, on the margins of movements controlled by other people.

CENTRAL AMERICAN SOLIDARITY

“Sandino was not an original political thinker. Most of his political these may be found in Flores Magon’s letters, political manifestos, and communiques.”

from Intellectual Foundations of the Nicaraguan Revolution, p. 28

by Donald C. Hodges

“Although Sandino repudiated Christianity in all its forms, the new theology of liberation encouraged by the FSLN represents the single most important carrier of his anarcho-communism.”

ibid. p. 294

Once the missiles were deployed in Western Europe the nuclear disarmament movement went into a general retreat. Many of the activists who had been originally politicized in the nuclear disarmament movement began to work against U.S. intervention in Nicaragua and El Salvador. The divestment movement on campuses continued through 1986 and won significant victories. Many campuses divested and so did many city and state governments (which owned stocks through their retirement funds). Many of the corporations doing business in South Africa pulled out rather than face the loss of capital from divestment.

Many of the students who were initially radicalized in the divestment movement went into the Central American solidarity movements. Central American solidarity work in the U.S. had its roots in

the support for the Nicaraguan Revolution in 1979, but took on a particularly urgent character in the mid-late 1980s as the Reagan administration sought to destabilize the Sandinista regime through support for the Contras. When Congress denied funding for the Contras it was provided covertly. Direct U.S. military intervention became increasingly aggressive and Honduras, which borders both Nicaragua and El Salvador, was transformed into a military outpost of the U.S..

On campuses, Central America activism focused on CIA recruitment. The anti-CIA recruitment campaign retained much of the militant spirit of the divestment struggle. CIA recruiters were driven off of a number of campuses by spirited demonstrations that occasionally turned into skirmishes with the police. But the anti CIA campaign was the more militant wing of a larger and more moderate off-campus Central America movement. Tensions between the militant students and the more moderate liberal and religious forces in the Central America movement came to a head in the spring of 1987 with a student initiated attempt to blockade CIA Headquarters in Langley, Virginia.

The blockade was called by a group of students returning from Nicaragua and taken up by the Progressive Student Network, a large-



Anarchist contingent at 1988 Pentagon Blockade action

ly midwestern left wing student organization. It was scheduled for the day after a national March on Washington against U.S. involvement in Central America and South Africa.

At the March on Washington two spontaneous anarchist contingents were organized. Symbolic of the general disorganization of the anarchist movement, efforts to unite the contingents failed as the two contingents weaved in and out of the march. Leaflets were passed out by Neither East Nor West from New York calling for “A March Without Marshalls for a World Without Bosses” and anarchists from Minneapolis were busy promoting the upcoming continental anarchist Gathering in Minneapolis. Neither East Nor West was a coalition of anti-authoritarian groups from New York who had initially formed as an anarchist alternative to No Business As Usual but which had become a group mainly dedicated to solidarity with East Bloc social movements.

The only Neither East Nor West members who could make it to the March were also members of the Revolutionary Socialist League (RSL). The RSL had once been a Trotskyist organization but over the 80s had broken with the thinking of Trotsky and Lenin and defined itself as libertarian socialist. Many members of the RSL already con-



Militant mass demonstration in Minneapolis against US troop deployment to Honduras in 1986.

sidered themselves anarchists and the organization had made a decision to attempt to participate in the anarchist movement. It was in the contingents that many anarchists heard for the first time about the Langley action scheduled for the next day.

The students intended to carry over the militancy that had been used on campus to shut down the entrances to the CIA Headquarters. But the more mainstream anti-war groups sought to repress the militancy of the students by organizing a highly choreographed “civil disobedience” that wouldn’t interfere with anybody getting to work at the CIA. The resulting scene outside the main entrance to CIA Headquarters was a zoo. The War Resisters League sought to coordinate a symbolic blockade of the road while Workers World Party attempted to bore everybody to sleep with an endless series of speeches on the sound system they controlled. Simultaneously an assortment of students, anarchists and members of NBAU attempted to really block the street without offering their bodies up to the police.

In the aftermath of the Langley action, anarchists from a number of cities began to talk informally about the need for some sort of structure to coordinate our participation in future actions of this sort. Langley provided only further evidence of what we had learned from NBAU, that as long as authoritarian and reformist groups had a monopoly on organization and the resources organization gave them access to, we would be pushed to the margins of radical opposition and would be at their mercy in any kind of mass movement.

THE MINNEAPOLIS ANARCHIST GATHERING

The organizers of the Chicago Gathering had made no provisions to initiate the organizing of another Gathering. After contacting groups in several cities that had indicated interest in holding a gathering and finding out that nobody actually was going to do it, Back Room Anarchist Books in Minneapolis offered to host a Gathering in 1987. The Minneapolis Gathering was three days of workshops, meals and music, followed by a day of action, a Warchest Tour through downtown Minneapolis. The Warchest Tour was deliberately scheduled on the last day to ensure that any arrests would not disrupt the rest of the Gathering.

The workshops were consciously scheduled to lead up to a final session of workshops that would be devoted to making concrete plans for the coming year. One workshop worked out a plan to publish an internal newsletter for the anarchist movement, *Mayday*. A second workshop affirmed and discussed the plans of the Toronto anarchist community to host a Gathering in 1988. A third workshop decided to

hold a network meeting in Atlanta in the winter that would be aimed at increasing communications and coordination within the anarchist movement.

The Minneapolis Gathering represented a significant step forward for the self-organization of the anarchist movement. It also showed the first signs of a basic division within the movement between those who saw the need for structures beyond the local level and those who saw such structures as only compromising their cherished local autonomy. Several members of the RSL attended the Gathering. The RSL members were attacked by members of the Fifth Estate collective and accused of attempting to take over the anarchist movement. While many people were not surprisingly suspicious of the RSL given the long history of Leninist intrigues against the anarchist movement, the Fifth Estate attacks were very personal and based largely on unsubstantiated speculation. The RSL members, for their part, participated constructively throughout the Gathering and won the respect of many people in that process. The final sessions of workshops were not the most controversial, but because they had to make decisions involving people from lots of places and of lots of political leanings they were difficult. The RSL members were particularly helpful during these meetings in drawing out the full range of peoples concerns and in finding a basis for consensus.

THE INVASION OF HONDURAS

On March 17, 1988 the U.S. sent 3,200 troops to Honduras in apparent preparation for an invasion of Nicaragua. The response to this action was massive. In every major city and in hundreds of towns people took to the streets. The actions were militant. In countless cities government buildings or offices were occupied in sit ins. In those cities with strong Central America movements like San Francisco, Minneapolis, Toronto, and Boston demonstrations attacked government buildings, breaking windows and fighting with the police. The demonstrations went on day after day for a week until Reagan announced that the troops would be brought home. In all of the most militant actions, anarchists played significant roles. The widespread resistance to the invasion established a very real limit on what the Pentagon could get away with in Central America if it didn’t want to risk a serious challenge to domestic stability.

A couple months later a leak from the Pentagon indicated that plans to invade Panama were put on the back burner in the wake of the resistance to the invasion of Honduras.

In Minneapolis, the Honduras actions announced the existence of the Revolutionary Anarchist Bowling League (RABL). RABL was an action collective that had grown out of



RABL goes bowling at Armed Forces Recruiting Center in Minneapolis to protest US troops in Honduras

Back Room Anarchist Books seven months earlier. Its newspaper, *RABL Rouser*, was inspired by the English newspaper, *Class War*, and as a group they pushed for mass militant direct action in the streets as opposed to the non-violent civil disobedience employed by the mainstream of the Central America movement and the late night lock gluing and window breaking that constituted the direct action of much of the anarchist movement. The Honduras actions gave many anarchists the sense that a mass resistance movement was possible, that many of the people we had previously written off as apathetic were capable of very bold direct action. There was also a sense that the anarchist movement could play a significant role in bringing that resistance movement into being. But in order to do that we would have to get ourselves considerably better organized than we were. As it was to turn out the Honduras actions were probably the high point of the militant direct action movement of the 1980s. Only the Gulf War would succeed in bringing out as many people into the streets. But where the Honduras actions resulted in a clear victory for the movement, the Gulf War left the movement defeated and demoralized. But at the time it seemed as if we were on the verge of a decisive break with the rightward political drift of the 80s and at the beginnings of a new upsurge in radical politics. The indications of this potential were not limited to the Honduras actions. ACT UP was making the leap from a New York based direct action group to an international movement. Earth First! was growing rapidly as well and obtaining the attention of the mass media. And in dozens of cities anarchists were involved in an incredible range of militant local struggles.

THE TORONTO ANARCHIST GATHERING

Several months after the Honduras actions about 1,000 anarchists came to Toronto for what was becoming an annual event. The increase in size over the previous two Gatherings indicated a general growth in the anarchist movement. The workshops were of a generally higher quality and broader in scope than at the previous Gatherings. But the numerical growth of the movement did not mean that there was an improvement in the level of coordination within the movement.

A proposal to establish a decisionmaking structure for the network of anarchist activists that had come together around Mayday met a largely hostile response (no doubt the fact that there were only a dozen hard to read copies of the proposal did not maximize the chances that it would get a positive reception). The Continental Newspaper Project initiated at the Atlanta meeting attracted only about 20 people who felt that launching a monthly paper at that point was premature and instead decided to produce a pilot called *RAGE!* to be distributed at the upcoming Pentagon Blockade.

While it was apparent that it would not be possible to build an organizational structure that would unite the whole anarchist movement, it was equally apparent that there had emerged a group of anarchist activists with some common political commitments scattered across North America who had a strong desire to establish some sort of structure to coordinate future actions. It would be about a year



Cover of the pilot issue of *Rage!*, distributed at 1988 Pentagon Blockade

before this group coalesced around the proposal to launch a continental anarchist newspaper. What had emerged by this time was an understanding that the best way to bring together serious and committed anarchist activists was around common projects. This didn't mean that we didn't think that it was important to establish what our basis of political unity was. Rather we wanted to unite people who were actually committed to working together and believed that political agreement could be built on a foundation of working together better than the other way around.

On the third day of the Gathering the U.S. military shot down an Iranian commercial airliner, killing 256 people. The Day of Action, scheduled for the next day, which was intended to be a Warchest Tour was turned into a response to the downing of the airliner. The demonstration began with a march of several hundred people on the U.S. Consulate. Blocking traffic and burning U.S. flags in front of the Consulate the demonstration quickly turned into a running fight with the cops through downtown Toronto. When we learned that the action was the largest response to the downing of the airliner in all of North America the idea of the anarchist movement as the fighting wing of the larger movement sank deeper roots.



Flier for 1988 Toronto Anarchist Gathering

At this point, engaged in the concrete projects of organizing for the Pentagon blockade and publishing *RAGE!*, the history of Love and Rage becomes distinct from that of the larger anarchist movement from which it emerged. We were no longer being bounced around by forces beyond our control, we had become conscious of ourselves first as anarchists within the larger social movements, and then as activists within the anarchist movement who saw the need for political coherence and organization beyond the local level. While we would continue to be shaped by developments in the larger anarchist movement, at this point we began to be propelled just as much by our conscious identity as a group committed to revolutionary anarchist organization.

IN THE BEGINNING...

Before there was Love and Rage there was a thing called the Continental Newspaper Project. The Newspaper Project was a loose grouping of people who were committed to launching a monthly continental anarchist newspaper. The idea of a continental newspaper had been bouncing around in the anarchist movement for a while, particularly since the collapse of the Anarchist Communist Federation which published *The North American Anarchist* (known as *STRIKE!* after the ACF's collapse) and the increasing irregularity of publication by Open Road. The initial call for the Newspaper Project came from Back Room Anarchist Books in Minneapolis in December 1987. It was at an anarchist networking meeting in Atlanta in between the Minneapolis and Toronto Gatherings that a group of 5 people from different cities decided to initiate the project.

At the Toronto Gathering a group of about 20 people decided to publish a pilot issue of the newspaper to be entitled *RAGE!* for distribution at the October 17, 1988 Blockade of the Pentagon. A second pilot issue, *Writing on the Wall*, was produced for the 1989 San Francisco Anarchist Gathering where two meetings of about 40 people decided to call a conference to launch the monthly newspaper. Up until the founding conference the Newspaper Project had no formal structure. The few decisions that were made were made informally among the people who were most involved at the time.

MAYDAY

Most of the people involved in this process had met each other at the annual Anarchist Gatherings and had worked together on Mayday. Because of its broad mission it was difficult to establish exactly who Mayday was accountable to. One consequence of this absence of a clear structure was that a lot of energy was spent on fighting over Mayday: who decided what went in, who was on the mailing list, who had access to the mailing list, who paid for it, and so on. Most of the people involved in the Newspaper Project wanted to avoid repeating the experience with Mayday by establishing a clear process for making decisions concerning the newspaper.

THE PENTAGON BLOCKADE

Organizing for the Pentagon blockade and preparing *RAGE!* (edited by RABL and produced using the RSL's equipment), occupied much of our energies after the Toronto Gathering. In New York City an



Anarchists unarrest a comrade at 1988 Pentagon blockade action.

attempt to impose a curfew on Tompkins Square Park that summer met massive resistance and ignited a police riot involving huge sections of the community. The anarchist movement on

the Lower East Side played a significant role in the resistance to the curfew and the militancy of the movement helped overturn the curfew. The Tompkins Square riots inspired many anarchist across the US and their spirit influenced the character of the Pentagon blockade. Also during the summer there were anarchist actions at both the Democratic and Republican National Conventions where the Pentagon blockade was discussed.

The Pentagon blockade was originally called by the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES) and the Pledge of Resistance as an action against the US support for the right wing Salvadoran government. As at Langley there were two distinct conceptions of the blockade. The New York and Washington DC leaderships of CISPES and the Pledge basically wanted a symbolic civil disobedience and therefore planned a legal rally and a civil disobedience at a single entrance of the Pentagon. The anarchists (taking for this single action the name Mayday Network of Anarchists), the Progressive Student Network, and a number of local CISPES and Pledge groups influenced by the militancy of the Honduras actions wanted to engage in "mobile tactics" blocking access to the Pentagon parking lot and avoiding arrest as long as possible to prolong the actual disruption of work at the Pentagon.

A compromise was worked out designating the parking lot as a mobile tactics zone. The result was a very interesting action. As the first people showed up to work before the sun came up the main entrance to the parking lot was lit with burning tires. Concrete barriers had been dragged in front of other entrances and Pentagon employees trying to walk across the parking lot had their paths blocked by angry masked demonstrators. The surrounding walls were covered with graffiti. This went on for several hours much to the dismay of the East Coast Pledge and CISPES leaders whose civil disobedience seemed entirely symbolic by comparison. Feeling silly blocking only one entrance the civil disobedience was expanded to several entrances. Some people who came for the civil disobedience just stood up and joined the militants in the parking lot.

The Pentagon blockade generated a broad debate on the left about the tactics of "the anarchists." This debate was carried out mostly in the pages of the Guardian and was tilted towards the moderate leftism of the East Coast CISPES and Pledge leaders. *RAGE!* had announced who we were to the larger demonstration, but lacking a regular newspaper we were dependent on the Guardian to carry our side of this debate. The need for a regular anarchist newspaper that could speak to the broader social movements became more apparent.

THE NEW ERA

A couple weeks after the Pentagon blockade George Bush defeated Michael Dukakis, promising four more years of Republican rule. At the beginning of the election campaign Bush was very unpopular and Dukakis was presumed to be headed for the White House. The anarchist movement of course largely ignored the elections. But Bush's election had a significant impact on the anarchist movement as well as the broader social movements. The last two years of the Reagan administration had seen a rising tide of social insurgency. The Iran Contra scandal had undermined the legitimacy of the Reagan administration. As a barometer of the social mood the elections were an important indicator of how deep the discontent went. Voter turnout was low, but the Bush victory indicated that the radicalization of the



Chinese army troops watch a student leader speak at Tiananmen Square in June 1989. The protests were stopped with a massacre.

movement did not reflect a dramatic shift in popular feelings.

Bush continued the Reagan policy of incrementally increasing direct US military involvement overseas. But unlike Reagan who was fixated on “the Communist threat” in Central America, Bush chose targets that were difficult for U.S. radicals to rally support for as they had for the Nicaraguan Sandinistas and the Salvadoran FMLN. The invasion of Panama that came in December 1989 failed to generate the massive resistance that a similar action against Nicaragua or El Salvador would have. Manuel Noriega was a despot and everybody knew it. The invasion had nothing to do with “restoring democracy,” but the Central America movement wasn’t prepared to do much to oppose the invasion. The Gulf War was to have a similar character. Saddam Hussein’s regime had very little political capital among U.S. radicals. But both these military actions had devastating effects of the broad social movements in the US. They helped create a patriotic public atmosphere that was utterly hostile to any kind of radicalism. They very effectively cut off the increasing insurgency of the late 80s.

1989 saw the rebirth of a militant reproductive rights movement as the Supreme Court’s Webster decision undermined Roe v. Wade. Rowdy demonstrations broke out in cities across the country after the decision and created momentum for a November Pro Choice March on Washington. The Webster decision also provoked a resurgent interest in breaking the monopoly of the medical establishment through women’s self health.

Perhaps most significantly 1989 brought the collapse of the Soviet Empire and the general defeat of Communism. The Tien An Men Square massacre displayed the moral bankruptcy of the Chinese Communist regime. The rapid disintegration of the Soviet satellite



Anarchist contingent at March on Washington for Reproductive Freedom
Love & Rage Member Handbook • Page 17

regimes in Eastern Europe left Leninism completely discredited as a revolutionary ideology. For the anarchist movement these events offered an opening, an opportunity to put forward an anti-authoritarian alternative to the ideologies of the authoritarian left. The San Francisco Gathering, coming on the heels of the events in China and the rage at the Webster decision could have been a place to pull together a broad anti authoritarian movement.

About 2,000 people attended the San Francisco Anarchist Gathering, but it would be absurd to suggest that more than a fraction of those attending were serious activists. Many were more into their own “personal liberation” than any kind of political engagement. Many others were merely curiosity seekers. The Rainbow Gathering was taking place that summer in Nevada and so the Anarchist Gathering picked up some of the acid casualties from the Rainbow Gathering who hadn’t found their way home yet. The politics were all over the map: every screwball conspiracy theorist seemed to have a workshop. The Gathering was held in a school building in a predominantly Spanish speaking neighborhood, yet none of the Gathering materials were available in Spanish.



Chinese troops repress students in 1989

The Day of Action in Berkeley at the end of the Gathering turned into a fiasco when the abandoned Berkeley Inn that we had planned to take over and open up as a squat was barricaded in advance by the police and the demonstration turned into a militant but largely undirected expression of anarchist frustration. Great fun was had breaking windows, beating up a racist skinhead, and attacking a Coca Cola truck (until the fleeing Black driver told TV cameras that the crowd was shouting racist comments). In the midst of this several dozen people gathered for a couple meetings to plan a conference to launch a monthly continental anarchist newspaper.

THE FOUNDING OF LOVE AND RAGE

The founding conference of Love and Rage took place over Thanksgiving weekend in Chicago in 1989. About 65 people attended the conference from about 12 cities. There were six main groups represented at this conference: the Revolutionary Anarchist Bowling League from Minneapolis, the Hayday Anarchist Collective from Chicago, former members of the Revolutionary Socialist League (from New York, Detroit, Chicago, and Los Angeles), Bay Area Anti Racist Action, The Alternative from Knoxville, and the Circle A Collective from Atlanta. In addition to these groups there were individual activists from a number of cities and there was a larger body of people who supported the project but who were unable to attend the conference.

The structure established at the conference was designed to enable us to publish a newspaper until our next conference. It was made up of a paid facilitator and a volunteer Production Group in New York and an Editorial Council of 12 people elected at the conference



THE LOVE AND RAGE STRUCTURE IN PRACTICE

The Editorial Council was set up, as the name suggests, to make editorial decisions for the newspaper that seemed beyond the scope of the Production Group. But almost immediately the Editorial Council was asked to make political decisions outside the sphere of producing the newspaper. We were asked to rent desk space to and to endorse the Earth Day Wall Street Action organized primarily by the Youth Greens and the Left Green Network. We decided to rent the desk space and to hold off on the endorsement until we could discuss whether or not we wanted to make endorsements of actions at all. An Editorial Council meeting in New York in the summer of 1990 confronted the question of the relationship of the newspaper to local groups by establishing the category of Supporting Groups that would be listed with contact addresses in each issue of the newspaper to encourage communications between groups and to help put individuals in contact with groups.

that was empowered to add new members in order to make it more representative of what we rightly expected would be a growing body of supporters. The Editorial Council was to be the highest decision making body between conferences. The decision to make the Editorial Council a body elected at the conference instead of a body of delegates from local groups was a conscious decision based on a particular assessment of the state of the anarchist movement. There were three main points to that assessment. First, while there were a number of collectives that had decided to support the project, a significant amount of support came from individuals who either were not members of local groups or whose local groups had not yet decided to support the newspaper. Second, the structure needed to be simple and understandable if we were to encourage the fullest participation in decision making. Third, we understood that local groups tend to come and go. While we took considerable pains to ensure that the Editorial Council included members of all the major local groups we didn't want their participation contingent on the health of those groups.

It is worth noting that all six of the groups that were the foundation of Love and Rage are now defunct, but many of the activists from those groups remain active in the Love and Rage Network either as individuals or as members of new local groups. In setting up the Editorial Council we were not unaware of the question of making that body accountable to the base of local groups. The election of the Editorial Council followed a lengthy discussion of the need for balance in its composition and the body that was chosen included representatives from each of the local groups, was gender balanced and was as multi racial as possible. Over the course of the year and a half until the second conference the Editorial Council was enlarged to 20 as new groups and individuals came around the newspaper.

At the first meeting of the Editorial Council in Knoxville in January 1990 it was decided to try to establish a regional structure. The Editorial Council members were divided into four regions which were supposed to function somehow autonomously. This regional structure didn't take off because there wasn't really any point to it. There wasn't any exclusively regional activity to support such a structure. It was more an expression of desire for decentralization than a useful addition to the structure that had been set up in Chicago. Regionalization would have to wait until there was something for regional structures to do.

In August 1990 Iraq invaded Kuwait and the U.S. started to prepare for the Gulf War. This crisis forced the question of whether or not Love and Rage should endorse actions. At the November 1990 Editorial Council meeting it was decided that we would call for an anarchist contingent to what we expected would be a spring March on Washington. It was felt that a contingent was necessary, that Love and Rage had more credibility to call for one than any single local group, and that the importance of building resistance to the war meant that it would be irresponsible for Love and Rage not to call for a contingent. It was also felt that since there were two national anti-war coalitions we might have to choose between more than one action and that we didn't want to find ourselves working at cross purposes. Also Love and Rage had the resources to print up a lot of posters and mail them out on relatively short notice to all the groups and individuals that distributed the paper (as well as lots of folks that didn't). Using the collective resources of the newspaper required the approval of somebody. The only appropriate body to make such a decision seemed to be the Editorial Council.

To make a long story short the Editorial Council decided to call for a Black Bloc at the January 26 March on Washington and not at the the January 19 one. While the Black Bloc had its problems there was little doubt that it should have been called and little doubt that choosing a single date enabled anarchists to have a larger impact than if our energies had been divided between the two demonstrations.

The decision to call the Black Bloc meant acknowledging that Love and Rage was "more than just a newspaper." This of course was not a big surprise to the people who had founded the newspaper. From the beginning we saw the newspaper as a vehicle for raising the level of coordinated activity within the anarchist movement. The problem was that the structure we had in place was designed for "just a newspaper." We expected that we would have to change the structure we had started with eventually. Most of us had ideas about what a new structure might look like. We didn't know when the need for one would occur. It was our view that the newspaper would attract a lot of new people and that those people should be allowed to participate as fully as possible in changing the structure. There is an important principle here: No structure is perfect for every purpose. The structure we decided on was designed to enable the people who originally came together to carry out certain tasks (publishing a monthly newspaper) and to accommodate some expected growth in the circle of support for

this project. But we consciously decided against trying to anticipate all of the new kinds of activity we fully expected we would eventually be involved in. The original structure was not the best possible one for organizing a Black Bloc, but it worked well enough to get us through until we could change our structure.

THE GULF WAR

It wasn't immediately apparent, but the Gulf War radically changed the conditions under which Love and Rage existed. Prior to the Gulf War, Love and Rage aimed to be the expression of the militant anti-authoritarian wing of the various social movements. The Gulf War brought about the general collapse of these movements. Millions of people who had poured into the streets when the U.S. began bombing Baghdad were deeply demoralized and it became increasingly difficult to turn people out for any sort of action. If the kind of massive opposition that was built up in such a short period of time couldn't stop the slaughter of 100,000 Iraqis, any other expression of opposition to the system seemed futile. The movement against the Gulf War largely evaporated before the two month war was over.

Every new movement politicizes and radicalizes a new group of activists whose experiences inform the next period. The nuclear disarmament movement energized a group of young anarchists. The divestment struggle built on that energy and made a generation of students much more conscious of racism. The Central America solidarity movement built on those earlier struggles and gave the growing body of young radical activists the sense that they could build a massive popular resistance movement.

The Gulf War had the reverse effect on the thousands of new activists it mobilized. Defeated and demoralized, the activists politicized by the Gulf War who continued on with political work were perhaps more cautious and conservative than any generation of activists since the 1950s. That is not to say that they hated the system any less than any other activists, rather that their experiences had burned into their consciousness a profound skepticism about the potential of mass insurgency.

This was just as true for the anarchist movement which took a beating with everybody else. The conservatism and cautiousness expressed itself as a retreat into the most narrowly defined concepts of "community." One's household, or food co op, or zine became the

focus of political work. The rest of the world seemed impossible to tackle and so it was ignored. Anarchist groups fell apart all over the place.

In spite of this general retreat Love and Rage grew. But it was not growth based on an optimism about the vision of a mass resistance movement that had brought Love and Rage together. It was more like the population growth of a life boat picking up exhausted waterlogged survivors of a shipwreck. So while the tasks of organizing against the Gulf War compelled Love and Rage to raise its level of organization, the defeat of the anti-war movement meant that Love and Rage was flooded with new people who did not necessarily share the understanding of the need for organization that had originally brought us together to found Love and Rage. This meant that each step towards a tighter more effective organization involved considerable hesitations and qualifications. No sooner would a decision be made than it would have to be made again because its original implications were not fully understood the first time.

THE LOVE AND RAGE NETWORK

The first opportunity to change the structure of Love and Rage was the Minneapolis Love and Rage Anarchist Organizing Conference in the summer of 1991. Several key changes in the structure of Love and Rage took place at this conference. First, we acknowledged that we were more than a newspaper and called ourselves the Love and Rage Network. Second, the Editorial Council was replaced with a 10 member Coordinating Group popularly elected by the conference. Third, we set up a brand new decision making body, the Network Council that would be made up of two delegates from each local Supporting Group plus the members of the Coordinating Group.

The Network Council was supposed to be the highest decision making body between conferences, but it was understood that putting in place such a delegate structure would take time and that in the meantime the Coordinating Group was needed to make decisions quickly. The Network Council never really got off the ground. There was a Network Council meeting in Hamilton, Ontario in the spring of 1992. But it wasn't really clear who were the two delegates from each group and in the spirit of encouraging participation by everyone no effort was made to more sharply define who was and who wasn't on the Network Council. The result of this was that the Coordinating Group continued to make the decisions that we hoped would be taken up by the Network Council which didn't really exist. The effect of this was organizational paralysis: no serious decisions could be made without the approval of the Network Council, but the Network Council didn't really exist. This was the situation going into the Atlanta Conference in November 1992.

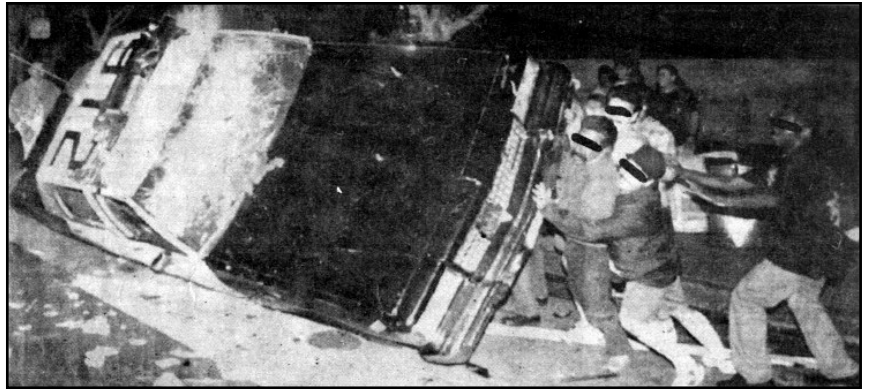
THE REBIRTH OF REVOLUTIONARY ANARCHISM IN MEXICO

Shortly after the Minneapolis Love and Rage Conference an Anarchist Gathering in Cuernavaca, Mexico set in motion events that would eventually lead to the establishment of Love and Rage in Mexico. Originally the Cuernavaca Gathering was going to be a continuation of the Continental Gatherings but the Mexicans quickly came to the conclusion that they were not prepared to play host to an anarchist invasion from the north, and that there was a crucial need for a gathering of Mexican anarchists.



Anarchist contingent at Gulf War protest in DC, January 26, 1991

The Cuernavaca Gathering in September 1991 suffered from many of the same problems as the Gatherings in the US and Canada in the late 1980s: disorganization, petty squabbles and so on. In particular there was considerable resistance to the demands of the women present that the Gathering confront the profound sexism within the Mexican anarchist movement. Gustavo Rodriguez, active with Love and Rage in Miami, was one of the few men who sided with the women. As a consequence of the Cuernavaca Gathering the women formed the Emma Goldman Collective and Gustavo Rodriguez relocated to Mexico City to assist in the organization of a Love and Rage group.



The LA Rebellion commanded the attention of the entire world

THE LOS ANGELES REBELLION

Shortly after the Hamilton Network Council meeting Los Angeles exploded in response to the acquittal of the four cops charged with the beating of Rodney King. The rebellion spread to several other cities and massive protests took place across the US and around the world. The Los Angeles rebellion was the single largest rebellion in US history since the Civil War. At a moment when the organized left was in a state of almost complete disarray the Los Angeles rebellion revealed the depth of unorganized popular discontent in the US particularly among Black and Latino poor folk.

The Los Angeles rebellion pointed to the crying need for effective revolutionary organizations that could turn the spontaneous outrage of the rebellion into a sustained and revolutionary challenge to the existing order. Obviously Love and Rage was in no position to effectively take on that task yet. But the Los Angeles rebellion underlined the importance of a project we were involved in: the Anti-Racist summer Project (ARSP).

The ARSP was a project of concentrating young anti-racist activists in an area where the racist right was organizing to attempt to build an anti-racist movement that could combat them. The neighborhood of East St. Paul, Minnesota was chosen for a pilot project that we hoped would be a model for similar projects the next summer.

By almost every measure the ARSP was a failure. About a dozen folks from across the US and Canada were packed into a single house for most of the summer of 1992 to organize the neighborhood against



LA residents help themselves to consumer goods

the activities of a group of racist skinheads. While a few events and demonstrations were organized, considerable amounts of energy were expended on internal fights. The project was organized with the Twin Cities Anti-Racist Action group. But rather than build the group, the ARSP exacerbated existing divisions within the group leading to its (ultimately temporary) collapse. The nazi's for their part kept their heads low for the summer making it particularly difficult to convince their neighbors of the urgency of stopping them.

It was hoped that the ARSP would train a core of organizers who would work on similar projects in other cities. Most of the participants continued their activism after the summer, but the bad feelings generated meant that the ARSP would not continue.

What the ARSP did teach us was that there was no shortcut to building an organization of serious and trained activists. Without much more careful advance planning with the local groups affected a national or continental project like the ARSP could have very bad effects for a local group. The development of an effective organizational strategy would be a long and painstaking one based on a slow process of trial and error with few people and fewer resources.

CRISIS IN THE ORGANIZATION

The failure of the ARSP was shortly followed by a more general crisis within Love and Rage. While this crisis found its sharpest expression in an effective split within the New York group, it reflected a basic contradiction within the organization as a whole. The crisis first became apparent at the November 1992 Love and Rage Network conference in Atlanta. A proposal from the outgoing facilitator, Matt Black, that put the existing structure into the form of a set of written by-laws seemed to come from out of the blue. (Publication of the Network Discussion Bulletin scheduled to appear before the conference had been delayed until immediately before.) With a few relatively minor changes Matt's proposal was simply an attempt to put into a coherent written form the structure and decision making process we already had in place. But to many of the people in attendance the proposal seemed overly centralized.

The negative response to the proposal in some ways illustrated how important it was to have a set of written by-laws because so many people were unaware of the actual working structure of the Network that it was interpreted as an attempt to impose something new on the Network. But more importantly, the response indicated that the Network had reached a point where a lot more people cared about the structure and wanted to participate more fully in the discussions and

decisions around whatever structure we were to have. The failure to make the Network Council work had meant that a lot of people who felt like they were part of the Network were not part of the informal discussions of structure that took place before the conference. The Atlanta Conference did make some structural changes in the Network, but the ratification of any formal set of by-laws was put off by the crisis in the organization for almost two years.

One very significant decision was made at Atlanta however, to launch a Spanish language edition of the newspaper out of Mexico City.

TWO VISIONS

The negative response to the by-laws proposal precipitated the emergence of two opposed conceptions of the Love and Rage Network. The first conception was of a very loose network of local groups that would maintain a structure primarily for purposes of communications and mutual aid. The second conception was of a tighter organization, with a clearly defined membership and politics that would strategically carry out coordinated activity across North America.

These two conceptions emerged when several members of the newspaper Production Group in New York authored a proposal to “decentralize” Love and Rage. The proposal called for, amongst other things, turning the newspaper into an autonomous project of the New York group that would be on an equal standing with the various other autonomous projects of different local groups.

In opposition to this position several members of the New York group posed an alternative position in a brief statement of five points. The key points were that Love and Rage should become an organization with clearly defined membership, a statement of our common politics, and an expectation that members work on the projects of the organization. Furthermore we argued for decentralizing specific functions then concentrated in the New York office by delegating them to functioning local groups. This was in contrast to a notion of decentralization that we thought would mean dismantling the few organizational advances we had made since Love and Rage had been founded.

The advocates of the five points argued that the call for decentralization was ultimately, if perhaps unintentionally, anti-organizational. It was a proposal to return to the organizational level of Mayday. We argued that without clearly defining membership in Love and Rage policies would be set, not by those most committed to the organization, but by whoever felt like and was able to show up for a conference.

We had already seen the consequences of this arrangement. Conferences consistently endorsed and took on a dizzying number of projects that the Network was in no position to carry out instead of setting priorities and strategically focusing our limited resources on things we actually could do. We also felt that without a statement of our common politics it would continue to be impossible to develop any sort of working strategy that would inform these decisions.

The conflict between the two positions came to a head at the summer 1993 Love and Rage Network Conference in San Diego. The conference itself illustrated the significance of the divergence of the two positions. Over half of the participants in the conference were new to Love and Rage. Most of these people were not deeply committed to Love and Rage. They were there to check it out. But their numbers meant that they would play a decisive role in any decisions

about the future of the organization even if they had little intention of working within it in the future.

As it turned out the critical decisions to base membership on agreement with a (so far unfinished) political statement, passed by the narrowest majorities. While we felt that we had not yet reached the point where we could call ourselves a functioning federation we decided to change the name of the organization from the Love and Rage Network to the Love and Rage Revolutionary Anarchist Federation as a gesture of conciliation to those now outside the organization who thought that the word “Network” was inconsistent with our turn towards a tighter organization. Some of the folks who opposed the decisions made at the San Diego conference have gone on to do valuable work building the Anarchist Black Cross and the looser Network of Anarchist Collectives.

THE FEDERATION

Love and Rage was energized by the decisions made in San Diego. A whole series of unresolved questions that had hung over the organization were now settled and it became possible to jump into organizing work with a new level of energy. While a number of very committed people left Love and Rage at this time because of their opposition to the decisions made in San Diego we picked up just as many new members who had up to that point avoided joining the organization because of its lack of organizational coherence.

The Mexico group had wholeheartedly supported the turn towards tighter organization. They were putting out *Amor y Rabia* on a regular basis and were participating in a number of struggles taking place in Mexico. They were involved in a May 1st demonstration of independent workers organizations at which the Mexican police opened fire.

The fall following the San Diego conference saw Love and Rage involved in a series of anti-fascist mobilizations in the South, the Midwest and on the East Coast. We put out a call for anti-fascist actions on “Kristalnacht” (November 9) and actions took place across the US and Canada.

The anti-fascist work was one of two areas of work, represented by two “Working Groups,” we had decided to focus on at the San Diego conference. The second was Immigration. Anti-immigrant hysteria was only just starting to pick up steam at the time, but we saw it as likely to expand. Accordingly we called for an International Day of Actions Against Immigration Controls and Anti-Immigrant Violence on May 9, 1994. Unfortunately the May 9 actions were beyond our organizational capacities.



Zapatista soldiers in Chiapas village, 1994.



Mass meeting in Zapatista territory, 1994.

VIVA ZAPATA!

The first meeting of Love and Rage's Federation Council took place in mid-January 1994 in New York. The space we had obtained for the meeting was freezing cold and the meeting was generally not very productive. One source of warmth however was the news from Mexico. On January 1, 1994 the Zapatista uprising in Mexico had begun. The Mexican Love and Rage group threw itself into the task of getting out the word on the uprising, and this work was quickly taken up by Love and Rage in the US as well.

The Zapatista uprising presented Love and Rage with a wholly unexpected situation. While the Zapatistas were not explicitly anarchist, their politics were very close to our own. The Zapatista uprising put revolution on the agenda in Mexico. It has also compelled Love and Rage to seriously confront questions of what it will take to make anarchist revolution in North America.

Love and Rage initiated production of a book of English translations of Zapatista communiqués and joined in a range of solidarity activities with the Zapatistas. The Zapatista solidarity work eclipsed our original commitment to the immigration struggle which we have only recently been struggling to reincorporate into our work.

GETTING ORGANIZED

The October 1994 Love and Rage Federation Conference in Minneapolis finally approved a set of by-laws for the organization that have since served as the basis for making decisions and carrying them out within Love and Rage. The Minneapolis Conference also expanded the number of Working Groups to three: Anti-Fascist, Prison Abolition, and Mexico Solidarity.

1995 saw another upsurge in anti-fascist work and the Anti-Fascist Working Group played a very active role in getting the mid-west based Anti-Racist Action Network organized.

It was hoped that the 1995 Conference in New York City would finalize the new political statement. While considerable progress was made in developing a draft document, the final document remains unfinished.

CONSISTENCY... AND GROWTH

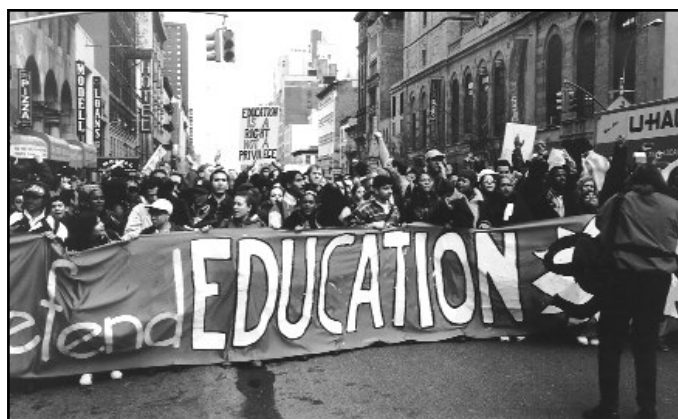
The 1997 Conference reaffirmed the Anti-Fascist Working Group and

the ARA Network orientation. At it we also decided to drop our other two Working Groups: Anti-Prison and Mexico Solidarity. In their place we created two new Working Groups: Anti-Cop and Anti-Poverty.

While recognizing that our structure has been basically stable since the 1994 Minneapolis conference, we fine-tuned things somewhat at the 1997 Conference. We maintained the basic structure of Locals, Working Groups, Federation Council and Coordinating Committee. But with the appearance of a few new locals, we retooled the Federation Council so that it is composed of two delegates elected by each local. The Federation Council will now meet at least once (and hopefully more often) between conferences. These changes are designed to emphasize that we are a federation based on locals, and those locals are the basis of the organization.

Additionally, we tightened up membership expectations at the 1997 Conference. Now all members are encouraged to fulfill seven activities: (1) Participate in or create an L&R local; (2) Participate in mass organizing; (3) Participate in ongoing study of politics, history, and theory; (4) Participate in internal discussion in fedbull and/or local (5) Pay dues regularly; (6) Distribute and sell L&R literature; and (7) Have general agreement with the L&R Political Statement. This is designed to replace the previously vague expectations of members, and to ensure that Love & Rage is an organization of activists who are engaged in mass organizing and engaged in the life of the organization. We also, for the first time, adopted a progressive dues structure, which replaces our previous "flat-tax" dues of 4% for all members who can afford it.

The development of several new locals, the organizational tightening, and the rising level of political debate in the organization show that through consistent and patient organizing, we can and will continue to grow.★



New York students march against cuts to education, March 1996

L&R Draft Political Statement

This is the collection of versions of all the draft sections of the political statement that were approved at the March 1997 Conference. They are not necessarily in the order they will appear in the final draft. At the March 1997 Conference, the sections on **Revolution** and on **Race & Colonialism** were essentially finished. The versions presented here are *not* the finished versions, since they were sent back to a final Style Committee to be fine tuned. The finished versions will appear in future editions of the Handbook as soon as they are available. Readers should keep in mind that all the sections here are still *draft* versions, though we are comfortable enough with them to distribute them to give interested people a basic sense of what our politics are.

REVOLUTION

We are revolutionaries. We believe the overthrow of the state and the existing social order are necessary in order to smash the oppression and brutality that keep people from having power and control over their own lives. Revolution must happen within society, within relationships and within our own consciousness. The revolution is not just one moment in history, but a process of building social movements that are able to converge at a point when the whole system is in a deep crisis and go on the offensive, to create self-organization of masses of people, to resist the forces of repression, to smash the state, and to continue the process of breaking down authoritarian relations and creating a new free society.

THE CASE FOR REVOLUTION

The problems of the world today require a revolutionary response. Capitalism has not brought about freedom because it is not designed to provide freedom and equality, but to exploit, dominate and oppress humanity and nature instead. It is not that the system has failed, but that the system is doing exactly what it was meant to do.

Many people with strong egalitarian visions devote their lives to trying to transform the system so that it is moral, communal and just. The reform movements that they built have won many real gains. However, the reformist road to social change ultimately gets tripped up by the conflicts inherent in the system it is trying to change. It is impossible to build a truly liberatory and egalitarian society on a historical foundation of individual self-interest and exploitation. Reformist movements do not go to the root of misery in this society-patriarchy, capitalism and white supremacy.

Reforms won by social movements are sometimes taken away when they get in the way of the needs of capital. The social safety net of the welfare state which was won by social movements in the 1930's and 1960's is being dismantled now that capitalism is expanding globally and no longer has to make concessions to North American labor when it has access to cheaper labor in industrializing countries.

Often times, rather than taking away gains won by reform movements, the system transforms them to serve its own needs rather than

the needs of the people who fought for them. Capitalism is a dynamic system that is constantly changing and adapting itself to its present situation. The struggle for labor unions is a good example of this process. The right of workers to organize and bargain collectively for the conditions under which they traded labor for wages was won through the struggle of the workers themselves. However, capitalism has been able to transform collective bargaining into a mechanism for regulating labor relations. Furthermore, the people that run unions now have a stake in preserving their own position and as often as not collaborate with bosses for their own gain rather than fight for the rights of the workers they represent.

These examples show the complex relationship between the system and those who struggle to reform it. The system generates its own opposition and is in constant negotiation with it. It concedes reforms when it can't win a fight or when the costs of winning are higher than the concessions. With every concession, those in power choose who among us they will recognize and thereby seek to incorporate our resistance into the functioning of the machine. We can win certain reforms, but the bottom line remains: their power rests on their control over our lives and they will not give up that control without a fight. If we want to put an end to their power over our lives, we will have to fight for it and fight to win.

Our understanding that reforms cannot bring about the society we want does not mean we do not participate in reform movements. We participate in many reform movements and support the struggles of people to improve their lives. However, within those movements we seek to win reforms through revolutionary means.

WHAT IS REVOLUTION?

The revolution is a process. There is no starting point and no end point. Revolution is the transformation of ourselves, our relationships with others and society. It is the means by which we realize our vision for a better world.

The revolution must be global. The globalization of economic forces and exchange of information have made us increasingly interdependent on one another. No one section of the world can smash the authoritarian structures it lives under and build a free society without the international ruling class uniting to crush it. The ruling powers cannot afford to let the people they rule see that it is possible to live freely without a state. Likewise, the revolution cannot limit itself to the liberation of only a section of the world's population. Revolutionary movements must make links that cross geographical boundaries and make connections between many different struggles around the world.

The revolution must occur in people's consciousness. Revolutionary consciousness is the heart of the revolutionary process. Without the transformation of consciousness, a truly anti-authoritarian revolution is impossible because some people will continue to be pawns in other people's games, because they will not be able to evaluate their situation and choose their own course of action. But with the transformation of consciousness, the revolution cannot be stopped. We believe that the development of revolutionary consciousness

comes through struggle. Joining with others and engaging in the transformation of one's own material reality forces a person to engage in critical thought about one's self-worth, position in society, how one relates to others, how the world works, what forces shape one's life, and how the world might be different. The development of revolutionary consciousness cannot be separated from action.

The revolution must transform relationships between people. We are social revolutionaries as well as political ones. The revolution is a process by which we change the way people relate to one another, break down the walls that divide us, and allow people to express their humanity in a multitude of loving, creative and compassionate ways. The transformation of how we respond to strangers on the street, who we consider family, with whom we form sexual bonds is all part of revolution.

The revolution is the destruction of the political, social and economic forces that oppress us. We must smash capitalism and create new economic structures that allow people to live free from material want and be productive without being exploited. We must smash patriarchy and white supremacy and create libertarian communities and families. We must smash the state and create democratic and decentralized forms of political organization.

WHAT THE REVOLUTION IS NOT

Historically, the Marxist-Leninist strategy has been the one of the most common and popular strategies in the revolutionary struggle. We disagree with the Marxist-Leninist tradition on a number of points. Marxist-Leninists claim that their historical and social analysis is "scientific", in that they are able to predict accurately which social struggles and forces embody the main problems in society and will lead us to a revolutionary situation. While we believe that certain forces and struggles will occupy more strategic places in building a revolutionary movement at different times and under differing conditions, we do not believe that any one theory or group has a unique and total claim to an absolute or "scientific" truth that will lead us to a better world. We believe that the revolutionary movement benefits from the existence of a variety of perspectives, reflecting not just differences in social position, but in developed revolutionary political theory. Because no single theory expresses the totality of the revolutionary process, we are not looking for the eventual triumph of the single perspective, but rather the triumph of the oppressed made possible by their approach to the creation of revolutionary organizations.

Furthermore, the Marxist-Leninist insistence on the existence of a "scientific" truth that they alone have a claim to leads to a vanguard strategy. The vanguard strategy is to build an organization of an elite cadre of militants, who have a unique hold on the true path to socialist revolution and who will guide the masses to a socialist society. This strategy has consistently failed to bring about human liberation because it is inherently incapable of allowing for the self-organization and determination of people to be in direct control of their own lives. Its highly centralized and undemocratic bases have reproduced inequalities of power in society, replacing one state with another.

We do not pursue state power. We reject the creation of a political vanguard party as a means of achieving our revolutionary ends. The revolution is not the act of a monolithic social group, it is the product of the convergence of many different struggles against many different aspects of this authoritarian society, some great and some

small. In opposition to the vanguard party, we pose the affinity group, the revolutionary anarchist collective, the network or federation of local collectives and other forms of revolutionary organization. We do not strive for the creation of a single organization, but neither are we opposed to the development of large revolutionary groups.

The anarchist tradition in North America has had a different approach to a revolutionary transformation of society. This anarchist tradition is one that Love and Rage has its roots in, but one that we see as limited. This tradition has advocated creating collectives, infoshops, community centers and other points of autonomy within society which will inspire others to do the same. This strategy supposes that eventually the old society will break down as people organically self-organize themselves in democratic and anti-authoritarian ways. This strategy does not address the ruling class's ability to crush such independent forces when they begin to threaten its ability to function. The ruling class has shown a consistent willingness to bring its power to bear in destroying liberatory movements world wide.

OUR STRATEGY FOR REVOLUTION

We believe that a revolutionary situation will develop when a number of different struggles are able to go on the offensive simultaneously. We call this situation convergence. A convergence will contain coordinated activities of different forces in coalitions and alliances. It will also contain spontaneous actions by new forces stepping into the process. This will inevitably be an uneven process. A convergence means the overlapping and blurring of lines between previously distinct struggles, communities and organizations. The convergence must happen at a time when authoritarian rule is in crisis. A revolutionary situation only becomes possible when the revolutionary movement is able to recognize and exploit the crises in authoritarian rule that periodically appear.

Counter-institutions are a necessary part of building for a revolutionary situation. Counter-institutions are alternatives to the existing order created by people who have decided they cannot live under the demands of the present society. Food co-ops, radical bookstores and squatted housing are all examples of counter-institutions. When a revolutionary situation develops, counter-institutions have the potential of functioning as a real alternative to the existing structure and reliance on them becomes as normal as reliance on the old authoritarian institutions. This is when counter-institutions constitute dual power.

Dual power is a state of affairs in which people have created institutions that fulfill all the useful functions formerly provided by the state. The creation of a general state of dual power is a necessary requirement for a successful revolution.

There will come a point in a revolutionary situation when armed insurrection will be necessary. In order to survive, the ruling class will be forced to smash the revolutionary movement by force and we will be forced to respond preemptively or in kind. Armed insurrection will most likely take a number of different forms. Strategic military operations, prison revolts, riots, attacks on physical institutions such as police stations, banks and city halls will all be likely aspects of armed insurrection in a revolutionary situation.

At the current stage of the revolutionary process, our revolutionary strategy is embedded in how we approach existing social movements. We believe that within social movements social change becomes revolutionary when people are able to make the necessary

links to see the totality of what they are fighting for. To that end, we participate in the building of social movements, whether they be against police brutality, racist terror, homophobia, sexism, prisons, budget cuts, attacks on education and social services, or the rights of workers.

Within these social movements, we push for revolutionary pluralism. Revolutionary pluralism is a response to the growing complexity of capital and imperialism. We believe that the worker can no longer be seen as the sole agent of revolutionary change. Rather, the struggles of women, people of color, and oppressed nationalities, along with workers, constitute the potential, in their plurality, to be the foundations for a new mass movement. A revolutionary pluralist strategy has four key elements: 1. It embodies the vision of a directly democratic and egalitarian society; 2. It opposes all forms of oppression—not one more than others; 3. It promotes direct action; 4. It embodies the particular demands of the diverse groups of oppressed and exploited people by this society.

Within the movements in which we participate, we fight for direct democracy, that is, that the people who are participating in the particular struggle or movement are making the decisions about the direction the movement will go. We fight for democratic internal structure and real debate, discussion, and communication so that everyone's voice is heard. Accordingly, we fight against internal racism, sexism and homophobia within the movement.

There is no inherently privileged struggle or sector of society that is more important in the revolutionary process than others. This does not mean that we think all struggles are equally important or have the same revolutionary potential. We support the increased coordination of activity by political forces within various social movements, and we completely reject the attempt to create a vanguard organization that defines itself as the leadership of any movement.

Direct action is taking matters into your own hands. Rather than appealing to those in power for an answer to one's problems, taking direct action means retaining one's own autonomy and refusing to be pacified or co-opted. Direct action could mean taking over the school library when budget cuts threaten to shut it down, instead of writing letters to legislators. It could mean sabotaging the trucks of a logging company that is illegally chopping down old-growth forests, instead of taking them to court. It could mean using bricks and baseball bats to chase nazi skinheads out of our neighborhoods, instead of using the police.

Direct Action can sometimes mean using violence. The system that oppresses us is a violent one and requires a violent response in order to overthrow it. In a truly liberatory society, we believe that violence will become obsolete. Conflicts between people and groups will be resolved peacefully. However, until that day, the oppressed will need to defend themselves against the powers that be and violence will be a necessary, but not the only, tool in the revolutionary process. We understand that violence is a destructive force both for those who use it as well as those who it is used against. The psychic and emotional damage that violence has on those who perpetrate it cannot be ignored. However, movements of oppressed people have been crushed too many times in part because they have chosen, for just these reasons, not to use violence against their oppressors.

We do not participate in mass movements simply to mobilize people for the revolution that we want. Rather the demands and desires of the people must be the basis of the new society we are fight-

ing for. The role of an organization like Love and Rage is not to lead the movement but to participate in it as equals in order to link related issues and to heighten existing conflicts in society.

ANTI-AUTHORITARIANISM

Anarchists fight against all aspects of oppression: class rule, patriarchy, racism, homophobia, and many others. While other political movements focus on one "primary" oppression—which acts as a linchpin, holding together the whole oppressive system—anarchists fight all the things which keep people down. While we may conclude that one aspect of oppression or another plays a more or less important role at any given historical moment, we demand total liberation and refuse to compromise on one front for the illusion of a gain on another. All oppressions are deeply related to each other as facets of a single authoritarian system of coercion, domination, and hierarchy.

Associated with other facets of oppression is the ideological or social-psychological aspect. No society can long survive if an armed guard must stand behind each person. People must want to do what they have to do. Aspects of oppression, such as the rule of one class, gender, or race over all others, are not just a pattern of popular behavior but are also a matter of how people think and feel. Popular consciousness supports the oppressive patterns of behavior; while the popular behaviors continually recreate the oppressive consciousness. Basic ways of looking at society are passed along through the family, the church, schools, politics, popular culture, and the way people live and work. The system cannot completely destroy people's desire for freedom nor their common sense, but these can be distorted into widespread prejudice, ignorance, and superstition.

The struggle for liberation, then, is not only about social structures but is also about consciousness. Systems of consciousness are composed of values, feelings, and ideas which may or may not be organized into deliberate philosophies or religions (that is, ideologies). Social oppression has generally been upheld by two apparently contrary systems of consciousness. One is authoritarianism and the other cynicism.

AUTHORITARIAN IDEOLOGY

"Authority" has been used to mean the influence of people who may know more about a particular subject than other people. Such "authorities" are not regarded as superior to others outside their field of expertise, and to the extent that they pass on their knowledge (such as good coaches), they increase other people's independence. But "authority" has also been used to mean the "natural" and "proper" superiority of some people over others, their right to tell others what to do—to make others serve them. This is the authority we oppose, which we call authoritarianism.

Authoritarianism says that the rulers' ideas are not merely the best ideas that fallible human minds could produce under certain circumstances. Their ideas are "supported" by forces beyond human consciousness: God or the gods, the laws of nature, or the historical process. The problem is not so much a

belief that there is a supernatural God or "laws" of nature or a historical process, but thinking that finite and fallible human beings can know the intentions of God, nature, or history, beyond any doubt whatsoever, with complete confidence. Inquisitions, holy wars, jihads, and Stalinist purges have been justified by this arrogance.

At times the authoritarian approach has been temporarily used for good ends, as when the Catholic church in the 1960s declared segregation to be a sin deserving excommunication. But now they use the same authority to condemn women's reproductive rights. Similarly, Marxists have long fought against the oppressions of capitalism, buoyed by the "certainty" that they knew the laws of history. But the same certainty of knowing history rationalized their establishment of totalitarian regimes.

Anarchists do not claim to have marching orders from God or to have absolute knowledge of historical processes-and we do not trust those who do. Knowledge is only the best approximation of reality that some people can create at any specific time, reached through the free and open exchange of ideas.

CYNICISM

An apparent alternate to the authority of absolute ideas is cynicism. This is the rejection of all values, the belief that people should just "look out for number one," no one will help anyone and everything is a racket. These are widespread views in our society, consistent with the morally empty marketplace and its hypocritical politics. They are not really contrary to moral absolutism. People typically believe in an authoritarian morality, but one which is confined to the church on weekends, and a broad cynicism for the rest of life. The religious morality is seen as "too high a standard" for people to actually "live up to" in the "real world" of patriarchal capitalism.

For individuals, cynicism is more of an attitude than a worked-out ideology. Applied to groups, however, it becomes an important set of beliefs: "my" group above all others, my country, my race, my religion, we come first, "we're number one!" In the form of nationalism, group cynicism appears as a high ideal. This is not to condemn people's attachment to their cultures or groups, especially groups which are oppressed. It is to condemn the placing of any segment of humanity above all others. How often has a formerly oppressed grouping become a new oppressor? How often has one oppression been used to justify ignoring others? We stand with the oppressed because our values are universal.

Moral values are not written in the stars nor in an abstract human nature. They cannot be proven like a chemical reaction. But human beings have always been value-creating animals. Certain moral values have been advocated for ages: cooperation, kindness, universalism, respect for the lives of others, seeing the world through the viewpoint of others. These values have been used to support oppression but they have also been used to justify rebellion. They have been summarized in the great ideals of freedom, democracy, equalitarianism, and socialism-ideals which have been betrayed again and again but which have mobilized millions against human domination.

We are proud to be the heirs of these traditions!

We have no new values to impose on others; we only ask people to be true to their own ideals. Our fellow subjects of the American empire generally "believe in" democracy, freedom, and the value of human beings-along with authoritarian and cynical beliefs. We will try to persuade them, in the course of struggle, that the only program consistent with their best values is that of revolutionary anarchism.

THE NEED FOR COMMITMENT

Cynicism includes a belief that humans cannot know reality, not even approximately-a crude empiricism. It upholds the system of domination, precisely because it denies that there is a system. Liberals, who may see as many social evils as we do, see them as distinct problems, to be solved one at a time, rather than as part of an integrated system.

Absolute certainty is not possible; all the facts are never in. But at a certain point, decisions are necessary, hypotheses adopted, and a commitment to action must be made. The complexity of reality must not be made into an excuse for failing to make moral commitments.

Our best judgment is that international socialist-anarchist revolution is the only alternative to catastrophe. This social system is not stable and will not last. The question is what will replace it. Alongside the dangers of economic collapse or the rise of a new fascism or Stalinism, the very existence of the human race is threatened by nuclear war and by worldwide ecological imbalance.

Again, we have no values to impose on others. Virtually everyone is against the destruction of the human species. We intend to argue that the only way to prevent it is through our program, the anarchist vision. To this we have committed ourselves.

PATRIARCHY

One of the oldest and most persistent forms of authoritarian rule is patriarchy. Patriarchy is the system of male domination over women. The institutions of patriarchal power are not directed only at women: they are the main institutions that oppress kids and youth and that repress and pervert the rich diversity of human sexuality by trying to force it into the narrow confines of approved heterosexual relationships. Patriarchy also operates as a foundation of state power, used to justify a paternalistic relationship between the rulers and the ruled.

Patriarchy has not always existed. We know that societies have existed in which women wielded the majority of power, and others in which power was more evenly distributed. We do not know exactly how patriarchy first emerged, but for as long as it has existed, women have resisted the expansion of patriarchal power and have created zones of relative autonomy.

The gynocidal witch hunts from 1250 to 1550 were an all-out war by the patriarchal Catholic church and the various state authorities against women's power. While the patriarchal church and matriarchal pagan traditions had co-existed uneasily for centuries, some women's religious orders were becoming more autonomous from the

church. The witch hunts were aimed at destroying this autonomous women's power by mass murder and general terror. In the process, the church and the male aristocracy were able to accumulate vast amounts of wealth. This kind of wholesale looting financed the opening rounds of exploration and conquest, which eventually succeeded in expanding European-style patriarchal exploitation to include the women of the colonies.

With the Industrial Revolution, women were super-exploited in the fabric mills and were involved in the earliest workers' struggles. The collective experience of the workplace broke down the isolation experienced by women doing domestic work and laid a new foundation for women to assert their collective power.

The struggle against slavery, both by slaves and free abolitionists, witnessed the widespread reappearance of women as participants in public life. Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, the Grimke sisters, and many others were leaders in the fight for the abolition of slavery. Amongst white people, women were the main force for abolition.

The abolitionist movement brought together women who went on to build the first modern feminist movement. While this movement was seriously compromised by frequent expressions of white chauvinism, it was the first continuous expression of women's autonomous political power in centuries. Struggles for women's suffrage, the legalization and distribution of birth control, and the extension of other basic freedoms to women marked the beginning of a long struggle to destroy patriarchy altogether. Emma Goldman spoke about the limitations of all these reforms and consistently argued for a more radical program that attacked the institution of marriage and demanded full sexual liberation.

In the 1960s, with the widespread entrance of women into higher education, and participation in the mass movements for civil rights and against the war in Vietnam, women became active not only in public life but also in "revolutionary" movements that consistently relegated them to a subservient status. So the late 1960s saw the emergence of a mass women's liberation movement with a strong revolutionary wing that expressed a radical critique of patriarchy and related systems of oppression. This movement won the legalization of abortion, the prohibition of job discrimination, the dramatic expansion of women's presence in public life, and initiated a general transformation of personal relations between women and men-and between women and other women-that continues to this day.

The second wave feminist movement, like the first wave, was dominated by white and middle class women. The late 1970's and early 1980's saw an explosion of writings by women of color. In her book "Ain't I a Woman?", bell hooks wrote in the tradition of Sojourner Truth's famous speech, exposing the racism of white feminists who assume that their experience as women is universal. She urged women of color to "re-appropriate" feminism to provide "all women a feminist ideology uncorrupted by racism."

Women of color feminists like Audre Lorde, Barbara Smith, and Gloria Anzaldua have written about the need to acknowledge the differences between women, and to recognize the ways that many women are oppressed by racism, class exploitation, and homophobia. The influence of these ideas on the feminist movement and other social movements has laid the foundation for a powerful new kind of coalition work that doesn't ask people to prove their loyalty to one struggle or another, but to fight together for the liberation of humanity.

THE PATRIARCHAL FAMILY

Patriarchy translates literally as "the rule of the father." The patriarchal family is a basic social unit dominated by a single husband/father who is the final authority. Women give birth, but within the patriarchal family, men are given control over women's sexuality and capacity for reproduction. Though disguised as protection and support, the rule of the father is often enforced through violence and sexual terrorism.

Even people who are not in patriarchal families are subject to the rule of the father as handed down by the boss, the church, and the state. The maintenance of the family is a major component of all reactionary ideologies. Current attacks on single moms and queers punish those who stray from the patriarchal family model, and blame them and the decay of the nuclear family for all social ills. This attack on poor women and queers has legal sanction in anti-queer ballot measures that have passed, and in "personal responsibility acts" which, for example, require mothers under eighteen to be married to receive public assistance.

In place of an outmoded patriarchal family, the church and the state have stepped in to ban sex ed in schools, restrict access to birth control, and outlaw abortion. Sterilization without consent and other "population control" programs have been pushed by the U.S. government and the World Bank and are continually used as weapons of imperialism against women of color within U.S. borders and around the world.

SEXUAL TERRORISM

Rape, incest, harassment, and other forms of sexual terrorism are the main weapons used by patriarchy to enforce its rule. One out of three women in the U.S. can expect to be raped in her lifetime. All women live in the shadow of sexual violence, and it dramatically limits their freedom of movement and ability to have free lives. Women are often forced to turn to men to protect them from violence, but the price of that protection is the total power of the "protecting" man: the father, boyfriend, husband, or cop.

Sexual terrorism is institutionalized. Men are trained to carry it out so routinely that they often don't even recognize it. Women are so consistently beaten down, humiliated, and dehumanized that men come to see this as normal. Women's bodies are transformed in the minds of men into objects for the realization of their own needs and desires, without regard to the wishes, desires, or needs of the women involved. Men are trained to hear consent where it does not exist and to wear down women who assert control over their bodies.

WOMEN AND WORK

Two thirds of all the work in the world is done by women. On top of the work women do to support themselves and children, women do unwaged work like cooking, cleaning, and taking care of kids. This work makes it possible for themselves, husbands and boyfriends, and future generations to go out and work. Bosses profit from this unpaid labor, but women remain economically dependent on men. The patriarchal division of labor devalues the work necessary to maintain the human species. Cooking, cleaning, and childcare are common social responsibilities which as a revolutionary movement we must value and share.

Male supremacy is reproduced in the workplace where women are paid less, confined to conventionally "female" occupations, and subject to sexual harassment. Under the global economic restructuring known as neo-liberalism, this division of labor is becoming increasingly brutal on an international scale. Multinational garment and electronics corporations based in powerful Western countries superexploit women around the world, pay them starvation wages, force them to endure unsafe and unhealthy working conditions and often, to live in locked dorms.

Women bear the brunt of cutbacks in social programs, and are the first to be pushed out of relatively well-paid jobs and pushed into low-wage, low-security jobs where they're isolated and it's hard for them to organize, such as temp work, part-time jobs, and domestic work.

THE WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT THAT WE WANT

Love and Rage builds upon the long history of insubordination, sabotage, and organized resistance by those subject to patriarchal terror. Our freedom will not come through the passage of yet more laws but through the building of communities strong enough to defend themselves against anti-choice and anti-queer terror, rape, battery, child abuse and police harassment. We need to follow the example of projects like the Jane Collective and develop strategies to provide women-controlled health care and abortions.

A revitalized feminist movement must be relevant to the experiences of the majority of women in the world. When women organize, we break down the isolation between us and learn more about our own and each other's lives. We need to build a feminist movement that fights the oppression faced by women of color, queer women, and poor and working-class women. We need to build networks across borders, between women who are resisting the cutbacks in social welfare programs, other austerity measures, and super-exploitative labor practices that are part of neo-liberalism.

The international working class is predominately women. We need to understand the ways that capitalism is expanding its control over our lives and feeding off of pre-existing forms of patriarchal domination. Patriarchy existed in feudal times, and it is possible for patriarchy to operate in an anarchist society which fails to treat the family as a public institution or to operate in a socialist society which assumes that patriarchy will dissolve with the end of capitalism. We must fight to overthrow the institutions of patriarchy as well as those of capitalism if we want to build a truly free society.

THE OPPRESSION OF KIDS AND YOUTH

Instead of being members of a whole community, children are a possession of their parents. Over the course of "growing up," they are beaten down, their desire for knowledge is stifled or extinguished, and they learn to be ashamed of their bodies, thoughts, and feelings. In the family, we first learn the pattern of domination and obedience that follows us through our lives. Incest, beatings, spankings, and scoldings are all part of a process of socialization that prepares us to accept that our bodies are not our own, that our wishes and desires have no value.

The state denies young people civil rights until they are 18 or 21, enforcing curfew and mandatory attendance in schools through police harassment and brutality. Under the guise of education, kids are taught obedience and conformity, and generally prepared to be either

good workers or bosses. We support young people's resistance to the forces that seek to control their lives.

COMPULSORY HETEROSEXUALITY, GENDER, AND QUEER LIBERATION

Almost from birth, kids are forced into strict gender roles. They are dressed in pink or blue, given gender-specific toys, and taught to imitate their mothers and fathers and to desire the so-called opposite sex. Girls have their sense of autonomy, pride in their physical strength, and dreams crushed. Boys have their capacities for empathy, nurturance and interest in the desires of others beaten out of them.

There is nothing "natural" about this strait-jacketed gender and sexuality. Humans are playful, sensual and curious animals who find many diverse and wonderful ways of pleasing themselves and each other sexually. Because free sexuality challenges the structures of the patriarchal family, and because it breaks down the separation and alienation between people, it is potentially disruptive to the functioning of authoritarian society.

Queer (gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered) people are therefore denied civil rights, subject to police brutality, and are attacked by fearful and repressed people. The "closet" refers to the requirement by heterosexual society that queers hide their sexuality and pretend to be straight. While public displays of heterosexuality abound in the media, on the streets, and everywhere else in our lives, the slightest indication of queer affection generates hysterical responses that at best kill the pleasure of the moment, and at worst end in violent assault or murder. This suppression of a huge area of human sexuality has a global character. It is justified with the Bible in the U.S. and wrapped in the red flag in Cuba.

Despite these attacks, the queer liberation movement has, in a couple of decades, vastly increased the public visibility and acceptance of the diversity of human sexuality. The AIDS epidemic has had a devastating impact, at first on gay and bisexual men, and more recently on women and children. In the face of this devastation, coupled with a rise in queer-bashing, the queer community responded with one of the most powerful, militant, creative, radical, and non-authoritative movements of this period.

Patriarchal domination is perpetuated by the system of gender which is forced on us. Women everywhere have resisted being defined by their capacity to bear children. Queer people have created a tradition of subverting and re-creating gender that is potentially liberating for all of humanity. People will always form identities and groups based on these identities, even in a free society. But our identities and social formations must be based on self-determination if we are to build a real human community where people have the freedom to be who they want to be.

THE EMPIRE OF CAPITAL

We live in a capitalist society in which a minority ruling class controls the means of production and the rest of us are compelled to work for them by one means or another. Humanity has the collective capacity to meet all of our basic needs, but under capitalism hundreds of millions go hungry, are homeless, die of treatable illnesses and work under the most brutal conditions.

Even the middle classes and more privileged workers who do not live in fear of hunger have little control over many important decisions that affect their lives. Furthermore, capitalism has created a commodified culture that drains all our lives of meaning and corrodes the bonds of human community.

WHAT IS CAPITALISM?

Capitalism as a system is characterized by commodity production, the making of things to be bought and sold. While commodity production has existed since antiquity, it first began to become the dominant system around the world with the conquest and colonization of the Americas by Europe. The history of capitalism is the story of the relentless expansion of this system of commodity production into new areas. This expansion has introduced capitalism into every corner of the globe and increasingly into every realm of our lives. Sex, food, music, poetry and all the other things that make life good become things traded on the market and in the process lose their ability to really fulfill us.

Like all forms of class society capitalism is based on exploitation. The laboring classes in all societies produce more than they need to survive. By direct or indirect means the ruling class takes this "surplus value" from those whose work produced it. Before the rise of capitalism this process of exploitation was direct. The ruling class obtained its wealth through taxes, rents, tributes and the work of slaves. Under capitalism the process is hidden by the impersonal workings of the market. Workers are compelled to sell their labor for less than it produces in order to survive. This is only possible because the workers are separated from the tools and machines they use to produce things. This "alienation from the means of production" means that workers are also separated from the products of their labor and ultimately from themselves. The "products of our labor" are not just physical things; they are all the things that make up society. The psychological feeling of alienation that characterizes life under capitalism is a direct consequence of this concrete and material alienation from the processes by which we make and remake the world.

The seeds of capitalism have existed so long as there have been people who live by buying and selling the products of other peoples labor. But this layer of merchants only rose to dominance with the creation of a global market by European expansion. The trans-Atlantic slave trade and the plantation system it supplied with African labor in large part financed the Industrial Revolution in Europe and North America. The Industrial Revolution saw the wholesale transformation of labor into another commodity to be bought and sold on the market. In this sense chattel slavery was the foundation on which the system of wage slavery was built. Since then every imaginable form of human activity has been turned into a job.

Capitalism is the most dynamic form of class society in human history. Because profits are immediately plowed back into the further development of new productive forces capitalism is characterized by relentless growth and change. As a result of this, capitalism has "revolutionized" many aspects of this society. When old prejudices become an obstacle to capi-

talist growth they are often swept away. At the same time capitalism uses long-standing oppressive relations and ideologies for its own purposes, often transforming them in the process. The place of women in the processes of economic production, for example, has undergone many radical changes and this has created openings for women to challenge particular aspects of patriarchal rule. At the same time capital has continued to maintain the generally subordinate social position of women in spite of these changes. We must appreciate the always dynamic and sometimes revolutionary nature of capitalism if we want to destroy it.

Capitalism has been dependent not only on the exploitation of wage workers, but also on the superexploitation of women in the home and colonized peoples who produced raw materials for industrial production. The working class, then, is not simply industrial workers or even all those people who perform wage labor, but the whole social complex of people whose lives sustain capitalism. This includes unwaged producers (semi-proletarianized peasants producing for the market and houseworkers), children who are being prepared for work, as well as the unemployed who serve to keep wages down.

From its inception capitalism has depended on and developed unequal relations between different peoples and nations. This inequality was made explicit by the actual conquest of peoples in Africa, Asia, and the Americas. Imperialism is the systematic subjugation by direct and indirect means of the majority of the world's peoples by the ruling classes of a handful of imperialist countries. Imperialism has evolved from the direct rule of overseas colonies to the domination of formally independent former colonies by increasingly transnational capital.

Following the Second World War anti-colonial national liberation struggles significantly challenged imperialism worldwide. In the name of socialism many of these movements established some variety of state capitalism based on the nationalization of private property and the direction of economic development by a party-state. These changes did not constitute a break with capitalism but they did force it to reorganize and put the dominant capitalist powers on the defensive for a generation.

Capitalism has always generated resistance. Indigenous resistance, slave revolts, Luddism, resistance to enforced domesticity and sexual subordination, the creation of cultures of resistance, and housing struggles are just some of the many forms that anti-capitalist resistance has taken and that inspire us today. It is this self-activity of all people oppressed and exploited by capitalism that is the germ of a new post-capitalist society.

Because its labor sustains capitalism, the only class that has the power to overthrow capitalism is the working class. This does not mean that other classes can't contribute to the struggle against capitalism or don't have legitimate demands of their own. Neither does it mean that the struggles of other sectors of society (youth; women; queer people; oppressed national, ethnic or racial groups) are any less central to the revolutionary process. The overthrow of capitalism is only one part of the larger revolutionary process which also includes the overthrow of patriarchy and all forms of racial, national or eth-

nic oppression.

NEO-LIBERALISM

The anti-colonial struggles following the Second World War and the simultaneous social upheavals in Europe, North America and Japan seriously undermined the stability of international capitalism by the late 1960s. In response to these challenges capitalism embarked on a new strategic orientation that has come to be called "neo-liberalism." Taking advantage of the increasing mobility of capital and the globalization of production processes resulting from the development of new technologies, neo-liberalism has attacked the various gains won by the working class, by anti-colonial struggles, and by the new social movements.

Starting in the early 1970s, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank began imposing austerity measures on Third World governments in exchange for development loans. More recently, these same demands have been made of First World countries as a condition for participation in regional and global agreements like NAFTA and GATT. The dramatic expansion of industrial production in parts of Asia and Latin America has been accompanied by deindustrialization in the old imperialist countries and the complete social collapse of parts of Africa. The old imperialist countries have witnessed a dramatic reorganization of their working classes with the expansion of the service and information economies and the expanding use of part time and temp workers. These changes have contributed to and been accelerated by the imposition of neo-liberal policies.

Neo-liberalism refers to the policies of eliminating barriers to international investment, privatizing state-owned industries, dismantling social services, and attacking various guarantees that protected the rights of workers, peasants and other poor people. These policies have been accompanied by a dramatic expansion in the repressive power of the state (more cops and prisons) and the rise of fascism and other reactionary movements as more privileged sectors of the working class attempt to prevent what they see as their submersion into its lower ranks.

Huge sections of the population are being made marginal to the production process and are being treated more and more like "surplus humanity." The explosion of the prison population and the imposition of police-state techniques for controlling housing projects and poor peoples' neighborhoods reflect this chilling attitude. While unemployment and underemployment are used as tools to divide the working class the dramatic growth of the unemployed has made them a sector from which significant struggles against the status quo are emanating.

THE FIGHT AGAINST CAPITALISM

We are fighting for the overthrow of capitalism. We are fighting for a world in which decisions about what is produced and how are made by the people affected by those decisions. This means we are fighting for the complete democratic reorganization of production. This must involve workers at the point of

production, directly affected communities, and ultimately the whole of humanity.

This vision depends on the development of the capacity of the working class to consciously act on its own behalf unmediated by the power of politicians and bureaucrats. As the experience with state capitalism in the 20th century demonstrates, without this development of workers autonomy any effort to establish a just economic order will fail and reproduce the hierarchical class relations of capitalism.

We understand that only by overthrowing the privileges and inequalities of power of race and gender, that divide the working class itself as much as society as a whole, is it possible for the working class to achieve the unity necessary to overthrow capitalism. Consequently the overthrow of these hierarchies is an interest of the class as a whole. At every turn we must fight within the working class for this understanding.

The class struggle is a daily fact of life. But it only becomes a revolutionary struggle when the oppressed classes become conscious of the nature of the system they are up against and the possibility of overthrowing it. The creation of strike committees, workers councils and other forms of workers' self-organization in the course of the class struggle prefigure the reorganization of a post-capitalist society.

RACE AND COLONIALISM IN NORTH AMERICA

We live in a racist society. Modern racism is primarily, though not exclusively, the product of the period of European global expansion. The system of racial power and privilege known as white supremacy was built up over the past 500 years through the process of the European conquest, colonization, genocide, and enslavement of the peoples of Africa, Asia and the Americas. Elements of racist ideology can be traced to before the period of European expansion and those ideas have since been adapted to the needs of non-European oppressor groups around the world. Racism, however, refers not only to the poisonous ideas of racial supremacy but to the institutionalized relations of inequality that to this day deny basic dignity to the majority of humanity. In the Americas these relations have been expressed mainly in terms of white power and privilege. Accordingly we are committed to the uprooting of all forms of racism and national oppression, the complete overthrow of the racist system of white supremacy in particular, and the creation of a society that respects the full diversity of all human cultures.

While European countries have been the main colonial powers for the past 500 years and therefore the main object of our analysis they can claim no monopoly on the horrendous practices most closely associated with their ascendancy. At different times Asian, African and American Indian empires have also conquered and ruthlessly subjugated peoples. In modern memory Japan carried out great crimes in its attempts to conquer East Asia. On a smaller scale we can find the systematic oppression of ethnic minorities in practically every corner of the globe.

THE CONQUEST OF THE AMERICAS

The wholesale slaughter of indigenous peoples initiated by Columbus and continued for the past five centuries was initially justified not on racial but rather on religious grounds. The crimes committed against the Indians were justified because they weren't Christians. But the exploitation of the labor of the native population by the Spanish conquistadors established some of the basic features of what would quickly become a system of racial oppression.

The great civilizations of Mexico and Peru were systematically destroyed and the Europeans began to define the native peoples as "savages" and to justify their rule on paternalistic grounds. The conquest of indigenous populations took two main forms. In Mexico, Central America and the Andes, after an initial period of slaughter the indigenous peoples became the main subordinate social group whose exploited labor would support the colonial system. In the United States and Canada the native peoples were targeted for extermination and those that survived were pushed to the geographic and social margins of a society dominated by European settlers. It was on these foundations of native conquest and genocide that the particular social structures of the Americas were built.

COLONIZATION AND SLAVERY

The European colonies established in the Americas were business enterprises designed to deliver cheap raw materials—gold, silver, sugar, tobacco, cotton—to their respective mother countries. Their profits depended on a reliable supply of the cheapest possible labor. In the highlands of Peru and Mexico this need was met by indigenous peoples tied to the hacienda system. In the Caribbean, Brazil and much of British North America this demand for labor was met with African slaves.

The trans-Atlantic slave trade is one of the greatest crimes ever committed in human history. Flourishing African societies were devastated by the predatory pursuits of the slave traders. Millions of Africans perished crossing the Atlantic packed into the living hell of slave ships that were followed across the ocean by sharks waiting to feed on human flesh. In the Americas the enslaved Africans were subjected to a systematic effort to break their spirits, destroy their culture and strip them of their humanity. The plantation system sought to squeeze the enslaved African for every penny of profit possible. Most slaves were simply worked to death. Only in British North America did the African population become self-reproducing before the abolition of slavery.

The slave system gave rise to many forms of active and passive resistance. From resistance on the job to escape to open insurrection slave resistance raised the costs of slavery until the system came crashing down. While the support of white abolitionists and contradictions between the slave system and industrial capitalism contributed to the defeat of slavery these forces too were set in motion by the determined resistance of the enslaved themselves. To this day the overthrow of slavery stands as the greatest achievement in the struggle for human liberation and as the most compelling evidence that the most wretchedly oppressed people have the capacity to overthrow their oppressors.

ORIGINS OF RACISM

In popular consciousness race is associated with skin color or other physical characteristics and presumed descent. In reality race is a

mark of relative social power and privilege that has been socially constructed through the historical development of this society. The first Europeans and Africans to settle in the Americas did not think of themselves as white or black in the sense that those words have today. They were Spanish or English or Igbo or Hausa. They were Catholics or Protestants or Muslims or practitioners of Vodun. While they were undoubtedly aware of differences in their appearances and cultural practices they did not yet think of themselves as members of distinct "races." While ethnocentrism of different sorts has existed at least since antiquity, the modern system of racial classifications was developed during the period of European expansion as a mechanism of social control.

The European colonies in the Americas could only be operated profitably if a cheap source of labor could be secured. In much of the Americas this gave rise to a system of racial slavery. This system was defined as much by who it did not enslave as by who it did. This system was developed in response to the threat of united resistance coming from the servant class as a whole. Poor Europeans were given powers and privileges (guns, land, the vote) that were denied the Africans and in this way drawn into a web of white racial solidarity with their rulers. The enactment of legal distinctions between servants of European and African origin enshrined this system in law. In the U.S. the division of the colonial populations into free European settlers (whites) and enslaved Africans (blacks) and the establishment of special power and privileges for the white population became the most powerful weapon of the white ruling class. Thus was born the white race.

Simultaneously Africans of diverse ancestry were cast together on plantations where they were compelled to develop a common culture in order to survive. The creation of this syncretic culture drawing from a variety of African sources as well as European and Indian ones was a profound act of collective resistance. It is this culture of resistance as much as any white-imposed system of racial categories that is the foundation of black racial or national consciousness. This Black national consciousness has expressed itself in many different forms. In religious practices on the plantation and in the Black church the unity of Black people through the cultural connection with Africa has been reaffirmed from generation to generation. Only in the 20th century was this tradition of grassroots nationalist pride in one's African roots linked to a Black nationalist political program, first by Marcus Garvey and then by Malcolm X.

In Mexico and other parts of Latin America, where Indians and not Africans were the primary source of exploited labor, a different system of racial categories emerged. Whites were on top and Indians on the bottom but a Mestizo group of supposed mixed ancestry also emerged, eventually becoming the majority group. In the Caribbean a caste of Coloreds—people of mixed descent—occupied this middle position.

In contrast to the North American colonies that became the United States, the colonies that became Canada were originally built on the expansion of trade with Native peoples rather than the labor intensive plantation system. When labor was brought in to Canada it was largely European and only later Asian labor. When the French colony of Quebec came under English control the Francophone Quebecois became the socially subordinate group of settlers ruled over by an Anglophone elite. The result is a distinctive system less closely associated with the super-exploitation of non-white labor and more closely resembling a European-style system of class divisions.

THE FUNCTION OF RACIAL IDEOLOGY

We reject all ideas of ethnic, national or racial essentialism that have developed in the service of white supremacy or in response to it. We reject the whole idea of racial categories which we know in no way correspond with any classification recognized by natural science. Rejecting racial categories does not mean denying or denigrating the existence of distinct cultures which may correspond roughly with those categories. We recognize the existence of distinct cultures but also the permeability of the cultural boundaries that separate them. All American culture is syncretic-drawing in different measures from African, European, Indian, and more recently Asian roots. Many individuals have found themselves with one foot in one culture and the other in another.

While there is no scientific foundation for the division of humanity into races that division has become an oppressive social fact in the lives of hundreds of millions of people. In the Americas and around the world racial ideology remains a major instrument of social control. Their reconfiguration over time has served the changing needs of an exploitative social system.

Racial ideology has also been used by historically oppressed groups to build solidarity in the struggles against white supremacy. Currents within Black nationalism and the Mexican idea of La Raza are examples of this tendency. While upholding the right of all oppressed peoples to self-determination, we reject all racial ideologies as ultimately reactionary and oppressive. Racial purity has always been a myth and therefore we stand for a truly non-racial society in which the integrity of distinct cultures is respected. The primary task in achieving this vision is the overthrow of white supremacy and the complete destruction of white racial power and privilege. Accordingly, in all cases we are committed to participating in the fight to redress historical racial inequalities.

NATIONALITY

Like race, modern ideas of nationality are of historically recent vintage. Nations are imagined communities created by aspiring ruling classes. Common culture, language, religion or history is used (or, where it doesn't yet exist, invented) to unite antagonistic social classes into a "nation" with a market and a patriotic army to defend it. The US and Haitian revolutions and the independence movements of the mainland Spanish colonies turned colonial societies made up of people of diverse origins and social status into modern nations ready to go to war on behalf of the interests of their new national ruling classes. The creation of "new" nations out of old colonies in the Americas in turn provided a model for the rise of 19th-century European nationalisms. Later European nationalism would serve as a model for anti-colonial national liberation struggles in Africa and Asia.

In the 19th century the major European powers divided up much of Asia and almost all of Africa. The colonial empires they created were justified in terms of European nationalism. When the colonized peoples of these empires rose up during the 20th century they did so in the name of their own nationalisms. While there are important similarities between them it is important to distinguish between the nationalisms of oppressed and oppressor nations.

The nationalisms of oppressed peoples speak to popular desires

for a sense of community that was destroyed by the process of imperialist conquest. The attempt to revive old suppressed cultural traditions is often an important part of the effort to create a new kind of community.

The anti-colonialist national liberation struggles of the 20th century put the imperialist countries on the defensive and politically mobilized the oppressed classes of the colonized countries. But these struggles-even when they proclaimed themselves socialist-were in fact led largely by middle class forces. While the upheavals created openings for the peasants and workers of these countries the regimes that were brought to power were ultimately state capitalist.

We uphold the legitimacy of national liberation struggles while recognizing the limitations of what they can accomplish. We also know from history that the efforts of aspiring leaders to enforce particular standards of race or nationality deny the true diversity contained within all cultures and by their violence demonstrate that there is nothing natural about those standards. The creation of every nation has involved the systematic suppression of difference within the nation. True self-determination must extend to all members of a cultural community or it is meaningless.

MANIFEST DESTINY

The United States was created in a war for independence by a population of land-hungry white settlers. Freed of the constraints of English treaties with various Indian nations the new American nation set about conquering much of the rest of the North American mainland. The mass extermination and relocation of native peoples was justified in terms of the Manifest Destiny of the United States. In the South the expansion of the United States meant the expansion of the slave system to new realms. The Trail of Tears, the US-sponsored settlement and secession of Texas from Mexico, the Mexican-American War, and the permanent occupation of more than half of Mexico were each driven by the demand of slaveholders for new lands for new plantations and greater profits.

The US conquest of Northern Mexico transformed former Mexican nationals into an oppressed people in what had once been their own country. The Chicano population of US-born people of Mexican descent has grown over the years with the constant movement of Mexicanos whose lives defy the US-Mexican border. The reconquista of parts of the US Southwest by Mexican immigrants and social upheavals in Mexico itself inevitably raise the question of the revolutionary reunification of Mexico.

FROM RECONSTRUCTION TO JIM CROW

Slavery was overthrown in the US during the Civil War when hundreds of thousands of slaves rose up against the slave system and sought to join the Union Army. In the period of Reconstruction following the Civil War Black people carried out the most sweeping social reforms ever attempted in US history. Universal education and basic democratic rights were extended more broadly than ever before. Former slaves were denied the land they had worked for generations but none the less challenged many of the most oppressive features of US society. The northern industrialists who had emerged from the Civil War as the dominant force in US society progressively abandoned Reconstruction. A period of racist terror against Black people inaugu-

rated the system of Jim Crow segregation that was to dominate the US South until the 1960s. In addition to the establishment of separate schools, swimming pools and water fountains, Jim Crow established a system of racial preferences that relegated Black workers to the most dangerous, worst paying, and least secure jobs. Once again the loyalty of poor whites to the system was bought with racial privileges.

US IMPERIALISM

By the end of the century the US had largely reached its current borders, but the continuing extension of US power did not stop. The Spanish-American War turned Puerto Rico and the Philippines into US colonies and Cuba into a puppet regime. The US came increasingly to dominate the political life of Latin America, imposing compliant governments by direct military intervention where other means proved inadequate. With a few exceptions the US avoided the establishment of outright colonies, preferring the creation of economically subordinate but formally independent puppet regimes. The US policy in Latin America developed in the 19th century was a precursor of the neo-colonial regimes established in parts of Africa and Asia following decolonization.

The Second World War established the US as the dominant power in the world. This power was economic, military and cultural. From Korea to Guatemala to the Dominican Republic to Viet Nam the US sought to maintain its power by militarily propping up puppet regimes often in the face of popular insurgencies. These imperialist wars and interventions reproduced globally the patterns of white supremacy that characterized the US from its inception. Through pop culture, prostitution and antipersonnel weapons the US asserted its "cultural superiority." Not coincidentally the countries most deeply penetrated by US imperialism became major sources of new immigrants to the US in the 1970s and after.

FROM CIVIL RIGHTS TO NATIONAL LIBERATION

The rise of the US to global domination made the persistence of legal white supremacy in the US a source of international embarrassment. At the same time the example of anti-colonial struggles in Africa and elsewhere became a source of inspiration for Black people in the US. Starting with the Montgomery bus boycott and continuing with the sit-in movement and voting rights struggles, the civil rights movement successfully challenged Jim Crow segregation. The US ruling class responded to this challenge by dismantling legal segregation through the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act. The 1965 Immigration Act, which opened the US to substantial non-white immigration, was another major victory of the civil rights movement. But the forces set in motion by the civil rights movement would not be satisfied by the elimination of state-sanctioned inequality.

The urban uprisings of the mid-1960s put the economic condition of the Black community on the agenda. Increasingly Black people and then other oppressed peoples in the US came to see their struggles as movements of national liberation that were part of the larger anti-colonial upheaval of the period. At the same time their struggles were inspiring other sectors of society to struggle. Students and youth, women, queer people and others saw in the openings created by the black liberation movement the opportunity to fight for their own freedom and for a better world.

NEO-COLONIALISM

The response of the old colonial powers to victorious anti-colonial struggles of the 1950s, 60s and 70s was neo-colonialism: the recognition of formal independence and the maintenance of economic domination. The organization of colonial economies to provide raw materials for the colonizing power leaves the decolonizing society highly dependent on the old colonial power for its survival. The result has been that a new nationalist elite raises a new flag and steps into the positions of power of the old colonial administrators. The new elite become the defenders of the systematic exploitation of their people. In this way the victories of national liberation movements and the rise of neo-colonial elites has exposed the danger of presuming that all members of an oppressed nationality share the same interests and has brought forward underlying class conflicts within the oppressed nation that were submerged during the struggle for independence.

THE WHITE BACKLASH

In the US the increasingly revolutionary character of the movements of the late-1960s were met with two main responses. The first was naked repression. Black revolutionaries were shot in their beds and thrown into prison and the movement as a whole was targeted for disruption. The second response was the deliberate creation of an enlarged Black and Brown middle class. Expanded educational opportunities and affirmative action created a buffer between the increasingly insurgent ghettos and barrios and the powers that be. This new middle class was largely dependent on the state and a handful of major corporations for employment in mid-level professional positions.

In many ways the Black and Brown middle classes were being asked to fulfill the same role as neo-colonial elites in the former colonies by putting a darker face on a still-intact system of racist exploitation. But the creation of a Black and Brown middle class meant dismantling some of the privileges that had previously separated the poorest whites from the lower status of people of color. In a period of layoffs, wage cuts and increasing attacks on the working class in general these chinks in the armor of white privilege have given rise to an increasingly militant and openly fascist white backlash. This backlash has developed in tandem with a dramatic increase in state repression directed at poor communities of color. The explosion in prison populations, the use of counter-insurgency techniques in the policing of communities of color, the cuts in spending on education and social services, the attacks on affirmative action, anti-immigrant hysteria, and the rise of openly white supremacist organizations can only be understood if they are seen as part of this larger white backlash.

IMMIGRATION

Historically immigrants have been brought to the Americas as cheap labor. Successive waves of European immigrants have experienced oppression and discrimination before they were incorporated into whiteness. Until recently non-European immigrants have remained largely outside this circle of privilege. Chinese, Japanese, and Philippino workers were brought to the US to build the railroads and work the fields and then crowded into ghettos where they became a permanent lower caste of US society.

Since 1965 immigration laws have favored immigration by skilled and educated workers, including many professionals, with the result that many new immigrants from Asia and Latin America rapidly join the middle class. At the same time low wage immigrant labor continues to come from Mexico, China, the Caribbean and elsewhere. The different social positions occupied by immigrants from different countries and the immigration of low-wage and professional workers from the same country has begun to fracture the once seemingly simple racial stratification of US society. At the same time non-European immigrants in general have become a major target of the white backlash in their efforts to restore that old System.

NATIONALISM, INTEGRATIONISM, AND A MULTI-CULTURAL SOCIETY

We stand for the overthrow of white supremacy, the redress of historical racial inequalities, the right of oppressed peoples to self-determination, the elimination of borders and frontiers, and the creation of a multi-cultural society. Oppressed peoples have historically been forced to choose between nationalism and integrationism, between upholding their dignity as a people and demanding equal rights within this society, between political separation and assimilation into the dominant culture. We reject this choice, as neither option offers real hope for freedom. The experiences of the 20th century show that national liberation struggles have been more successful in the creation of new ruling elites than in solving the pressing problems of the people. Similarly, integrationism has resulted in the dismantling of autonomous institutions in exchange for the entrance of an elite minority into positions of privilege within the old order. Neither nationalism nor integrationism speak sufficiently to the complex realities of people's lives and identities. Immigration, cross-cultural relationships, and the rapid cross-fertilization of different cultures have all contributed to a fragmentation of cultural categories. We regard cultures as living and evolving products of human creativity-influencing each other, merging and redividing along new lines. Both nationalism and integrationism flatten out this diversity.

In opposition to both nationalism and integrationism we uphold the vision of a truly multicultural society in which distinct cultures are respected and able to coexist on the basis of equality and in which the fate of an entire people is never trusted to an elite of any kind. We look forward to a world in which human diversity is not a problem but a pleasure. We are neither interested in the creation of a single grey monoculture nor in the establishment of fixed barriers between different cultures but rather a world in which the free development of a culture-including its openness to other cultures-is never constrained in order to maintain an oppressive social order.

THE STATE

We are enemies of the State. The State-the police, the army, the prisons, the courts, the various governmental bureaucracies, legislative and executive bodies-is the enforcer and regulator of authoritarian rule. These structures provide the means with which to maintain control in a class-divided society and enforce patriarchy, white supremacy, ecological destruction, and other forms of domination. The State is inherently authoritarian. It represents the interests of the rich against the poor.

It is run by representatives-self-selected and sharing a similar ideology-ratified by the increasingly diminishing percentage of the population that bothers to vote. The State is not democratic, in the best sense of the word, but elitist. It is a specialized institution standing above the rest of society, alienated from and oppressing most of the population.

The State maintains a monopoly on violence, coercion, and surveillance in the service of the interests of the elite. Whether it is their police shooting down poor people of color in the streets or the more systematic elimination of the Black Panther Party and American Indian Movement in the late 1960s and 1970s, the State will not hesitate to destroy those who dare oppose it.

Despite these obstacles we are anti-statists. Opposing State power is an absolute principle of our revolutionary practice and one of the most defining elements of our anarchism. The repressive apparatus of the State can not be defeated by obeying its laws. For this reason we believe it is essential to actively meet State repression with organized solidarity and resistance. There is a spectrum of resistance possible within a political context. From our commitment to defending each other against arrest at demonstrations to providing both legal and political defenses for people brought to trial to supporting imprisoned revolutionaries, we believe that our commitment to each other is our strongest defense against the power of the State. We demand the release of all political prisoners and prisoners of war, but we also work for the abolition of the prison system.

Because we have grown up in a statist society it is often difficult to imagine not living in one. One demonstration of the power of the State is the fact that it has so colonized our imaginations as to make itself seem natural, leaving us unable to think of a different way. Yet for the majority of human existence we have lived without the State. Initially peoples lived communally, sharing what they had. Early human communities developed a sexual division of labor, with men going out on hunts and for the most part women gathering and taking care of children. Eventually this division became increasingly rigid, and as hunters competed with hunters of neighboring tribes, male warrior groups emerged. Along with the early rise of patriarchal hierarchies other divisions, such as the old over the young and the hoarding and accumulation of wealth, began to emerge. In time these early stratifications developed into imperial families, complete with their own armies, land, and subjects. These were the precursors of the modern nation-state.

Alongside the development of capitalism arose an entity to serve emerging class rulership in the form of the nation-state. Nation-states were created through the merger of various imperial families, establishing economic units that were geographically cohesive, that shared a common language and culture, and therefore made for a common labor pool and market. The nation-state furnished an ideology of national identity that made it easier to rally people for military adventures their rulers considered profitable. The "common language and culture" of each of these new entities was in no way a natural human community like the early tribes and bands. Rather they were created by brutal conquest such as that of the British over

the Irish, Scots, and the Welsh, or the Castillian Spaniards conquest of the Basques and the Catalans.

The emergence of the nation-state proceeded from the unification of Spain in 1492 until the 19th century when nationalism emerged as a general phenomena throughout Europe. Every step of the way the builders of modern States encountered resistance. The indigenous peoples of the Americas resisted the European conquest. Captured slaves from Africa resisted and rebelled every step of the way. In Europe, peasants consistently resisted efforts to force them off their land and into the workshops and factories. The English Diggers seized common lands that the nobility had claimed. The distinct cultures that States have sought to incorporate have fought back, as is the case today in the Basque region and Northern Ireland.

Those running States today, both the ruling classes and their political lackeys, seek to preserve their power. Sometimes to do this they make concessions to strong popular movements which challenge them, by engaging in direct action, from below. In fact, every major State reform has come in response to the strength and power of grassroots movements. In the United States we can look to the examples of the Reconstruction period in response to slave revolts and the abolitionist movement, or to the civil rights legislation passed in response to the civil rights movement. As anarchists we see State reforms as positive, opening up new space for action. We do not sit back complacently when reforms are won. Historically, winning reforms too often co-opts a movement, as when massive labor strife in the 1930s U.S. was quelled with the legalization of unions. We will not get real freedom as a concession from rulers. Real freedom we will have to win for ourselves. We seek a true democracy, where the people run their own lives directly. We do not want a "better" State, or a "smaller" State, as many socialists and even politicians now advocate.

The State is not an instrument of liberation. For this reason we oppose strategies for social change that rely on the power of the State. Whether it is participating in elections, petitioning those in power, or trying to seize State power, we see such strategies as self-defeating. Strategies based on State power either fail to appreciate the need to exercise autonomous power to win demands, set the struggle up for co-optation and sell-out, or give us a new set of rulers.

The Marxist-Leninist strategy of seizing the State to create a "dictatorship of the proletariat" has proven a mockery of social revolution, better resembling the old societies they professed to destroy rather than the liberatory vision upon which these revolutions were founded. In Russia, for example, the "dictatorship of the proletariat" quickly became the dictatorship of the Bolsheviks, as Soviet prisons filled up with anarchists and other left opponents of the new regime and even the original cadre were systematically eliminated. The way to the Stateless society is not to seize State power, but to completely destroy the State. Contrary to Marx and Marxists, we do not believe the State will "wither away." No State has ever done this in any real sense, and we do not see this as likely in the future. On the contrary, modern States, sided by newer tech-

nologies, have found more effective ways of spying on, killing, and imprisoning their own populations as a means of controlling those segments of society that pose a threat to the existing social order.

In place of the State we propose the self-organized community. We advocate that local people affected by decisions should be the ones making them. For larger geographic coordination, say at the regional or continental level, local assemblies can confederate, sending accountable, and immediately recallable delegates to present the positions of local communities. All policy would be made by the people in a directly-democratic fashion, with the administration of that policy carried out by accountable and recallable bodies to serve various functions. Various experts, those who know how to build bridges, for example, or design alternative energy technologies, would inform the decisions of the assemblies. But ultimately it is the people who decide, not the experts. This way of organizing society would be one part of an overall redistribution of wealth and power, which would fundamentally change our relations to each other. Of course this directly-democratic form of self-governance runs the risk of evolving into a new State, alienated from and above the majority of people, thus constant vigilance and flexibility will be required to prevent the emergence of new elites and an alienated administrative apparatus.

Another dangerous institution will be any sort of military organization developed to defend the gains of the revolution and fight those who would seek to destroy our new found freedoms. A libertarian armed force will need to be created to fight the revolution and preserve its victories. The anarchist ideal is democratic popular militias, an armed people. Yet to be successful this force will require a certain degree of coordination and even levels of centralization and command. The danger here is that this force too could become an institution above society. In these conditions we advocate only as much centralization and discipline as is temporarily necessary to win the revolution and beat back any counter-revolution with as much internal democracy as is possible. How to strike this balance may not be obvious; it will be a matter of political debate and decision by the people.

The State is born of the conquest of other people. The self-governing community is a creation of the people themselves in the process of overthrowing the State. The free society is characterized by the radical decentralization of all kinds of power. Confederal structures do not rule over communities, they are the means by which communities cooperate.

An anarchist society is not one free of conflict. It is a society in which the resolution of such conflicts is not monopolized by an elite. The structures of a free society would not be mystified as natural and never changing. Rather they would be open to constant modifications in light of changing conditions.

SOCIAL ECOLOGY

We work to create a free and ecological society, a society in which human hierarchies have been abolished and humanity no

longer attempts to dominate the natural world. An ecological society is a society in which there is a general consciousness of the ecological consequences of human activity and in which those consequences deeply inform all the decisions that we make. In a society in which decisions affecting our lives are made directly, rather than by elites, an ecological awareness will go hand-in-hand with our commitment to ending social domination.

The present world system — the inter-locking institutions and attitudes of patriarchal, racist, capitalist, and statist domination — is the outgrowth of a long history of hierarchy and exploitation, which is at the very root of the ecological crisis. The attempt to dominate nature — and the very real exploitation of nature we experience and witness every day — has grown out of the earliest domination of humans by humans. Understanding the link between domineering social relations and institutions and the attempt to dominate nature, we believe that the struggles against social, political and ecological domination need to find their commonalities. For this reason actualizing social freedom is the precondition for creating an ecological society.

Local self-sufficiency, sustainable agricultural practices, and importantly the utilization of ecological technologies can aid in restoring and replenishing the planet's endangered ecological communities. Confederated ecological towns and cities, based in principles of freedom, mutual aid and communalism, could engage in a widespread transformation of social life, ensuring that cultural diversity thrives, and ethnic, gender, sexual-orientation and other identities make up a whole, while fighting those institutions, social groups and others who would deny us our freedom or seek to profit from continued exploitation.

Many people today the world over understand and experience daily the consequences of the ecological crisis. It manifests itself in the polluted air we breathe and the water we drink. It shows up as cancer and other defects in our bodies and in our increasingly weakened immune systems.

We see and work against garbage transfer stations and incinerators; radioactive and toxic waste which continues to pile up and is dumped in poor urban and rural areas; and the ongoing destruction of this continent's last forests, from the Andean rainforest in Brazil, to the Selva Lacandona in Chiapas, and up to the Pacific Northwest. The list is endless, from the most immediate and debilitating to that which affects global ecological disruption, such as ozone depletion, the warming of the Earth's climate, reduction of biological diversity, and loss of cultivable top soil.

Much attention has been focused on the contemporary ecological crisis over the last thirty years: environmental and ecological struggles - both reformist and revolutionary - have come and gone. Yet the social forces and institutions responsible seem as entrenched and persistent as ever. A variety of social and ecological struggles continue today. Some of the best are local struggles led by people from all walks of life who are directly affected by the viciousness of this anti-ecological society. Many folks are making connections and fighting against the interlocking forces of racism, capitalism and

ecological destruction - what has come to be called environmental racism. In the Pacific Northwest Earth First!, now largely a left-ecological activist movement, continues to draw connections between the destruction of Old Growth forests and the class nature of US society. In some places the ecological crisis connects most clearly with racial domination, in others with gender. It is important to make these links, but it is essential that we move beyond a defensive mode and work to develop an overall analysis and practice. Current grass-roots ecological organizing points to the importance of taking on social problems to resolve society's ecological problems.

We do not believe that an ecological society can be brought about by reforming the State, "greening" capitalism, or simply changing our personal habits. We recognize the importance of "privileged" people living in the Metropolis - whose relatively higher standard of living is based upon the history of colonialism and neo-colonialism - in changing their consumption habits, engaging in recycling activities, and appealing for new sensibilities to stop the worst effects of ecological degradation. But it will require much greater effort - an organized, clearly conscious, and forward looking political movement - to meet the basic challenges posed by the aggressively anti-ecological society in which we live. Nothing short of an anti-authoritarian, directly-democratic reorganization of society will solve the ongoing ecological crisis.

THE VISION OF LIBERATION

THE VISION

Fundamental to the views of revolutionary anarchists and related anti-authoritarians is our vision of a new society. We are not only against this society and its evils but we propose a drastically different one. Liberals and revolutionary statist (such as Marxist-Leninists) also oppose many social evils, but they have no alternative except a smoother running, more benevolent version of this society. With the liberal concept of automatic "progress" and Marxist theory of the "inevitable historical process," there is no need for a vision of a better world as a yardstick to measure this one by. Yet the economic, ecological, and military crises threatened by the collapse of this dying society suggest that there is nothing so practical as an ideal vision.

FREEDOM

Central to this vision is the ideal of freedom. Individuals should be able to develop their potentialities to the fullest. While respecting the rights of others, people should be able to make their own decisions about how they want to live their lives, including making their own mistakes. Freedom is not just freedom from but also freedom to — not just freedom from oppressive authority but mainly the capacity to take action, to make initiatives, to do. People should not be defined by their gender, age, race, or even occupation but by the totality of what

they do.

While we do not know the limits of human improvement, people will, no doubt always have limitations and imperfections. Humans will never be angels. This is all the more reason we can not trust anyone to have power over the rest of us, for even the most benevolent masters will have their limitations and imperfections (and most are not benevolent but cruel and stupid). In the complexity of the modern world, in the midst of interlocking world crises, there is no alternative to a society where the people are alert, concerned, intervening, and deciding at every level and on every issue.

Many believe that “too much” freedom would result in chaos (“anarchy” they call it). We believe that such a chaotic society is caused by oppression and the capitalist market. These set each person in competition against every other person, so that only the state can hold things together. On the contrary, a free society would make possible increased cooperation, respect for others, and the formation of voluntary associations.

A free society would consist primarily of an interwoven network of voluntary associations, of all types, sizes, degrees of permanency, and purposes. They would be organized cooperatively, voluntarily, and democratically, not for power or profit. They would manage production, distribution, and consumption, mutual protection, the free flow of information and opinion, education, the fulfillment of social, artistic, and spiritual needs.

NO GUARANTEES

There can be no guarantees that such a world will come into existence, or, once founded, that it will not decay into the old world of power struggles, oppression, and competition. A truly new society can only be created out of a series of great struggles, which will change not only social structures, but the struggling people. In the course of revolutionary upheavals, people will have to decide whether they want to continue the old way or to find a new way of living together.

Nor will the struggle be completed on the “day after” the revolution. There will need to be continuous, permanent struggle to improve the society and to fight the remnants of the old ways of thinking. In particular, women and men, together and separately, will have to organize to fight against sexism in ideology and practice. Similarly, racism will continue to have to be fought against. “The price of liberty is eternal vigilance.”

However, the social system of decentralization, pluralism, and direct democracy — a living system of checks and balances — will make it difficult for new rulers and oppressors to arise without challenge. In a society based on free association, previously oppressed groups, such as women will be able to organize themselves autonomously to fight for their interests.

DIRECT DEMOCRACY

There are libertarians and anarchists who claim to oppose democracy. Yet a free society can only exist as the most radical extension of democracy. Free associations must be rooted in

direct democracy: people who are affected by decisions meet face-to-face to make the decisions themselves: town meetings, neighborhood assemblies, shopfloor committees, factory councils, and so on. There will be many opportunities for women to participate in decisions which affect them and all of society.

A society of voluntary association and participatory democracy will be stateless. When everyone is involved in self-governing then there is no government.

INSTEAD OF THE STATE

Instead of the military and police forces, there would be the self-organized armed people: the militia. For a time, it would be needed for defense against internal counter-revolutionary armed forces or against attacks by imperialist states which have not yet had their revolutions. Instead of prisons, there will be communal approaches toward rehabilitation and restitution. Instead of courts, there will be popular organs of mediation and arbitration. But there will be no bureaucratic-military machine over and above society.

ANTI-AUTHORITARIAN SOCIALISM

The economy will be cooperative, with production for use rather than profit, with control in the hands of the working population rather than the owners of capital, the state, or the distant market. It will be self-managed socialism, with worker management of the workplace, consumer and producer cooperatives, occupant-managed housing, and communes which integrate production and consumption. Since everyone works for the community, women would be economically independent of men. Childcare, however organized, would be a communal responsibility. Economic associations will be federated from local to regional, continental, and international levels where useful.

These views are in the broad tradition of revolutionary anarcho-socialists, such as Bakunin and Kropotkin, the anarcho-syndicalists, the guild socialists, the IWW, and other anti-authoritarian socialists.

DECENTRALISM AND FEDERALISM

If people are to directly control their lives through direct democracy, then institutions must be on a scale that can be self-managed. Society must be decentralized to a human scale, so that where we work and live can be understood and managed by groups meeting face-to-face. To an extent, large institutions may be decentralized, so that a city could have many neighborhood assemblies, but there are limits — there is no place for the immense, cancerous, “cities” such as New York City or Chicago.

A certain amount of centralization might be necessary; certainly smaller units will federate into regional, industry-wide, continental, and international associations of various sorts. Some sorts of delegation of tasks will be necessary in such situations. However, unlike present-day centralized organizations, all such associations will be structured from the bot-

tom up. Without being organizationally rigid about it, there would be as much decentralization as possible and only as much centralization as is necessary.

Whatever delegation is necessary would come out of a society whose members regularly participate in face-to-face collective control over their daily lives, people who live in vibrant democratic communities. This is qualitatively different from people who spend their days as wage slaves for bosses and then vote, every few years, for someone to “represent” them in distant places.

TECHNOLOGY

Modern technology was developed primarily to serve the needs of capital and the military. While much of technology can be used for liberatory ends, this is only if there are drastic changes in the way it is used. Some reject all science and machinery since the middle ages or the stone age. But technology can be deliberately and consciously applied to fit a free society: to fit decentralized production, sustainable and nonwasteful use of energy, an adequate supply of goods for all, sufficient leisure time for all, work which is creative and interesting rather than drudgery. In planned communities, human beings can live in balance with the natural world rather than as a cancer on it.

Efforts would be made to decrease the division of labor. While some specialization may still be needed, the split between brain work and physical work can be abolished.

In principle, such a split has begun to be overcome when workplaces are self-managed by all who work there, former “blue collar” and former “white collar.” The reorganization of industry, technology, and the division of labor would end “housework” and “women’s work.”

INTERNATIONALISM

Freedom may break out anywhere in the world, but its survival will require world-wide freedom, international revolution. A free world will lack borders and border-guards. There will be voluntary movement of individuals, goods, and ideas from people to people. International federation for economic, cultural, and scientific purposes will span the planet. When asked, the former imperialist nations will provide material help to the former oppressed peoples to aid them in industrializing in their own ways. It will be in everyone’s interest to develop a prosperous and peaceful world.

Internationalism does not mean that all communities will dissolve into one world-wide sameness. On the contrary, there will be many cultural, historical, and linguistic differences among the world’s peoples. We value the pluralism and decentralism of such world variety. Some of the currently most oppressed peoples, such as the “Fourth World” native peoples, may have the most to contribute to world culture, speaking out of their own cultures.

EXPERIMENTALISM

There have been important areas of debate among various

types of anarchists, Greens, and related anti-authoritarians. For example: should industry (and maybe all of society) be run by workers’ councils organized at the job site or by consumers’ cooperative or by integral communes?

Should the economy be completely “communist” (in the sense of completely cooperative and using no money) or should it be some kind of “market socialism” (with craftspeople, producer co-ops, and small farmers on public land competing in a communally-regulated market)?

Should popular decisions be made by majority-rule elections (maybe with parties) or by consensus?

There will be formerly-oppressed groupings within a former US/Canadian free society: African-Americans, Quebecois, mainland Puerto Ricans, Mexican-Americans, other Latinos, Asian-Americans, Native American first nations, and others. Should they (or segments of them) separate out into independent communities or integrate into the broader society or choose some combination (being part of the broader society while organizing for their rights and to preserve their cultural heritages)?

How will people form sexual/romantic relationships without the patriarchal family? How will they organize to rear children?

As an organization we do not take positions on these issues. We are not vanguardists and we do not know all the answers. A free society will be experimental and flexible. It is able to adjust and re-adjust to changing conditions.

Covering all of North America (or the world), a free society will include very many communities and regions, with different cultures and ideas. Surely they will organize themselves in different ways. Some will try “communist” anarchism and others market socialism—and that is alright. Some will attempt almost complete decentralization while others will combine direct democracy with regional planning by elected people—and that is alright. One of the virtues of a decentralized federal system is that different regions can try different approaches and then learn from each other’s experience. By experimenting in real life, people will invent many varieties of the free society.

@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@

“It is no less than reasonable that those whom we try to involve in the great struggle for a better form of life than that which we now lead should call on us to give them at least some idea of what that life may be like.”

—William Morris

BY-LAWS of the LOVE AND RAGE REVOLUTIONARY ANARCHIST FEDERATION

Revised at the March 1997 conference in Lansing, Michigan

I. PREAMBLE

As social revolution requires organization, so will a free society be founded on its revolutionary organization. The Love and Rage Revolutionary Anarchist Federation exists to struggle for a free society based on participatory democracy, equality, voluntary association, mutual aid, and the abolition of all forms of oppression. The structure of the Love and Rage Federation should be consistent with these ends. These by-laws are to help ensure that the internal structure of Love and Rage is as democratic, participatory, egalitarian, and free of oppressive power relationships as possible within the present capitalist society. The aim of this structure is to enable the various projects and members of Love and Rage to act autonomously while keeping members and activities accountable to the entire Federation via democratic processes. It is expected that all members of Love and Rage respect and adhere to these by-laws.

II. MEMBERSHIP

Love & Rage is a membership organization. Members join as individuals and then join together into geographically defined Love and Rage Locals. There are two levels of membership: Member and Supporter.

A. Expectations of Membership. Love and Rage is an organization of activists. To ensure this, and to ensure the continued growth of the organization and the carrying out of our agreed-upon decisions and programs, there are seven basic expectations of all members.

1. General agreement with Love and Rage's revolutionary anarchist politics, and a commitment to discussing and struggling over any political disagreements with the politics expressed in the statement.
2. Participation in or working toward the creation of a Love and Rage Local in your city or area.
3. Paying dues regularly according to the current dues structure of the organization.
4. Participation in mass political work.
5. Participation in internal discussion and debate over theory, strategy, tactics and issues relevant to building the revolutionary movement.
6. Participation in ongoing study of politics, history and theory, either through Love and Rage study groups or on your own. This includes a commitment to sharing information and lessons from your studies with the rest of the Federation by writing about it in the Federation Bulletin or in articles for the newspaper.
7. Distribution and selling of Love and Rage literature.

B. Leave of Absence. Members may request a leave of absence for specific periods of time during which they know they will not be able to meet membership requirements. Members must notify their local of their leave of absence before the leave starts. If you do not have a

local, the Coordinating Committee should be notified of your leave of absence.

C. Suspension. Members who do not meet these membership requirements, violate the politics of the Federation, or engage in unprincipled actions can be suspended from the Federation.

1. A member can be suspended if at least ten other members petition the Federation Council and demand the member's suspension until the next Conference. This petition must be published in the Federation Bulletin, and the member facing suspension must be notified immediately by the Coordinating Committee. The member facing suspension then has three months to publicly defend her or himself in the Bulletin. After the defense is published or if no defense is submitted, the Federation Council then votes whether or not to suspend the member.
2. Suspension is only a temporary action; a decision to expel or retain a member can only take place at a Conference. During suspension, members may not work under the name of Love and Rage or participate in decision-making processes. Petitions for suspensions will be published in the Federation Bulletin.

D. Expulsion. A member can be expelled only at Conferences by a simple majority vote. A member need not have been suspended to be expelled. A member who is threatened with expulsion has the right to defend her or himself in the Federation Bulletin and at the Conference. A person may be readmitted into the Federation only at a future Conference.

E. Supporters. A person who supports Love and Rage's activities and politics but who does not wish to assume the responsibilities of active membership can be a supporter of the Federation.

1. Responsibilities for supporters includes general agreement with Love and Rage's political statement, self-definition as a supporter, and a \$40/year communications fee. Supporters are also strongly encouraged to pledge time and/or financial support when possible.
2. Supporters receive the Federation Bulletin and other official documents. They may not vote at Conferences or serve on any of the Federation's official bodies except the Production Group. Supporter status must be renewed yearly.

F. Organizational Autonomy and Political Integrity. No one may become or remain a member of Love and Rage who is:

1. An employee or agent of a law enforcement agency;
2. A member of any organization that requires its members to give reports on Love and Rage's inter-

nal activities; or

3. A member of any organization that requires its members to argue for a *Óline* or otherwise direct the activity of its members acting within Love and Rage.

Any member who is found to fall into one of the above categories will be considered to have violated the integrity of the Federation and can be suspended and / or expelled by the procedure outlined in section II.C. on Suspension and II.D. on Expulsion.

III. STRUCTURE

The basic structure of the Love and Rage Federation is federal: power is distributed among locals, working groups, a Federation Council, and a Coordinating Committee, all of whom are accountable to and united by the whole Federation. Day-to-day administrative work is carried out by the Coordinating Committee; membership and finances are handled by the Federation Office. The various publications of Love and Rage (*Love and Rage*, *Amor y Rabia*, *Federation Bulletin*, etc.) are edited and produced by various production groups. Federation decisions are made democratically and non-hierarchically at Conferences; between Conferences they are made by the elected Federation Council.

A. Locals. Locals consist of members of the Federation who meet regularly in a face-to-face democratic manner to 1) engage in local activism and solidarity work as a Love and Rage Local, 2) to discuss and participate in the continental activities of the Federation, and 3) to try to bring new members into the Federation or to encourage other forms of anti-authoritarian politics and activism among other activists. Locals are free to organize themselves internally as they see fit, so long as their organization is egalitarian; practices participatory, non-hierarchical democracy; and does not violate the spirit of these by-laws or the L&R political statement. Each local does elect a secretary to collect pledges and take care of other administrative tasks regarding membership.

B. Working groups. Working groups are formed by the Federation to carry out the political work of the Federation. They are created out of the political discussions and decisions of the Federation and their policies, actions and effectiveness are subject to the decisions and criticisms of the entire Federation.

C. Production groups. Production groups are those groups that produce the various publications of Love and Rage: *Amor y Rabia*, *Love and Rage*, *Federation Bulletin*, etc. Although these bodies are not autonomous and their decisions and actions are subject to criticism by the Federation, each production group is generally responsible for editing and producing its respective publication.

D. Facilitators. A facilitator for the production group for *Love and Rage* (currently produced in New York City) works full-time on the paper and various duties surrounding the paper office. She is to be approved by the Conference and is to be paid a salary by the Federation.

The facilitator's position is for one year or until a new facilitator can be found.

E. Caucuses. Caucuses may be formed by any group of members of the Federation who define themselves as having similar interests or concerns or who face similar oppressions in order to collectively influence the internal workings of Love and Rage. Caucuses **consist of** members who come together to attempt to affect Love and Rage's direction internally, not to do activism autonomously from it. Caucuses may have representation on the Federation Council if approved at a Conference.

F. Conferences. Conferences are the major decision-making body of the Federation. They occur at least every two years and the major political decisions, directions, and analyses of the Federation are debated and decided there. Decisions at Conferences are made based on a 1-person-1-vote model, where every Federation member has a vote. (Only Federation members may vote in Conference decisions.) The Federation Conference, because it is the most directly democratic and participatory body of the Federation-at-large, is therefore the ultimate decision-making body of the Federation.

G. Federation Council. The Federation Council is responsible for making decisions between Conferences, within the mandate set out by the previous Conference. Proposals, propositions, and the debates surrounding them will be organized by the Coordinating Committee (see III.J. below) and presented to the Federation Council.

1. Election of Council members

The Federation Council consists of members elected by locals, regions, and caucuses that have been granted representation by the Federation.

- a. Locals. Each Love and Rage local may elect two delegates to the Council.
- b. Regions. In areas that lack a local, at-large members living relatively close to each other can meet and create a region. Once created, a region may elect two delegates to the Council.
- c. Caucuses. A caucus may also elect two delegates to the Council if approved by the Federation.

2. Decision-making process

- a. The Federation Council is a delegate body. Council members make decisions based on the will of their constituency, not on their own.
- b. The Federation Council decides on proposals made by Federation members that can not wait for a conference. All proposals are to be published (in English and Spanish) in the Federation Bulletin for all members to consider. All members are encouraged to vote on and debate every decision facing the Federation. There are two ways in which the Council can make decisions.
- c. Federation Council meetings. The Council

will meet in between Conferences to decide on proposals made by the membership. While all Love and Rage members and invited guests may attend and participate in Council meetings, only Council delegates may vote.

d. The Federation Council may also make decisions without meeting. The process is as follows: Council delegates present submitted proposals to their constituency (local, region, or caucus). After sufficient debate, delegates tally their constituents' opinions on the proposal and then return one vote per delegate, based on the majority opinion of their constituents. These votes are reported to the Coordinating Committee along with a report on any debate that emerged. The results of the Federation Council's vote and any debate will be gathered by the Coordinating Committee and published in the Federation Bulletin. The majority of the membership can also call for more debate on any particular issue and delay the voting process.

3. **Accountability to membership**

Federation Council delegates are expected to make regular contacts with constituents. Delegates are recallable by their constituency by simple majority vote.

4. Decisions made by the Federation Council override any of those made by the Coordinating Committee, but can themselves be overridden by Conferences.

H. Federation Office. The Federation Office is responsible for certain administrative work of the Federation, including correspondence, finances, membership lists, and statistics. The Office's location and specific responsibilities are determined at Conferences.

I. International Secretary. An International Secretary is elected at Conferences. Her responsibility is to build and develop relationships with revolutionary anarchists around the world.

J. Coordinating Committee. The Coordinating Committee of Love and Rage is responsible for the day-to-day work of the Federation. Its job is to bring the Federation together by coordinating activities and making sure the projects the Federation votes on are carried out. This includes 1) making sure the various projects and working groups are doing the work entrusted to them at Conferences, 2) facilitating debates within the Federation surrounding Federation politics and activities, 3) organizing Federation Council votes on proposals (and the debates surrounding them) between Conferences, 4) ensuring the democratic flow of information and communication within the Federation, and 5) making sure the projects, production groups, and working groups, are getting the support they need from the Federation-at-large. This committee is an important one; it is to be very active and carries great responsibility. It is to act according to the political statement and

by-laws of the Federation in a manner that it feels best represents the interests of the Federation in each instance.

The Coordinating Committee consists of at least **four** persons, elected at Conferences, who should be drawn from as diverse a population as possible. The Coordinating Committee must consist of members who are able to meet at least once a month. Its actions are subject to the decisions of the Federation Council and it is accountable to the entire Federation. Coordinating Committee members are directly recallable by the Federation Council.

IV. MEETING STRUCTURE & PROCEDURES FOR CONFERENCES

Meetings for Conferences should be conducted in the following manner. The purpose of this structure is to create a democratic and open political space that can ensure the maximum amount of participation and empowerment possible as well as to make decisions, in a consensual manner if possible, by majority vote if not.

A. Agenda setting. Any member may submit items for the Conference agenda. Conference agendas are approved by majority vote at Conferences. All agenda items must be submitted to the Federation Bulletin that comes out *prior* to the upcoming conference. Any agenda items that are not printed in the Bulletin will be considered only after other proposed items and if time allows. Of course, the Conference can vote to address certain agenda items if there is a pressing and immediate need.

B. Conference procedures and processes. The purpose of these procedures is to help Conferences run as smoothly as possible. They are also to empower people as much as possible, and to encourage the greatest amount of participation from all persons who care to. Lastly, these procedures are designed to help the Federation make decisions in the most democratic, egalitarian, and non-hierarchical manner possible. Consensus will be striven for in all decisions; if that cannot be done then decisions will be made by a simple majority vote (50% + 1). Although anyone friendly to Love and Rage and its politics may participate in Conferences, only members may vote.

1. **Facilitation.** A facilitator is chosen at the beginning of each meeting by the Conference. If there are objections to someone acting as facilitator an attempt is made to find someone who is acceptable to everyone. If that is impossible a facilitator may be decided by vote. The responsibilities of the facilitator include but are not limited to: calling on people to speak, ensuring that these procedures are followed, keeping the meeting flowing, keeping discussion on track, merging similar proposals to keep things simpler, setting time limits on discussion, bringing discussions to a decision either by consensus or vote, and ruling on procedural questions. Any procedural ruling can be challenged by

- any member, in which case it is put to an immediate vote.
2. Note taker, timekeeper, and name taker. Every meeting should have a note keeper to take notes of discussions and to record all decisions made for future reference. A timekeeper should be chosen if the discussion of certain agenda items is limited to a particular amount of time or if the length of time for each speaker is limited. At the facilitator's request, a name taker should be chosen to write down the names of people who wish to speak (i.e. the stack). In general, the names should be taken down in the order in which hands are raised, but the facilitator and name taker should be aware of certain imbalances in the stack (e.g. certain people speaking too much, male-dominated discussions, etc.) and take steps to fix them.
 3. Making a proposal. When someone wants to make a proposal that they want the Conference to decide on, they need to say so and explain their proposal clearly to the Conference.
 4. Seconding. A proposal needs to be seconded by another member in order for it to be decided on by the Conference. This ensures that there is at least one other person who supports the proposal.
 5. Consensus. Love and Rage uses a combination of consensus and voting to make decisions. There is a commitment to sincerely seeking consensus: The facilitator will try to see if the decision can be reached by consensus before she puts it to a vote. She asks for objections to the proposal; if nobody objects the proposal passes. Abstentions are to be recorded. If there are objections the facilitator opens the floor up for discussion on the issue. If there is no clear proposal on the floor or there are a variety of similar proposals, it is the facilitator's job to try to come up with a proposal that everyone can agree on.
 6. Voting. If an issue cannot be resolved by consensus, it is to be voted on after sufficient discussion. When a proposal comes to a vote the proposal itself is repeated and then the facilitator asks for all votes in favor, then all votes against, and then for abstentions. Proposals must be passed by a simple majority (i.e. 50% + 1). Abstentions do not count when tallying votes; only votes for and against do. However, if more people abstain than vote for a passed proposal (or than vote against a failed proposal), the facilitator can ask for a vote on whether to reopen the question.
 7. Limiting discussion. The facilitator or any member may propose to limit discussion to a certain number of speakers for and against a motion in order to keep the meeting moving along. The facilitator or any member may also propose to limit discussion to a certain amount of time or to a certain amount of time per speaker. If there are objections the facilitator should put the proposed limit on discussion to an immediate vote without discussion.
 8. Amending proposals. When a proposal is being discussed a change or amendment to the proposal can be suggested. The facilitator then turns the discussion to the amendment, which must be decided before the proposal itself is decided. A "friendly amendment" is an amendment that is thought to be acceptable to the person who made the initial proposal. This person can either accept or reject the friendly amendment to her proposal. If she accepts it it becomes a part of the original proposal and discussion returns to the proposal at hand. Other amendments may need to be voted against the original proposal if it is not accepted as friendly.
 9. More than one proposal. If there is more than one proposal about the same issue on the floor and the meeting is unable to merge them into a single proposal that can be approved by consensus, the proposals will be voted for or against individually, and not against each other. If two conflicting proposals are voted for by the Conference, they will be voted against each other.
 10. Point of process. A member may interrupt the order of speakers by calling a process point. A point of process is made either when it is believed that the meeting is operating in violation of the By-Laws or when the By-Laws give no clear guidance for handling a situation. The person who raises the process point then either explains what she thinks the correct procedure is or suggests a procedure. The facilitator then either accepts or rejects the suggestion, or puts it to an immediate vote.
 11. Point of personal privilege. A member may interrupt the order of speakers by calling a point of personal privilege. This is a request relating to the conditions of a meeting or to challenge oppressive speech or behavior during the Conference. Privileged or oppressive behavior or speech should always be challenged in a principled, non-confrontational manner.
 12. Requesting a vote. If a member believes that a discussion has gone on too long or that the Conference is ready to make a decision she may request that a vote be taken immediately. Requesting a vote (or "calling the question") means that discussion ends and an attempt is immediately made to reach a decision, either by consensus or by voting. If someone requests a vote the facilitator asks for any objections. If there are, she takes an immediate vote on whether or not to end discussion.
 13. The following procedures may be suspended for the duration of any Conference or for any portion of the Conference by consensus or by a simple majority vote.
 14. Conference procedures will be printed out and a copy given to each voting member. This is the responsibility of the meeting organizers. The facili-

erator will ask if there are any questions about Love and Rage's process and procedure at the onset of every Conference.

V. AMENDMENTS TO THE BY-LAWS

A. Proposing amendments. Opening discussion to propose amendments to the By-Laws for the Love and Rage Federation requires a simple majority vote.

B. Passing amendments. Amendments to the By-Laws must be passed by a simple majority vote. Amendments can only be made at Conferences.

By-laws revised (based on decisions made at the March 1997 Conference) and submitted by Joel Olson, June 2, 1997.

Organizing a Love & Rage Local

(This piece is based on a document written by Rebecca for the 1995 Minneapolis Coordinating Committee. It has been substantially edited and updated to reflect changes in organizational structure and emphasis since that time.)

What do we do to build our organization? How do we do it as anarchists? Why have a local anyway? I'll try to answer these questions and give some suggestions for what concrete things locals can do.

Love and Rage members in various cities are better able to participate in Love and Rage if they had strong, local Love and Rage groups. Instead of seeing these groups as a tiresome obligation or "just one more meeting," we should see them as resources to bring together anarchist work in different locations. This is in many ways how Love and Rage started out: from a desire to coordinate anarchist activism on a larger scale in order to have more political effectiveness.

WHY HAVE A LOCAL ANYWAY? ISN'T IT JUST ONE MORE MEETING TO GO TO?

Love and Rage locals should design themselves as resources for local activism. Each local, because it is composed of members and supporters doing work in different places, will have its own unique character, and should feel free to define Love and Rage (within reason) as it sees fit. Locals can be useful by doing things such as:

1. Serving as a forum for discussion on how to better participate in broad coalitions as revolutionary anarchists. In this way, anarchists don't feel isolated in coalitions with sectarian left groups or with broader liberal organizations.
2. Supporting work of members within local groups in the form of sharing tasks such as posterage, media contacts, etc.
3. Creating a forum for the discussion of anarchist politics in general.
4. Creating a more autonomous and full participation in national federation politics. (For example, local groups can discuss and debate proposals in between conferences)
5. Mobilizing people for local demonstrations
6. Host Love and Rage conferences and Working Group meetings.
7. Support the work and development of anarchist strategy in our three major areas of work: anti-poverty, anti-cop, and anti-fascism.

Love and Rage is most useful for those people who have local groups, because these local groups are connected to relevant local struggles. Instead of participating in Love and Rage primarily as a national organization, members who have strong locals can shape Love and Rage to suit their local needs. For those Love and Ragers who already participate in local anarchist collectives, such a local might seem useless or "superfluous" to your ongoing politics. However, because Love and Rage has a broader membership than an anarchist collective, a local meeting would be a good opportunity to

create strategic dialogue among anarchists doing work in different groups in your area. In addition, because Love and Rage members do not need to be in a collective or member group, but join on their own, a Love and Rage local creates an important space for these individuals to work with other revolutionary Anarchists in a group setting. People who join Love and Rage through the newspaper, or through national offices, need to have a local forum in which to organize with other Love and Rage members in their region, or to attract new members if there isn't anyone else.

HOW DO WE ORGANIZE A LOCAL AND WHAT DO LOCALS DO ONCE THEY'RE FORMED?

Besides the obvious "have political discussion," here are some suggestions for concrete ways to organize local groups.

1. The local can meet as often as you feel is necessary; every other week is the most common.
2. Each Love & Rage local elects a Secretary, who is in charge of calling people and reminding them of meeting location and time, keeping meeting notes, collecting dues, etc.
3. A "newspaper commandante" can take charge of distribution of L&R and AyR. Each local should organize at least one paper sale per issue. Paper sales can be on street corners, at local demos, on campuses, outside workplaces, etc.
4. Potential new members are approved by the local group.
5. Organize fundraising parties, movies, picnics, and other fun, social activities to build a broader revolutionary culture.
6. Meeting Format Suggestions:
 - political discussion on relevant / interesting issues
 - political discussion of working-group strategies that focus on experiences in local groups such as ARA, ABC, SLAM!, Mumia Coalitions, etc.
 - reports from members of FC/CC/PG etc. on important federation business
 - discussion of proposals
 - discussion of business -- paper sales, money, new members, forums, educational events, etc.
 - organizing public forums dealing with current work of local Love and Rage members.

Good forum topics include "Anarchism and women's liberation," "Fighting the far right," "Anarchism and the Mexican Revolution," etc. A good forum to repeat periodically is a general forum on "What is Revolutionary Anarchism?" We have found that forums that include a member of a specific mass organization work particularly well to draw on a broader audience.

If you are not stretched to the max by all this, it makes sense to do follow up on local forums by building study groups with local members and interested people who aren't in L&R (yet!). Building a good mailing list at the forums can also help add to a local base of interest in our politics and strategy.

Creating a local group is the heart of Love and Rage's effort to become better at the basic and essential job of concretely applying our political strategy. Members of a local can initiate or get involved in locally-based mass organizing, collectively sum up our experiences, and develop new strategies and new projects.

Forums can work well as a supplement to mass organizing to improve the quality of our relationships with broader groups that we work with. By having public forums in which we discuss our political perspectives openly and with public debate we engage in constructive, open dialogue with other political activists locally. By providing a public face of anarchist politics within a community debate, we provide an option for those seeking a political direction who would otherwise gravitate towards Leninist groups or more liberal ones for lack of something better -- simply because anarchists are more or less invisible outside their own circles in many communities. (It's true!)

In addition, having a local group with whom to discuss one's actions within mass organizations is more helpful than similar discussions with L&R people outside of the local scene. It's not just the anarchist perspective that's useful, but communication with people who have a knowledge of the history of local politics in your area.

In terms of (inter)national L&R politics, the organization needs to consolidate and strengthen our federative structure, as we have been doing over the past couple years. In 1996-97, we seem to finally be breaking out of being a primarily New York / Minneapolis / Mexico City based organization. There are several new locals that all seem likely to thrive and grow.

Love & Rage, as an organization of activists, can only grow as a vital organization by engaging in ongoing local struggles. From these struggles we will recruit new members who also share a commitment to mass organizing, and not just to anarchist ideals in the abstract. Locals should be able to sustain themselves by bringing new people from their own areas into Love and Rage by making Love and Rage into a powerful and useful element in local politics in every part of the country where L&R members live. This is ambitious but it is the only way forward. So, I hope I have convinced you of the necessity, usefulness and do-ability of locals. I'm sure there are other things to do that you will come up with. Please do!★

Expectations of Membership

Love and Rage has two types of involvement: Member and Supporter. There are seven expectations of Members:

- (1) General agreement with our politics
- (2) Participate in or attempt to build a Love and Rage local
- (3) Participate in mass organizing
- (4) Take part in internal political discussions
- (5) Study of politics, history and theory
- (6) Pay dues regularly
- (7) Distribute and sell Love & Rage literature.

While nobody will be kicked out of the group for not keeping up with all of these all the time, these are the things we are committed to developing

as regular practice among our members. They are a statement of the type of organization we are working toward. People who, for whatever reason, can't or won't fulfill these things can join Love and Rage at the Supporter level. Supporters can come to meetings, participate in internal debate, and work on projects of the organization, but do not have votes at the continental conferences.

To become a member or a supporter of the organization, you need to be endorsed by two current members. If you are interested in joining but don't know two members, write the Federation Office or your local group and we can help you out. The New York local has a more detailed process for bringing in new members. If you are in the New York City area and are interested in joining, contact us for more information.

Dues Chart for Members

Love and Rage members are expected to pay regular dues to support the organization. These dues are in addition to the money you lay out for the political work of the local and any mass work. Dues checks should be sent to the L&R office at 2441 Lyndale Ave S., Minneapolis, MN 55405 Checks should be made out to Love and Rage or, if you want the tax deduction, the Aspect Foundation.

To calculate your monthly dues you first need to know your monthly income after taxes. If you know your annual income just divide it by 12 to get your monthly income. If you know your weekly income multiply it by 4.3 (not 4). Then just check your monthly income in the following table to determine your monthly dues. To assist the Federation Office in its record keeping, please fill out the form at the bottom of this page and send it in with your dues. The Federation Office will send out dues notices but it is your responsibility to keep your payments current.

In addition to monthly dues members are expected to pay an annual communications fee of \$40 to cover the costs of a subscription to the newspaper and the copying and mailing costs of the Federation Bulletin.

| MONTHLY INCOME | MONTHLY DUES | | |
|----------------|--------------|--|-------|
| under \$500 | \$5 | \$2601 to 2700 | \$108 |
| \$501 to 600 | \$6 | \$2701 to 2800 | \$112 |
| \$601 to 700 | \$7 | \$2801 to 2900 | \$116 |
| \$701 to 800 | \$8 | \$2901 to 3000 | \$120 |
| \$801 to 900 | \$9 | \$3001 to 3100 | \$124 |
| \$901 to 1000 | \$10 | \$3101 to 3200 | \$160 |
| \$1001 to 1100 | \$22 | \$3201 to 3300 | \$165 |
| \$1101 to 1200 | \$24 | \$3301 to 3400 | \$170 |
| \$1201 to 1300 | \$26 | \$3401 to 3500 | \$175 |
| \$1301 to 1400 | \$28 | \$3501 to 3600 | \$180 |
| \$1401 to 1500 | \$30 | \$3601 to 3700 | \$222 |
| \$1501 to 1600 | \$32 | for each \$100 above \$3700 per month income add \$6 to your dues. | |
| \$1601 to 1700 | \$34 | | |
| \$1701 to 1800 | \$36 | | |
| \$1801 to 1900 | \$57 | | |
| \$1901 to 2000 | \$60 | | |
| \$2001 to 2100 | \$63 | | |
| \$2101 to 2200 | \$66 | | |
| \$2201 to 2300 | \$69 | | |
| \$2301 to 2400 | \$72 | | |
| \$2401 to 2500 | \$75 | | |
| \$2501 to 2600 | \$104 | | |