

SWITCHBOARD

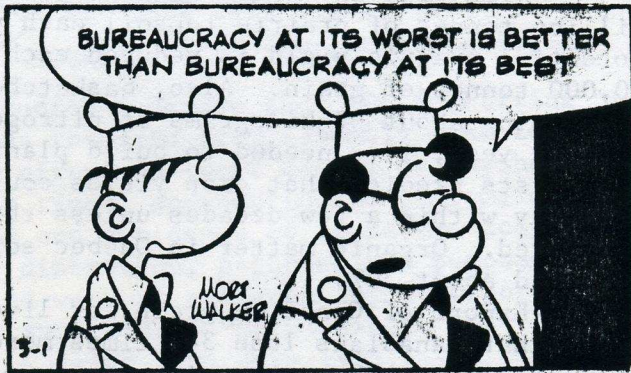
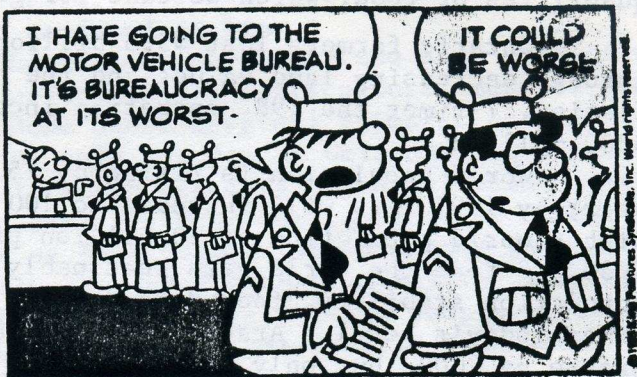
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COMMUNITY SWITCHBOARD
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FREE

one block north of Queen, one block east of Bathurst
open Tues-Sat, noon to 6

Community Switchboard offers a forum and research facilities to those concerned with analyzing the need for basic social change and establishing an alternative social system, economically and ecologically sound, whose principles of small-scale technology, self and co-operative employment and human scaled social units will contrast with those of the corporate state. Anyone who shares this goal is invited to contact the Switchboard.



In a previous issue, we lamented the low number of Toronto outlets at which Utne Reader, a compilation of articles and excerpts from the alternative press, is available. In the last month this situation has improved somewhat; it's still not at very many book or magazine stands (Book City being an exception) but a number of natural foods stores are now carrying it. One good thing Utne does is to bring together material on the same subject from different publications.

Issue #13, now on sale, contains blocks of articles on South Africa, women entertainers, the growing water shortage, illiteracy in North America and Bruce Springsteen. There are also single articles on such topics as Christmas customs, trans-

cedental meditation, vegetarianism and the new underground press, as well as shorter pieces on a wider variety of topics.

The illiteracy section, which one out of three Americans can't read, includes a chilling suggestion from Kevin J. Kelley in the Guardian: "Why is government so indifferent to the fact that 45% of the country's adults do not read a daily newspaper and that the U.S. ranks 24th internationally in books published per capita? Perhaps it has something to do with the presumed high correlation between reading competence and political participation. It also seems likely that people who cannot comprehend critical writings are most susceptible to the sort of visual manipulation that now characterizes most electoral campaigns."

CANADIAN FOOD PRODUCTION THREATENED

The Agricultural Institute of Canada, a national organization of professionals involved with all aspects of agriculture and food, hired Garry Lawrence Fairbairn to write a book about the future of agriculture in Canada. The book, *Will the Bounty End?*, (Western Producer Prairie Books, 1984; available at some Toronto Public Libraries) reveals some alarming facts about Canada's future ability to produce large quantities of food, which we take for granted:

-Ontario farmers lost \$5.5 billion in 1982 through decreasing land values and the effect of inflation, 7 times the 1982 operating income of about \$800 million.

-World population is rising by 75 million a year; by 1990 this will increase to 100 million, with a world population of 10 billion projected by 2030. Before the world gets reasonably close to population stability, food demand could be three times today's level. Arable land will also increase by 2000, but only by 4%.

-With wind and water erosion taking about 200 million tonnes of prairie topsoil each year, the potential prairie yield is reduced each year by over 70,000 tonnes of grain. Also, Saskatchewan farms are losing about 47 kilograms of nitrogen per hectare per year; it's needed to build plant protein. Scientists predict that crop yields could drop markedly within a few decades unless this depletion is halted. Organic matter in Quebec soils has declined about 30%.

-Export of Canadian grain for livestock feed means that Canadians lose 3-4 times more nutrients than people in other countries get from the meat they produce from that grain.

-Erosion costs Ontario close to \$90 million annually, with slightly less than half that loss being suffered directly by farms in the form of lost production, lost fertilizer and higher energy costs.

-45,000 people in the USA require medical treatment each year from pesticide poisoning; in 1974 it caused 52 deaths and 150 suicides. The USA uses over 450,000 tonnes of pesticides each year, of which only about 1% hit the target

organisms in 1965; the rest hits something else. Over 350 species of insects are resistant to one or more insecticides. Canada is reducing the pest control research it undertakes.

-Nearly half Canada's best farmland lies within a two-hour drive of downtown Toronto. In the last quarter century, half the Niagara fruit belt's area in peaches and fruit trees has been lost although this area produces over half Canada's fruit crops.

-In 1982 Canada imported nearly \$5 billion worth of food, feed, beverages and tobacco although much of it could be produced at home.

-The gradual cooling trend some predict would be disastrous to Canadian agriculture, much of which is already done under marginal climatic conditions. A reduction of only one degree Celsius in average temperatures would slash Canada's potential wheat level by a third, cereal grain production land by a half. A rise of three or four degrees would expose part of Canada, especially PEI, to danger from melting ice-caps & floods.

-Currently half a billion people suffer from hunger and 10,000 die in the Third World each week. There are presently 1.2 cultivated acres for each person in the world, but by 2,000 this figure will decline to 0.5%.

WORKERS UNDER PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESS

Studies indicate that the dekillling of workers which has resulted from assembly line techniques has a crucial effect on their mental or psychological state at other times, engendering pessimism, depression, fatalism and avoidance of sparetime activities that require discretion, planning and purposeful action. Unskilled workers and unemployed workers are both prone to this syndrome of "helplessness" or "hopelessness." (Canadian Forum June/July 1985.)

STATE'S SOLUTION: ELECTRIC SHOCKS

What can those who succumb to mental disorders brought about by powerlessness expect? About 5,000 people are subjected to electric shock therapy each year; it's often involuntary and kills one of every thousand victims. Shock's alleged safety and effectiveness have never been proven though it's known to reduce IQ and creative potential. It's a great way for the state to get rid of non-conformists. (Goodwings Spring 1985)

Sources: Libertarian Workers Bulletin, PO Box 0, Parkville 3052, Melbourne
 Australia; Anarchy, PO Box 380, Columbia MD USA 65205.

Australia: Plans are underway for an Anarchist Centenary Celebration May 1-4. May 1 marks the centenary of anarchism in Australia, the first action having been a Mayday gathering held in conjunction with one in Chicago growing out of the Haymarket judicial murders. The centenary observance may also be hooked to a similar one planned in Chicago. Information: Australian Anarchist Centenary Celebration Committee, PO Box 20, Parkville 3052 Melbourne Australia.

Korea: The Korean Anarchist movement, which has a long history virtually unknown outside Korea, is reorganizing and regrouping. State repression makes it impossible for them to publish a contact address, but they want contact with movements elsewhere and may be reached via CIRA-Korea, co PO Box 20, Parkville 3052, Melbourne Australia.

Poland: Anarchists in France have taken up the case of two anti-authoritarian Polish activists, Tomasz Lupanow and Robert Chechlacz, sentenced to 25 and 13 years' imprisonment for activities against the state in 1982. Information: Les Amis de Robert et Tomek, BP4-93301, Aubervilliers Cedex, France.

Greece: Police fired into a crowd of anarchists demonstrating on the anniversary of the student occupation of the Athens Polytechnic University 17-11-73 which led to the collapse of the U.S.-supported military dictatorship. A 15-year-old was killed, and 200 people responded by occupying the Athens Polytechnic chemistry building until evicted with teargas. Demonstrations, occupations and some rioting in solidarity occurred in other Greek cities, and a non-anarchist group blew up a police van November 28 killing two cops and injuring 21. Papandreou refused to accept resignations of the Interior Minister (responsible for public order) and his assistant.

Japan: Fifty years after the last anarcho-syndicalist unions disappeared in Japan, attempts to re-organized have begun on a national scale. With an average age of 20-40, the organizers of the newly-reorganized Japanese section of the anarcho-syndicalist International Workers Association have little direct experience with functioning anarcho-syndicalist unions, but a good theoretical grounding; reconstruction is still in an early stage.

Italy: An active anarchist movement here is spearheaded by the legally organized Italian Anarchist Federation, and includes documentation centres in many cities.

ANY VICTIM WILL DO IN CANADA'S PRISONS

From: One Indian's as Good as Another"
 by Ruth Morris, Canadian Dimension Dec 1985:

A few years ago I asked a friend: "Where is Bill S?" Bill was a native friend of ours, and I hadn't seen him for awhile. She laughed and replied, "Oh, he's serving time for his brother this week."

"What!" I exclaimed "You can't do that-what do you mean?" "Oh, that's just the way the native people are," she explained. "When they have anything they share it, and when they don't they expect others will give. It's a very caring way of life. In this case, Bill's brother was up for another liquor charge, and with his record he would certainly get time, but his wife was expecting a baby. So Bill offered to serve the time for him. Bill went to court, pled guilty and is serving the time for his brother in jail now." Honest, that's what she said, and that's what happened.

When I expressed wonder that the justice system didn't check appearance and fingerprints, and object to this exchange, she said:

"Oh, what do they care? One Indian's the same as any other to them." The two halves of this story express the saga of native people and our justice system. On the one hand, native people express such a level of community caring that they will even go to prison for each other; on the other, a system of justice grinds Indians through its ravenous jaws so systematically and impersonally that it doesn't even notice the substitution of one brother for another, so long as it can digest another Indian.

Editor's comment: The article goes on to discuss statistics showing that native people in Ontario are 3 to 15 times as likely as others (depending on age and sex) to go to jail. One wonders whether it is just native people whose presence in jail the courts regard as interchangeable, or whether it doesn't really matter to them who is jailed and who isn't so long as enough people are sent to jail to keep the prison industry growing. Certainly the wide fluctuation in sentencing for similar offences gives rise to such suspicion.

Saturday January 25: Protest latest Cruise test at Tory headquarters, 121 Richmond St. W.

ACT presentations at 139 Robert St. (at Harbord):

Friday 24th 7 p.m. East-West Dialogue in Europe. Free

Sat 25th 9 pm-David Prentice & Bill Smith perform. \$4

Sunday January 26-film and talk on nuclear disarmament, public library Bloor at Gladstone. 2 p.m.