

IAS Update ..... 2  
Radical Theory, Academia & the IAS ... 3  
(Please note our new address)

## The Need for Critique, the Need for Politics: An Interview with Barbara Epstein

The nonviolent, anti-nuclear movements of the 1970's and 80's inspired thousands of people to radical, leftist political action with the vision of an ecologically balanced, egalitarian society.

Barbara Epstein, in her book *Political Protest and Cultural Revolution*, explores the successes and failures of these movements as a theorist and an activist participant, paying considerable attention to the role of anarchism. While the book focuses on two groups, the Clamshell Alliance of New England and the Abalone Alliance of California, Epstein has also worked to elaborate a broader radical critique and theory of social movements.<sup>1</sup> In particular, she has also written extensively on post-structuralism's inadequacy for a radical politics.

I interviewed Epstein by e-mail in the summer of 1998. ~ Rebecca DeWitt

*In Political Protest and Cultural Revolution you analyze the direct action movements of the 70's and 80's as a significant chapter in radical history. You state that it is important to engage a movement from the inside in order to truly understand the meaning of its actions. Why is this important?*

I think that one always learns more about a movement by studying it from the inside. "Inside" can mean various things. Actual participation is best, but is not possible if one is studying a movement of the past or one from which one is excluded, or which one has no sympathy for, etc. But in all cases the more one can come to understand the inner logic of the movement, to be able to think the way people in that movement think or thought, the better one's account is

likely to be although one has to maintain some degree of distance, and the capacity for criticism. When I wrote this book *I thought that the movement* I was studying would be the beginning of a new surge of progressive movements. I was wrong. Instead we are in a period in which progressive movements are on the whole in decline. Under these circumstances I think it is especially important for those who study, teach or write about social movements to try to get inside their skins, so to speak. Otherwise the study of social movements is likely to become one more academic sub-field, of little help to the movements themselves, either in terms of the analysis that is made or in terms of the likelihood of students in the field themselves becoming involved in progressive social movements.

*The cohesiveness of theory and praxis is an historical stumbling block for radical, utopian movements. The Abalone Alliance and the Clamshell Alliance, in many ways, collapsed over conflicts between political efficacy (leadership, strategy and decision-making processes) and principles. Did their utopian principles inhibit their ability to be politically effective?*

I think that movements need utopian principles. The question is how a movement can sustain those principles and at the same time act effectively in the world, which often requires suspending one's values to some degree. To give an obvious example, consensus process is sometimes too slow for decision-making, especially in a crisis. Working with more bureaucratic organizations often requires accepting

... continued on page 6

### IAS GRANT AWARDS

The IAS annually awards \$6000 in grants to writers whose work is important to the anarchist critique of domination, exhibit a clear financial need, and whose piece is likely to be widely distributed. On June 13, 1998 the IAS Board of Directors awarded grants to the following individuals:

\$1000 to Joe Lowndes for his piece, *Anarchism and the Rise of Rightwing Anti-statism*. This work will analyze the emergence of anti-government politics on the American right, contrast this with the current

failure of the anarchist left to construct and convey a viable anti-statist politics, and discuss the centrality of race to both. It will explore the historic connection between decentralism and racial domination in American political culture in order to advance an anarchist politics that can express an anti-statist populism delinked from discourses of racial domination. Lowndes lives in Brooklyn, New York.

\$900 to Patricia Greene for *Federica Montseny: The Woman and the Ideal/La Mujer y El Ideal*. This

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## PERSPECTIVES ON ANARCHIST THEORY

Fall 1998, Vol. 2, No. 2

Newsletter of the Institute for  
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**Grammatical Specialists:** Lex  
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## Institute for Anarchist Studies Update

A lot has happened at the Institute for Anarchist Studies (IAS) since the last issue of *Perspectives*. In addition to awarding grants, publishing this newsletter, and raising money for anarchist scholarship, we have also transformed the organization in important ways designed to enhance our ability to support the development of anti-authoritarian social criticism.

We've made two significant internal changes. First, we have moved the IAS from Albany, New York to New York City - from the alleged to the real capital of New York State. This is an exciting step for us, as it will enable the IAS to draw upon a larger community of radicals - both to give and receive support - and to utilize the many resources available to non-profit organizations (like the IAS) in New York City. Second, the IAS board of directors recently voted to expand its members by one: welcoming Rebecca DeWitt to our already diverse and talented board. Rebecca, who has worked as the IAS coordinator and co-editor of *Perspectives* for the previous two years, enriches the board with her sharp theoretical mind and years of experience in anti-authoritarian publishing, activism, and educational projects.

We have also changed IAS grant policies in two important ways. First, the IAS board decided to make IAS grants available to projects written in languages other than English (although applications must still be submitted in English). Second, we have changed the way the IAS pays out grant awards. Now, in cases where a grant amount exceeds \$500, we will no longer send the entire sum to a grant recipient immediately after the grant is awarded. We will now pay only 75 percent of a total grant at the time the award is made and will send the remaining 25 percent upon the completion of the supported project. Although we recognize that potential grant recipients will probably not welcome this change, we felt that this is an important way to ensure accountability among IAS supported writers.

In addition to refining the IAS as an organization we have also continued to provide real support to radical authors. In June of this year we awarded \$3000 to another fine group of writers whose projects will expand our understanding of the anarchist tradition and bring this tradition to bear on issues of vital, contemporary importance (see page 1). It has also been our pleasure to watch previous IAS grant recipients bring their projects to fruition (see page 3).

Fundraising is naturally one of the most important parts of the IAS's ongoing work and we are pres-

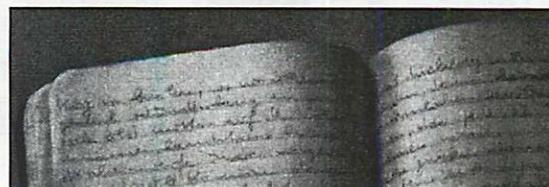
ently in the midst of the IAS's 1998 fundraising campaign. Specifically, the IAS must raise \$9200 by January 1999 to award another \$6000 in grants, publish two issues of *Perspectives*, and - by placing 15 percent of every donation in the IAS endowment - make sure there will be resources available to the next generation of dissenting, utopian authors. It is important to point out that our 1998 fundraising goal is \$700 more than our 1997 goal: this change does not reflect an increase in expenses but rather our pledge to increase the amount of each donation placed in the endowment from 10 to 15 percent.

It is the generous donations made by groups and individuals around the world that enables us to continue giving grants to radical writers, publishing this newsletter, and planning for the future by building the IAS endowment. You will find a list of those who have pledged or made a contribution to the IAS's 1998 fundraising campaign on page 11 and - if you are not among those listed - please join our 1998 supporters by making a donation to the IAS. Contributions are tax deductible for US citizens and, thanks to Perennial Books of Conway, Massachusetts, we offer an exceptional selection of books in exchange for any contribution of \$25 or more (see page 11). This will also entitle you to a 15 percent discount on any item in Perennial's remarkable catalogue.

Our work at the IAS requires a steadfast commitment to encouraging the development of radical social criticism and a willingness to revise our strategies when the need becomes apparent. This is exactly what we have done over the last six months and I am proud of our accomplishments. However, our efforts are ultimately driven by a desire to contribute to a much larger project of social transformation and I think it is fair to say that the IAS has made a modest but important contribution to this project in its two years of existence. We hope to offer even more in the future and look forward to continuing the fight.

~ Chuck Morse

Note: The IAS's first intern, Troy Alexander Williams of the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, was invaluable to the IAS's day-to-day work in the spring of 1998.



## Radical Theory, Academia and the IAS

by Michelle Matisons

*Radicals suffer when forced to choose between a task-oriented activist culture and an academic milieu that is with filled ideas but empty of politics. Michelle Matisons helps us explore some of the issues we must confront while building an alternative to these false choices.*

When I was asked to write on the topic of "the academicization of radical theory" my first thought was that this issue has recently become a standard preoccupation among progressive academics. They are now expected to show concern about academia's effect on theory - otherwise known as the theory/practice problem - and typically sprinkle self-conscious, ironic remarks about the inaccessibility of their ideas before they inchoately present these still inaccessible ideas.

But is there a unique perspective that anarchists can bring to this topic? Since so much theory is produced within the university system today, it is important for anarchists to gain clarity on the repercussions of this development. Although I have no absolute answers to these questions, I will draw upon my experience as a conflicted doctoral student in one of the US's first Women's Studies/Feminist Theory Ph.D. programs and offer some thoughts on the inadequate progressive solutions to the "academicization of radical theory" problem.

### Academic Feminism and Accessibility

The relatively recent inauguration of academic departments and programs inspired by social movements - Women's Studies, Race/Ethnic Studies, Gay/

Lesbian/Queer Studies - provides a unique opportunity to analyze and criticize how academicization transforms politics and ideas that emerged in the context of a movement. In fact, an interesting debate about academic co-optation and accessibility occurred during the second wave US feminist movement. One feminist theorist, Patrice McDermott, documents this debate in her book, *Politics and Scholarship: Feminist Academic Journals and the Production of Knowledge*. McDermott chronicles the birth of three prominent academic journals - *Signs*, *Frontiers*, and *Feminist Studies* - and their struggles around specialization, professionalization, and the community/academy split. In the late 1970's and early 80's, many feminists argued that the new infatuation with the French feminists, who are influenced in varying degrees by Jacques Lacan, Jacques Derrida, Louis Althusser, and Michel Foucault, would alienate the journals and theorists from a broader readership and a debate emerged concerning the issues of accessibility in all three of the above mentioned journals. *Signs* was the most open to the new theory, which McDermott attributes to its international connections. *Feminist Studies* gradually warmed up to it and *Frontiers*, the most non-academic of the three journals, blatantly opposed its exclusivity. Kathi George, one of the founding editors of *Frontiers*, summarizes the journal's position on the new theory: "Unless it is done brilliantly, it represents the worst tendencies in academic feminism - the stuff that is so arcane, so abstract, so self-absorbed - we viewed it very critically."

In my program and beyond, I have encountered many vaguely defined progressive academics who pretend to be concerned about the insularity of academic

*continued on page 9 ...*

### Recommended Reading

We asked Anthony D'Agostino, author of *Marxism and the Russian Anarchists* (San Francisco: Germinal Press, 1977), to tell us about his favorite critical analysis of Marxism. He writes: "I see anarchism and Marxism developing at around the same time from the same roots in the ideas of the Enlightenment and French Revolution, and I see their interaction as the key feature of the Russian and Spanish Revolutions. The Anarchist critique has a kind of class analysis that I think is scientifically interesting. Bakunin warned that Marxism in power would create, not the emancipation of labor, but a regime of state functionaries and engineers, actually the rule of scientific intellect. Excerpts of his writings on this

may be found in Sam Dolgoff, *Bakunin on Anarchy* (Montreal: Black Rose, 1980). These are the clearest and fullest in English translation. The best biographies are those of Max Nettlau, the 'Herodotus of Anarchism' and Yuri Steklov, who called Bakunin "the founder of the idea of Soviet power!"

"Jan Waclaw Machajski, in his ambitious theoretical study of 1906, *The Intellectual Worker*, which has never been translated from the Russian, took Bakunin's idea several steps further. Education itself was akin to capital in that its ownership permitted a class existence at the expense of the proletariat. The Intelligentsia, that is, the whole class comprised of white collar workers, professionals, civil servants,

*continued on page 10 ...*

### IAS GRANT UPDATES

Paul Fleckenstein has completed and will publish his piece in the Burlington, VT, based magazine *05401* as two articles in the September issue. They are titled: "Most Livable Carnival" and "Felines, Felons, Foe: Who Decides Which Way This Town Will Go?" He was awarded \$500 in January 1997 for these pieces (which were initially titled) "Civic Space and the Anarchist Dream."

Matt Hern and Stuart Chaulk have completed four chapters and the introduction for their book *The Myth of the Internet: Private Isolation and Local Community*. The introduction appeared in the *Journal of Family Life* and another piece from their book is coming out in the next issue of *Growing Without Schooling*. They were awarded \$1200 in January 1998.

Zoe Erwin and Brian Tokar have collected a third of the submissions for their anthology *Engineering Life: A People's Guide to Biotechnology* and have begun the editing process while also searching for a publisher. They were awarded \$1000 in June 1997.

Murray Bookchin's work on the Spanish anarchists will appear in Volume 3 of the *Third Revolution* (anticipated publication date: 1999). He was awarded \$1000 in January 1997 for the second volume of his *Spanish Anarchists*.

Allan Antiff is finishing his book, *The Culture of Revolt: Art and Anarchy in America*. A

*continued on page 10 ...*

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28021 Madrid, Spain  
Web: <http://www.ecn.org/a.reus/cntreus/fal/index.html>

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D-14427 Potsdam, Germany

Los Libros de la Catarata.  
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28933 Móstoles  
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Rivista Anarchica  
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Tidsskrift  
Kooperativet NISUS Forlag  
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## What's Happening: Books & Events

Few have done more to illustrate the systematic cruelties of the contemporary political-economic order than Noam Chomsky and readers will find another addition to his voluminous work on the subject in his new book, *Profit Over People: Neoliberalism and the Global Order* (288 pages, Seven Stories, October 1998. Orders: (800) 596-7437). This collection of essays examines the divide between proclaimed and actual political-economic principles, tracing the origins of neoliberalism from Adam Smith to the epoch of Clintonism. Chomsky enthusiasts will also want to read Robert Barsky's new biography, *Noam Chomsky: A Life of Dissent* (256 pages, MIT, 1998).

Murray Bookchin - another anchor of the late twentieth century left - continues his indefatigable efforts. His new work, *Anarchism, Marxism, and the Future of the Left; Essays and Interviews: 1993-1998*, sketches the theoretical dimensions of a radical politics able to confront contemporary conditions while preserving the best of the classical revolutionary tradition. This book (400 pages, AK Press, November 1998) contains recent but hard-to-find essays as well as interviews with Bookchin by Doug Morris and Janet Biehl. Spanish readers will be glad to know that Bookchin's *History, Civilization, and Progress* has recently been released in translation by Madre Tierra publications.

A less contemporary but still valuable exposition of anarchist theory appears with the publication of Camillo Berneri's *Humanismo y Anarquismo*. Berneri, father of Marie Louise Berneri (*Journey Through Utopia*), was a devoted theorist and activist murdered by Communists on a Barcelona street during the Spanish Revolution (160 pages, Los Libros de la Catarata, 1998).

There is continued progress in efforts to theorize late twentieth century radical social movements. George

Katsiaficas's *Subversion Of Politics: European Autonomous Social Movements and the Decolonization of Everyday Life* (285 pages, Humanities Press, 1997) makes a valuable contribution. This work, a sequel to his *Imagination of the New Left*, explores direct action social movements in Italy, Germany, Holland, Switzerland, and Denmark from 1968 to 1996. It examines autonomous feminist movements, the effect of squatters and feminists on the disarmament movement, and anti-fascist challenges to the neo-Nazi upsurge. Also, worthy of note is *ZAPATISTA! Reinventing Revolution in Mexico*, edited by John Holloway and Eloina Pelaez (Pluto Press, September 1998). This anthology aims to demonstrate that the Zapatista uprising raises new questions about the meaning of revolution and political action. It includes essays such as "History and Symbolism in the Zapatista Movement," "Chiapas and the Global Restructuring of Capital," and "Zapatista Indigenous Women." Readers may also be interested in *The Chiapas Rebellion: The Struggle for Land and Democracy* by Neil Harvey (Duke University, October 1998).



Bookchin in Venice, 1984\*

Historical treatments of the classical revolutionary era acquire greater depth every year, and the recent publication of volume two of Murray Bookchin's *Third Revolution: Popular*

*Movements in the Revolutionary Era* (a three volume series) marks an important event in the maturation of this literature. Volume two analyzes the course of revolutionary movements in Western Europe from 1820 to 1914 (1998, Cassells, £59.95 hardcover, a £17.20 paperback will be available in January 1999). A much smaller but still valuable contribution appears in *El Anarquismo de Ayer y Hoy de la 1ª Internacional a la Akitud Punk* by O. Escribano, one of the first books to trace developments in anarchism from the First International to the end of this century (65 pages, Desalabrando, 1998. Address: CC 18 Cod. Ptal. 1871, Buenos Aires, Argentina).

General studies of revolutionary history find their complement in works that detail the more localized traditions and uprisings of which it is composed. The literature on Spanish anarchism, as one example,

## IAS on the WEB

- ← IAS Publications
- ← Grant Application
- ← Helpful Links

<http://home.newyorknet.net/ias/Default.htm>

\* Photo from Marianne Enckell et al., *Another Venice: Images of an International Anarchist Meeting* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1986)

continues to grow, although naturally most of this work is done in Spanish. Julián Casanova has produced an overview of one period in Spanish anarchism with *De la Calle al frente: el Anarcosindicalismo en España: 1931-1939* (272 pages, Crítica, 1997) whereas Ángel Olmedo Alonso has written a more specific work on the journal of the Friends of Durruti Group: *El Anarquismo Extremeño frente al Poder: Estudio de un Periódico Libertario 'El Amigo del Pueblo', Azuaga 1930-1933* (225 pages, Institución Cultural 'El Brocense,' 1997). Readers may also enjoy the new Spanish publication of the documentary novel by Hans Magnus Enzensberger, *El Corto Verano de la Anarquía: Vida Y Muerte de Durruti* (Editorial Anagrama, 1998).

The truly global, inter-continental character of the classical anarchist movement is increasingly being represented in the historical literature. We can learn more about the history of anarchism in Japan with Helene Bowen Raddeker's *Treacherous Women Of Imperial Japan: Patriarchal Fictions, Patricidal Fantasies* (272 pages, Routledge, 1998). This work examines the life and writings of Kanno Suga and Kaneko Fumika, two anarchists convicted of attempting to assassinate the Japanese emperor (in 1910 and 1926, respectively). Likewise, Edward Krebs's *Shifu, Soul of Chinese Anarchism* (352 pages, Rowman & Littlefield, October 1998) adds new depth to the study of anarchism in China. This intellectual biography examines the life and political milieu of one of the most important figures in the early history of Chinese anarchism. Also, the anarchist movement in Argentina – one of the largest in anarchism's classical era – is explored in Antonio López's new book on the Federación Obrera Regional Argentina: *La FORA en el Movimiento Obrero* (222 pages, 1998, Antonio Lopez's - Tupac Ediciones, CC 18 Cod. Ptal. 1871, Buenos Aires, Argentina). Finally, the Kate Sharpley Library will add another pamphlet to its exceptional collection with the release of *Ned Kelly's Ghost* by John Patten, a work about the IWW in Australia (£1 from the Kate Sharpley Library).

The long history of Jewish radicalism finds expression in a number of new works. Peter Glassgold has written an enjoyable novel, *The Angel Max* (Harcourt Brace, 1998), that chronicles the lives of several Russian-Jewish immigrants and anarchists in New York during the first several decades of this century. Kropotkin, Goldman, Berkman, and other familiar figures make appearances. This period is also the subject of Steven Cassedy's (non-fiction) *To the Other Shore: The Russian Jewish Intellectuals Who Came to America* (Princeton University, 1997). Finally, in cooperation with the Anarchist Archives Project, the Kate Sharpley Library has just published

the *Yiddish Anarchist Bibliography* (edited by John Patten). At 32 8" x 11" pages, this bibliography is the most comprehensive source on this topic to date (\$12 from the Anarchist Archives Project (postage included, make checks payable to Jerry Kaplan) and £7.50p from the Kate Sharpley Library).

The complicated relationship between anarchism and art is the subject of several new works. Paul Smith's *Seurat and the Avant-garde* (Yale University, 1997) studies the post-Impressionist painter Georges Seurat and offers a critical view of his relationship to anarchism. Readers of German may enjoy Raimund Schäffner's *Anarchismus und Literatur in England* (1997, Carl Winter), as Spanish readers may enjoy Sonya Torres Planells's *Ramón Acín (1888-1936): una Estética Anarquista y de Vanguardia* (Editorial Virus, 1998). Acín was a Spanish sculptor, painter, and cartoonist as well as an active member of the CNT. He was murdered by fascists in 1936 at the beginning of the Spanish social revolution.

Without boasting too much, we want to note that our interview with Janet Biehl in the last issue of *Perspectives* (spring 1998) has been translated and published in three languages. An Italian translation (by Guido Lagomarsino) was published in *Rivista Anarchica* (anno 28, n. 6), a Dutch translation (by Johny Lenaerts) was published in *VerZ* (No. 10, 1998), and a Norwegian translation (by Eirik Eigliad) was published in *Tidsskrift* (May 1998, No 8).

Two important projects need your support: *Social Anarchism*, a central forum for the discussion of anarchist ideas since 1980, is suffering financial burdens caused by the loss of thousands of dollars after the collapse of Fine Print distributors and continual increases in printing costs. They must raise \$2000 by mid-November to publish their next issue. Please show your support by sending a contribution to Social Anarchism at 2743 Maryland Avenue, Baltimore, MD, 21218 - USA. South End Press, an anchor of US progressive publishing for more than 20 years, also needs assistance. The cruel success of bookselling chains has made it harder and harder for South End to make ends meet and they must raise \$20,000 by 1999. They have already raised a considerable sum but are still short of their goal. Please help them fight the chain store massacres by sending a donation to the South End Press at 7 Brookline Street, #1, Cambridge, MA, 02139.

**Correction:** The last issue of *Perspectives* contained the incorrect address for the Fundación Alumbrar (Argentine anarchist filmmakers). The correct address is: Fundación Alumbrar, Santiago del Estero 264 - Piso 5 (1075) Buenos Aires, Argentina

## ANARCHIST MEMOIRS

Two new books underscore the vital connection between anarchist history and anarchist memoirs. The recent publication of Rudolf Berner's (alias Frank Tireur) *Die Unsichtbare Front: Bericht Über Die Illegale Arbeit In Deutschland* (1937) (translation: *The Invisible Front: A Report from the Underground Activists in Germany (1937)*) helps us understand a long-overlooked dimension of anarchist history. In 1937, Rudolf Berner, a Swedish anarchist, traveled in disguise as a tourist from revolutionary Spain on a "secret mission" to establish clandestine contacts between German anarcho-syndicalists in exile and the anarcho-syndicalist underground in Germany. In this story of his journey Berner describes the resistance of German anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists to the Nazi regime. He conveys a vivid impression of the extreme life situations and the fears and hopes of a small but important section of the German resistance (160 Pages, Libertad Verlag Berlin/Köln 1997, Hardcover: DM 32,00). Ana Delso's new memoirs, *Trescientos Hombres y Yo: Estampa de una Revolución* (translation: *Three Hundred Men and I: Picture of A Revolution*) adds to existing literature on the travails faced by exiled Spanish anarchists. It is one of the few accounts of this period written by a woman. This book, which includes a preface by Martha Ackelsberg, is published by Madrid's Fundación de Estudios Libertarios 'Anselmo Lorenzo' (1998, 157 pages).

## BARBARA EPSTEIN: A POLITICAL LIFE

Raised in the radical, Jewish culture of New York and educated in progressive schools of the 1950's, the left has always been an important part of Barbara Epstein's life.

She became truly political in the 9th grade while writing an assignment on the 1958 gubernatorial elections that required her to interview Republicans, Democrats, and Socialists, during which she confronted the Republicans with the idea that Socialism seemed better than Capitalism. Rebuffed by the Republicans, she joined a socialist study group and spent the year interviewing leftists and reading Marxist works.

She joined the student chapter of SANE (Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy) and eventually became chair of high school SANE. Conflict emerged within SANE as adult members pushed an anti-Communist pledge against which students held out for four years. Epstein, on principle, refused to say whether she was a Communist or not despite the reaction within SANE. She left high school feeling that the anti-Communists were destroying the movement and joined the Communist Party in college.

Continuing her education at Radcliff and UC Berkely, and having left the Communist Party, she found political momentum in the emerging peace movement. She currently teaches in the History of Consciousness program at UC Santa Cruz and counts among her influences many "red-diaper baby" high school friends and teachers and the peace movement.

## The Need for Critique, the Need for Politics:

... Epstein continued from cover

their internal hierarchies. The question is always what can be compromised, and what cannot. Activists in the direct action movement too often failed to think about this, and tended to regard any compromise as unacceptable. I think this was one reason for the movement's short life.

*Since the 70's and 80's, feminism seems to have lost its radical edge. Do you feel that there has been a loss of radicalism and how do you think feminism can recapture its revolutionary role?*

I agree that feminism has lost its radical edge. I think that this is partly one example of the decline in radical movements generally, and partly the result of so many feminists going into academia, where academic values tend to take over, even among those who are ostensibly radical. Any mass radical movement of the future will have to be feminist in the sense that women will have to make up at least 50% of its constituency and it will have to regard equality between women and men in all spheres of life as a major objective. Whether feminism will play the kind of radicalizing role in a movement of the future that it played in the direct action movement I do not know. It may be that some other question, or issue, will play that role instead. One of the problems of the radical feminism of the late 60's and early 70's was that it was based so much on the experience and outlook of a very homogeneous (and relatively privileged) group of women: young, college-educated and therefore mostly white, mostly middle to upper-middle class, living in a period of unprecedented prosperity. The fading of radical feminism partly has to do with the fact that that group of women has aged, and partly to do with the fact that conditions have changed. Young people now pay a much higher price if they try to live outside the system (whether capitalism or patriarchy or both). I think that a new radical feminism would have to be quite different, less age and class specific, more sensitive to the situations of working class women, poor women, women of color.

*In terms of new problems we face today, such as global capitalism, which lacks a geographical center, how effective is direct action?*

Unless, or until, there is some international crisis that mobilizes people around the world, I think that people have to go on organizing around specific local or national issues; usually such struggles lead to challenging global capital. The problem is that global capital is so strong that it is hard to win, and the problems are massive, affect huge numbers of people, but leave most people with a sense that noth-

ing can be done. I think that a direct action movement could help by providing some focus and by showing that even if we can't expect to win immediately, it's better to protest than to acquiesce, better to be part of a community of resistance than a cog in a depersonalized system.

*Every radical movement has its "revolutionary actors" (e.g. the working class or women). Under what conditions does a certain group become "revolutionary actors"?*

I think that many groups can become revolutionary agents. A revolutionary movement, to be credible, requires the involvement or support of lots of people, people who are sufficiently oppressed by the system that they are not likely to leave the movement easily, and preferably representing significant parts of different social groups. It does not seem likely that the working class will mobilize as a group any time soon. There are too many divisions within it for unified action to be easy. There are also divisions among women. There are moments when different groups develop similar critiques and similar social goals, and ally with each other. In the US, in the 30's, there was an unofficial alliance between workers and a large sector of intellectuals and other professionals; in the 60's the student movement's critique of the war in Vietnam resonated with broad sectors of the public (the student movement did not fully recognize that the agreement had to do with ending the war, not with embarking on a social revolution). In Paris in '68, large numbers of students and workers shared grievances against the government and a desire to transform the system. It seems to me that this kind of convergence is key to revolutionary moments - and it is almost impossible to guess when it is going to happen, or how long it will last.

*You state that towards the end of the 70's the New Left's fascination with armed struggle (inspired by "Third World" political examples) was the downfall of the radical movement. However, some on the left continue to look to armed struggles for guidance. Is there any legitimacy for the left to continue looking in this direction for examples?*

I don't see armed struggle as an option for left movements in the US or Europe. Though Western democracies have severe limitations, they are still democracies, and to engage in armed struggle rather than in the political process is to discredit oneself and lose the possibility of building a mass movement. It also gives legitimacy to what the extreme right is doing, namely by-passing the democratic process.

## An Interview with Barbara Epstein

This is not to say that armed struggle isn't legitimate, and important, under other circumstances, such as resistance to the Nazis, to right-wing militarist rule in Central America, etc. I think that it is important to study the history of movements that engaged in armed struggle, and to distinguish between situations that call for it and those that do not. I am not saying that recourse to armed struggle (or at least armed self-defense) is permanently out of the question in the West. The world is a volatile place these days, and who knows how things might change. But as things stand I think that notions of armed struggle, on the left, are foolish and irresponsible.

*You point out the amazing number of people that were drawn to the utopian and predominately (although often not by name) anarchist principles of the direct action movements. What does this say about the importance of a committed ideology for a radical movement?*

I don't see how a movement can act, or present an alternative vision, without an ideology. Of course everyone has an ideology; those who think they don't have absorbed the dominant ideology. Movements for social change have to have alternative ideologies, and the more explicit these are, the more thought is put into them, the better. Ideology consists partly of a conception of one's goal - a social vision - and partly of an analysis of how and why existing society falls short of that vision, and how we might achieve the goals we have set. It is important to remember that analysis is only an approximation of reality, and needs to be constantly tested against reality and changed accordingly. Social visions also need to be looked at skeptically and revised as our ideas change. Ideologies are necessary but if they become rigid, they can be dangerous.

*In your essay "Post-Structuralism as Subculture" you state (in criticism of post-structuralism) that if "alienation drops out of our vocabulary, we have no reason to protest current conditions and no basis for imagining anything better." Why is the concept of alienation especially important today?*

I think that alienation has become so pervasive in contemporary society that it tends not to be recog-

nized, even on the left; it's as if alienation has become the air we breathe, and therefore invisible. In fact we are living in a society in which alienation is so deep, so widespread, that it has become very difficult to act. I'm referring to the commodification of virtually everything, the destruction of community and of human connections generally, the extension of the market into virtually all areas of life, the widespread loss of a sense of meaning, of values that go deeper than cash values. I find it extraordinary that under such circumstances a theoretical perspective in which there is no place for a conception of alienation could be considered radical. I think that the widespread acceptance of post-structuralism has greatly undermined the possibility of radical thinking and action. It seems to me that the concept of alienation gives us a place from which to criticize existing society. It allows us to say that human beings have inherent needs (not only for food and shelter, but also for viable human relationships, for community, for the possibility of doing socially meaningful work), that contemporary capitalism makes the satisfaction of these needs virtually impossible, and that we want a society in which human beings can thrive. The concept of alienation seems to me key in making this argument: it provides a way of saying that contemporary society is utterly inadequate and that we need a better one.

### POLITICAL PROTEST & CULTURAL REVOLUTION



*Nonviolent Direct Action in  
the 1970s and 1980s*  
BARBARA EPSTEIN

*For many post-structuralists, certain stylistic, literary strategies are celebrated as political or insurrectionary acts but you state that it often has more to do with performance than any attempt at dialogue or persuasion. To what degree is style relevant to radical politics?*

I think that things like rhetoric, performance, and theatrical skills can be helpful in attracting an audience and getting a message across and especially in gaining the attention of the media. But one of the problems that the left faces today is a culture that is organized around performers and audiences rather than community and collec-

tive action. I think that the left, in attempting to accommodate itself to this culture, has wound up promoting it. Performers are not the same things as leaders; the relationship between performers and audience is mostly one-way, and the audience is relatively

#### BARBARA EPSTEIN: SELECTED WORKS

*Political Protest and Cultural Revolution: Nonviolent Direct Action of the 1970's and 1980's*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.

*The Politics of Domesticity: Women, Evangelism, and Temperance in Nineteenth Century America*, Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1981.

*Cultural Politics and Social Movements* (co-editor). Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995.

*The First Anthology: 30 Years of the New York Review of Books* (co-editor). New York: Consortium Book Sales and Distribution, 1994.

"Postwar Panics and the Crisis of Masculinity." In *Marxism in the Postmodern Age*, ed. by Antonio Callari et al. New York: Guilford Press, 1995

"Interpreting the World (Without Necessarily Changing It)." *New Politics*, vol. 6, no. 4 (new series), Winter 1998.

"Postmodernism and the Left." *New Politics*, vol. 6, no. 2 (new series), Winter 1997.

"Post-Structuralism as Subculture." *Crossroads Magazine*, no. 40, April 1994.

"Politics of Prefigurative Community: the Nonviolent Direction Action Movement." in *Reshaping the US Left: Popular Struggles in the 1980's*, ed. by Mike Davis & Michael Sprinker, London: Verso, 1988.

Continued on next page ...

... Epstein continued from page 7

passive. Leaders, hopefully, are engaged in a common project with their constituencies; they are shaped by the movements that they represent, as well as helping to shape those movements. Leadership, especially charismatic leadership, has its dangers if one is trying to build an internally democratic movement. The performer/audience dynamic has even greater dangers; it tends to drive out the model that revolves around local organizing, equality among movement members, collective action, etc.

*From your most recent writings, it appears that you believe that there are important political struggles taking place in the University. What role do you think the intellectual, university culture play in forming a radical politics?*

I think that the left within the university could play an important part in forming a radical politics. In the 60's there was a university left that played a very important role in the movements of the period, especially the anti-war movement. It was mostly a student left, though some faculty were involved. One of the problems with today's academic left is that it is dominated by faculty, especially by prominent faculty in major research institutions, which gives a particularly academic cast to its concerns. Meanwhile conditions in academia are deteriorating, especially for those lower on the rung: students are being charged higher fees, graduate students are overworked and underpaid, many colleges and universities hire large numbers of part-time faculty whose working conditions and pay are not that much better than those of the graduate students. Junior faculty, at many universities, are forced to publish at a frantic pace to have any hope of gaining tenure. There is beginning to be some organizing around these issues. I hope that a university left will begin to emerge out of protests over student fees and the treatment of those who work in the university.

*I get the sense from your work that being a part of a left inspired by anarchism, Marxism, and socialism, is equivalent to being a minority these days considering the mostly apolitical atmosphere surrounding intellectual work. How have you experienced this?*

I feel quite isolated in the university, not because I have left opinions - many academics do - but because the academic left no longer has any sense of a political project. In the absence of a political project the values of main-

stream academia rush in, and the academic left becomes increasingly competitive and alienated. Especially in the humanities there is a great deal of conflict within the academic left, much of it personal and petty. I don't think that this strengthens anyone. I think that the academic left that revolves around literary theory and post-structuralism is exhausting its claims to radicalism. I hope that a more substantial university left will arise in its place.

*A common theme in your work is the need to re-examine past radical movements and pose questions based upon this examination. Is there a point at which analyzing the past should become secondary to articulating a contemporary political program?*

I think we have to do both at once. I'm afraid that there is no point at which we can stop examining the past, and our relation to it. Left movements often make the mistake of acting as if they were living twenty to thirty years earlier than they are. When the movements of the sixties turned toward a revolutionary perspective, many people's conception of revolutionary politics had more to do with the 30's than the 60's. The student movement of the early 30's opposed war; they were thinking of the world as it was at the time of World War One, not the world of Hitler and Mussolini. During the Gulf War many of us assumed that we were facing a re-run of the war in Vietnam (a protracted war). The only way to avoid such mistakes is to have a clear understanding of the past, the present, what remains the same, what is different, and what appropriate responses might be. But examining these issues should not stop us from organizing.

*You are one among few self-consciously leftist theorists within academia. How have your political beliefs shaped your experience in the university?*

There is a large sector of the university in which being in some way on the left is an advantage rather than a disadvantage. The problem is that within this sector, especially in the Humanities, deep-seated antagonisms have come to the surface. This would not be a bad thing if it were possible to discuss the intellectual differences that lie behind them. All too often attempts at discussion degenerate into veiled threats of ostracism, personal attacks, and so forth. Even before the current disagreements about post-structuralism came into the open, a subculture had taken hold in the academic left (especially in the Humanities, especially in elite

universities) that promoted the worship of celebrities, in which one-upmanship tended to take the place of debate, in which competition was rampant and mostly went uncriticized. In other words, left and feminist values were mostly left behind, in terms of people's behavior towards each other if not in their rhetoric. It is also true that the academic left has drifted further and further away from any engagement with political organizing or action. This is not the fault of individuals: it is the result of the weakening of progressive movements and of speed-up in the universities. But when rhetoric and actions become divorced from each other, there are bound to be severe problems. I think that the first step in remedying this would be to talk about these problems openly.

*What does the future hold for your work?*  
I'm working on a book on what accounts for the decline of the left, in the US, over the last several decades. I'm using a number of case studies from the Bay Area, of arenas where the left once flourished but has faded. I hope that this pattern reverses itself, and movements of the left revive; even if this should happen soon, I think we need to look at the causes of the decline in recent decades. At the same time I'm working on a project that involves interviewing Jews who were members of the various ghetto underground movements and/or were anti-Nazi partisans. These people's stories, and their understanding of the struggles that they were engaged in, need to be recorded while they are still alive.

Footnote:

1. The Clamshell Alliance formed in 1976 to protest the construction of the Seabrook nuclear power plant near Seabrook, New Hampshire. The Clamshell was based on anarchist principles, a small-group structure, consensus decision making, and large-scale civil disobedience. Though the Clamshell failed to stop the Seabrook plant, it paved the way for a mass movement based on nonviolent direct action with a vision of radical change. "Clamshell" refers to the clams along the seacoast that would have been destroyed by Seabrook.

The Abalone Alliance, more explicitly anarchist due to the influence of anarcha-feminists, formed on the West Coast in 1976 in response to Pacific Gas & Electric's Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant. The Abalone was more successful than the Clamshell and succeeded in shutting down Diablo by using similar tactics. "Abalone" refers to the thousand of abalone (a saltwater snail) killed when Diablo's cooling systems were first tested.

... *Academia* continued from page 3

feminist theory, but positively emphasize how university resources have allowed it to become more sophisticated. This balanced “pros and cons” view ignores the serious sacrifices that are made when theory is done in a university setting. These sacrifices include accessibility, radical, political passion, and relevance to all socially marginalized people, especially those impoverished by global capitalism’s international division of labor.

Although it is common for today’s academic feminists and progressive academics to bemoan the academicization of theory, and the powerful bureaucracies of their respective institutions, in the same breath, most will defensively call critics of academic theory “anti-intellectuals.” On this basis, that wrongfully confuses a critique of insular academic theory with anti-intellectualism, they conclude that they would rather their theories be isolated than not exist at all. And in concluding this, they then seek political engagement in a few standard ways.

### Standard Progressive Solutions

One notable development is the reluctant academic, who carries the burden of progressive academic guilt. Guilt frequently has her seeking quick relief in committees, but without application and transformation of her theory according to her practical experience. After all, committee work is not much of a practice to speak of. But this is the committee activist’s solu-

tion. She complains as much as the next person about all of the annoying bureaucracies, but she needs this pseudo-practice—her university-craft—to relieve her guilty conscience. Of course there are plenty of true, campus-based struggles worth engaging, but militant student groups spontaneously galvanized around an issue is rarely the committee activist’s focus. The guilty committee addict, be it a professor or graduate student who already feels guilty about her professional aspirations, is not looking to make the kind of trouble that would threaten her job or stipend. She wants to be an “activist” and pack her resume at the same time. How convenient. Another variation on this theme is the academic who has managed a strict division between her teaching and her political work. I recall an incident with a professor at the New School for Social Research who claims to be politically active. When approached by a graduate student seeking her support in a case of professor/student sexual harassment, her response was that she could not do anything because it would jeopardize her career. She is an after-school activist who rarely takes controversial political stances within university walls. She leads a double life where theory and practice each have their own unique place. Because they are so divorced from each other, neither are totally fulfilling or effective. These are just a few examples of ways that progressive academics try to simplistically resolve the theory/practice problem and keep their careers thriving at the same time.

But these are false solutions to an increasingly false problem: academic isolation vs. political involvement. Given that humanities programs are losing funding and that there are no large scale radical movements in the US, the polarity between theoretical isolation and political engagement has to be rethought. One cannot be isolated in fields and programs that are underfunded or under attack. In fact, the “downsizing” of humanities programs, the abolition of tenure, the growth of adjunct “temp services” and the exploitation of graduate student labor, to name just a few developments that characterize the contemporary university system, have burst the younger academic’s professionalized bubble. These and other institutional developments that Russell Jacoby describes in his widely circulated *The Last Intellectuals* and his more recent *Dogmatic Wisdom* are becoming more pervasive than ever.

Continued on page 12 ...

## CENTRO STUDI LIBERTARI/ ARCHIVIO G. PINELLI

Named after a famous anarchist martyr, the Centro Studi Libertari/Archivio G. Pinelli, was founded in 1976 to document anarchist history and develop opposition to the dominant ideology. The center has organized international meetings, research programs, art expositions, and other activities to foster a contemporary reconceptualization of anarchism through historical analysis. Many of these discussions and debates have been published and are available through the Archivio.

The center’s library contains more than 8,000 titles, including rare books and pamphlets, and more than 1,000 periodicals. Most of the collection is in Italian, but there are works in English, French, German, Portuguese, and Spanish. Though incomplete, a catalogue is available on the Internet.

The center’s biannual publication, *Bollettino Archivio G. Pinelli* (Lit. 8,000, ca. US \$4.50), includes news of the anarchist movement, historical articles, bibliographies, and contact information. There is no deadline for article submissions (which may be accepted in English). The center’s primary language is Italian, but readers may be interested in the English edition of an anthology entitled “Thinking as Anarchists,” derived from various meeting papers. To contact: Archivio G. Pinelli, cas. post. 17005, 20170 Milano, Italy. Ph: 02 28 46 923 Web: <http://www.club.it/biblio/archivio.pinelli/>

By Salvatore Engel-Di Mauro

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## RECOMMENDED READING

... continued from page 3  
administrative and technical personnel, was a parasitic layer whose true interests were most precisely articulated by Marxism. There is a translation of some of Machajski in V.F. Calverton, *The Making of Society* (New York: Modern Library, 1937) and an exegesis by his disciple Max Nomad in many works, including *Rebels and Renegades, Aspects of Revolt*, and *Apostles of Revolution*. Academic studies of Machajski include those by Paul Avrich, Marshall Shatz, and myself.

"You might suppose that the anarchists would have reacted to Bolshevism with horror, but this was not the case. Their critique of Marxism was really directed against the Social Democratic Marxist parties of the Second International. They saw Bolshevism, which broke with the International as a "social patriotic" organization, as a splendid alternative, at least at first. Many of the most prominent anarchists joined the Communists, the scourge of the intelligentsia. Machajski himself went this way. The further disillusionment and liquidation of the Russian anarchists would ensue. It can be followed in Victor Serge's *Memoirs of a Revolutionary* (New York, Writers & Readers, 1984). Serge's attempt to reconcile anarchism and Marxism makes his account more interesting than G.P. Maksimoff's *Guillotine at Work*, which catalogues anarchist victimization but fails to report on Maksimoff's support for the Soviets and his near-Bolshevik idea of workers' control."

## Letter to *Perspectives*

Dear Editors,

More or less by chance I found Jerry Kaplan's article, "Preserving Our Past: The Anarchist Collections," in the Spring 1997 issue of *Perspectives on Anarchist Theory*. It is a thoughtful piece, but I would like to comment on a specific point. Jerry notes that the International Institute of Social History (IISH) in Amsterdam is "connected to [...] the state". He has a point: the IISH is chiefly funded through the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences. Yet there is an important proviso to be made.

IISH was created in 1935 as a private foundation. In 1979 this foundation, which continues to exist, struck an agreement with the Academy in order to set the Institute on more sound footing. However, it retains full responsibility for the acquisition and maintenance of, as well as access to, all archives and other documents in the care of IISH. Indeed the foundation never considered relinquish-

ing control over the Institute's anarchist collections (and, for that matter, the many sensitive materials it often acquires) to any state-related institution. In this field, IISH is entirely independent and not even bound by Dutch archival legislation. It is an unusual legal construction, but so far it has worked well.

The Institute's collections are listed in its online catalog and, separately, on its Web site at <http://www.iisg.nl/>.

All the best,  
Jaap Kloosterman  
([jkl@iisg.nl](mailto:jkl@iisg.nl))

International Institute of Social History  
Cruquiusweg 31,  
1019 AT Amsterdam,  
The Netherlands

... *IAS Grant Updates* continued from page 3

chapter from the book, "Interpellating Modernity: Cubism and 'La Vie Unanime' in America," will appear this fall in a Peter Lang publication, *American Modernism Across the Arts*, edited by Justin Edwards and Jay Bockner. He has also submitted three other chapters to various journals. He was awarded \$1000 in January 1997.

Melissa Burch has completed the sections on Chiapas and Nicaragua for her piece "Autonomy, Culture, and Natural Resources in the Neo-liberal Age," and will complete the section on Vermont in the fall. She has also published part of her piece as "Bringing the Struggle Home: Zapatismo in my Backyard," in *Dark Nights Field Notes* (No. 12/13). She was awarded \$800 in January 1998.

Chris Gunderson is conducting extensive historical research for his book, *Anarchism and the Zapatista Revolution*, focusing on the history of the EZLN and the revolutionary left in Mexico as well as the older

traditions of indigenous autonomy and resistance. He was awarded \$2000 in January 1998.

Peter Lamborn Wilson's introduction to the re-publication of *Freedom - My Dream: The Autobiography of Enrico Arrigoni* continues to take shape, enriched by the recent discovery of a previously unknown manuscript by Arrigone about his life. He was awarded \$250 in June 1997.

Mark Bonhert and Richard Curtis have collected promising interviews for their book project, *Post-Industrial Resources: Anarchist Reconstructive Efforts & Visions in the Upper Midwest*, and continue to pursue additional interviews. They were awarded \$250 in June 1997.

Frank Adams continues historical research for his piece, *The Educational Ideas and Management Practices of 19th and 20th Century Anarchists in Labor-Owned Cooperatives*. He was awarded \$500 in June 1997.

### 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Bay Annual Anarchist Bookfair

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The IAS needs your support: we must raise \$9200 by January 1999 to award \$6000 in grants, publish two issues of *Perspectives*, and continue building the IAS endowment.

Please help make the IAS's 1998 fundraising campaign a success by making a donation today. Your contribution will enable the IAS to provide real support to radical authors working to confront some of the most difficult questions raised by anarchism and radical social theory. Your donation will also make it possible for us to publish this newsletter and - because we place 15 percent of every donation in the IAS endowment - make sure that there will be resources for the next generation of dissenting, utopian writers.

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The IAS has worked hard to encourage the development of radical social criticism and ideals of freedom since 1996. We have awarded \$12,000 in grants, published four issues of *Perspectives*, and built a small but growing endowment. Please join us in our efforts.

Please make checks payable to the Institute for Anarchist Studies and mail them to:

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Kathryn Pyne Addelson, *Impure Thoughts: Essays on Philosophy, Feminism, & Ethics* (Temple University, paper, pp. 256). List: \$16.95.

Patrick Coy (ed.), *A Revolution of the Heart: Essays on the Catholic Worker* (Temple University, hardcover, pp. 388). List: \$39.95.

Barbara Epstein, *Political Protest & Cultural Revolution: Nonviolent Direct Action in the 1970's & 1980's* (University of California, hardcover, pp. 327). List: \$30.

Martin Green, *The Origins of Nonviolence: Tolstoy & Gandhi in their Historical Settings* (Penn State, hardcover, pp. 256). List: \$27.95.

Frank Harrison, *The Modern State: An Anarchist Analysis* (Black Rose Books, paper, pp. 225). List: \$13.99.

Jerome Mintz, *The Anarchists of Casas Viejas* (Indiana University Press, paper, pp. 336). List: \$13.95.

Graham Purchase, *Anarchism & Environmental Survival* (See Sharp Press, paper, pp. 156). List: \$10.

Ōsugi Sakae, *The Autobiography of Ōsugi Sakae*, trans. Byron K. Marshall (University of California Press, paper, pp. 167). List: \$14.

#### — Discount at Perennial for IAS Donors! —

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The following groups and individuals have either donated or pledged a donation to the IAS's 1998 fundraising campaign:

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**Please Note:** The IAS is particularly indebted to Miranda Edison, Michelle Matisons & Gardner Fair, Chuck Morse, Caroline Morse, and Chumbawamba.

## IAS GRANT AWARDS

(continued from cover)

book will present the first comprehensive English language study of the works and political legacy of Federica Montseny, an important Spanish anarchist and intellectual. Greene lives in East Lansing, Michigan.

\$600 to Will Firth for the translation of three articles on Eastern European anarchism from Russian and Bulgarian into English. The two Russian articles are: "A Survey of the Anarchist Movement in the Ukraine 1987-1994)" and "Under Fire Between the Lines" (about the Volunteer Medical Brigade formed by socialists and anarchists in 1993 during the conflicts over the seizure of the Russian parliament). The Bulgarian translation will be a 'compilation' of various chapters from the book *National Liberation and Libertarian Federalism* by Georgi Khadzhieff. Firth lives in Berlin, Germany.

\$500 to Lucien van der Walt for a collection of historical articles entitled *Anarchism and Revolutionary Syndicalism in South Africa, 1904 - 1921*. Van der Walt lives in Johannesburg, South Africa.

If you are interested in applying for a grant, please send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the IAS. You may also print out a grant application from the IAS's web site at: <http://home.newyorknet.net/ias/Default.htm>. Grant applications must be received by May 15 and December 15 of each year.

... Academia continued from page 9

Many young anarchists of the post-New Left generation are involved on some level with the acquisition of higher degrees, and many teach at universities for a variety of reasons including the most obvious one - it's a job. Is it misguided to think that one can sustain a passion for teaching and writing radical theory and involve themselves in the university-craft required by this job? And if she does follow this path, according to what criteria can her theoretical work be deemed "too academic" and out of touch? There are no universal criteria to judge these questions, but they need to be addressed in a way that is different than the standard progressive academic solutions of resigned academic isolation, committee activism or after school activism. The best response is not to seek quick fixes, pet answers or secure ripostes to today's complex reality of institutionalized theory. We must all be suspicious of others selling out, but also of our own motives for engaging academia or not.

### Intellectual Criteria and the IAS

Where does the IAS stand in relation to these issues? The IAS tries to provide alternatives to academic theory in the ideal form of the counter-institution. We have limited financial resources, yet we try to support writers who usually fall through the cracks of conventional funding sources. But still, at our bi-annual meetings, the IAS board always faces difficult questions concerning academic theory. Although we have established basic criteria for assessing applications, we consistently come up against difficult questions with no easy answers. Do we fund a superficial, journalistic article written by an engaged activist that addresses a pressing political issue? Or do we fund a more sophisticated piece written by a graduate student who is busy attaining higher degrees and securing teaching posts? We always jump at the chance to fund the rare non-academic, politically

engaged writer of a solid piece - a rare breed indeed. She is unique because most writing today seems to be locked into either side of the academic/journalistic polarity.

The question about who to fund gets even more complicated when we take into account the social and class differences of our applicants. Since a middle-class writer has more intellectual leisure time than a welfare mother or a prisoner, how do we assess the relative merits of their projects and their applications? Merely awarding money to people whose writing complies with objective intellectual standards will not suffice. We must also begin establishing preconditions for intellectual work that reflects the vast array of people and issues that have been historically ignored. For example, to say that we will fund more women or Hispanic writers when we receive high quality applications from them, ignores one serious way that socio-economic oppression operates: it divorces people from intellectual resources, like free time and a well-rounded education. If we ignore the struggle that a poor person undergoes to find a "room of one's own" to study and write, then we do nothing to challenge how social oppression is reinforced through intellectual hierarchies. Clearly, we must have some general intellectual standards, but what, besides a writer's politics, constitutes a revolutionary, intellectual criteria? Although intellectual objectivism is not a radical solution, intellectual relativism is no solution either.

Our funding track record reveals that the IAS board's current strategy is to fund a variety of writing projects with differing strengths and weaknesses. We have funded people from various social and class backgrounds. We have funded professors, graduate students, community activists, anarchist activists, and the rare radical intellectual who has resisted the seductions of academic professionalism. But, cultivation of diversity - social, political, and intellectual - will take us only so far. Although there are no simple solutions to the problems I address in this article, we should not forget that our biggest problems will arise if we become complacent in our ambiguity and reluctantly accept the circumstances handed to us.

Michelle Matisons is a founding board member of the Institute for Anarchist Studies and author of the recently published essay "The New Feminist Philosophy of the Body: Haraway, Butler and Brennan," *European Journal of Woman's Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 1, February 1998. She lives in Worcester, Massachusetts.

Perspectives

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