

# **The Struggle is Our Inheritance: A History of Radical Minnesota**



## July 2007

Substantive, radical change is only accomplished with a firm understanding of the past, and it is with this in mind that the RNC Welcoming Committee has labored to produce this text. Minnesota has a rich history of radical struggle and, as history does, it informs our movement today. We have powerful examples of the tenacity of the human spirit- in the land we love, and amongst the people we live with and those who came before- and this zine is meant to educate people about that heritage.

Though we don't credit individual authors, this has been a collective effort and the articles represent a diversity of voices and perspectives. This is only a first edition, and we intend to update and flesh out the contents repeatedly over the next months. We welcome zine requests, critiques and contributions:

mnhistory@riseup.net

-or-

The Struggle is Our Inheritance  
c/o Jack Pine Community Center  
2815 E. Lake St.  
Minneapolis, MN 55406

and theater drive our strategy, it's equally important to recognize that orchestrating massive coordinated resistance for a few days in 2008 could have a profound impact on our collective morale, fueling a broad escalation in the radical, community-based work we should all be engaged in.

The 2008 Republican National Convention protests will be huge, whether anarchists are there or not. We are at a point in this country where there is widespread, open anger with the System and a new receptiveness to alternative ways of life. As anarchists and anti-authoritarians, we should take full advantage of this chance- we need to present a unified yet diverse front, to reenergize ourselves and to reach out to new people, to do everything in our power to eclipse the RNC. The Twin Cities boast a large, strong anarchist community, and we are already organizing for 2008. We believe we have the energy, the resources and the commitment to make the RNC a convention to remember.

Of course, we can't do this without the participation of like-minded folks from all over, and in addition to coordinating things like food, housing and transportation, the RNC Welcoming Committee hopes to facilitate productive collaboration between organizers elsewhere and organizers locally in the build-up to the RNC. To this end, we are organizing the pReNC, slated for August 31 through September 3 of this year. The pReNC will be the site of serious strategizing on a national level for the RNC a year later. We encourage people to start discussions now, wherever they are, and to send representatives to the pReNC to contribute to the decision-making that will occur there. In the meantime, contact us with any questions or suggestions: [rnc08@riseup.net](mailto:rnc08@riseup.net), and go to [www.nornc.org](http://www.nornc.org) for more info on what we're up to.

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## The Dakota Uprising of 1862

Minnesota erupted in an armed conflict in 1862 between Dakota warriors and the United States. The conflict left in its wake between 300 and 800 settlers dead, an unknown number of Dakota dead, and the largest mass execution with 38 Dakota men hanged at Mankato. This was the first armed conflict between the Dakota and the United States, but it would not be the last.

This is a particularly important event for me as my ancestors and my relations were Dakota in Minnesota. Being both a descendent of the original people of this land and a person working against the imperialist culture occupying it, I find the history of this struggle to be extremely important for the work I am to do.



The Dakota Uprising of 1862, as it has come to be called, began with the Treaty of Traverse de Sioux and the Treaty of Mendota in 1851. These treaties, which were signed by a few Dakota men intoxicated by whiskey, ceded vast amounts of Dakota territory to the United States. The treaty guaranteed the Dakota money, food, goods, and a twenty-mile wide reservation along a 150-mile stretch of the Minnesota River. The treaty became null and void after promised compensation was either never given or stolen by officials in the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

decade has simultaneously showcased our trip down demo-burnout lane, and the development of beautiful, militant, community-based projects- projects that are reaching for sustainability and autonomy, and that hold a lot of promise of succeeding.

As for that special place the Big Protest holds in all of our hearts: now that we've had some time to step back and focus on infrastructure and small "r" revolution, the nuts-and-bolts stuff, it's time to recognize the specific functions that well-executed mass demos can fill.

1. They can be powerful arenas for radicalization- coming face to face with the Police State, for example, can finally push a person into action. Many of us look back on one protest or another as the day our politics crystallized, and while there are plenty of people who are turned off by such big, public affairs, there are just as many who need that exhilarating, participatory arena as a point of entry. We need those newcomers as much as they need us.
2. They can be sites for capacity building, giving us all the opportunity to develop and practice new skills and tactics, and expanding and strengthening mutual aid networks. Because of the temporary nature of the Big Protest, it's a sort of free for all. We all have wild, crazy ideas that are fun to think about but impractical in day-to-day life, for lack of things like a critical mass or strategic target or captive audience. Summits and conventions provide unique, fleeting conditions that are near impossible to create otherwise, and we should take full advantage of the opportunities that System hands us.
3. They're also points of inspiration and renewed energy. Even the most veteran among us need to be reminded, from time to time, that we're not alone. Especially at a time when our comrades are being locked away and the threat of more indictments hangs over us, it's important to affirm in a visible, public way that this movement is huge, and strong, and not going to be cowed into inaction or cooperation by the machinations of the State. People are programmed to respond very strongly to visual and physical cues, and though it's important not to let an affinity for symbolism



## Why the RNC?

July 2007

From September 1 through 4, 2008, the Republican National Convention will descend upon Minnesota's Twin Cities. The reasons to oppose the GOP are so oft repeated that to list them here seems unnecessary. We all know, and we all understand that the RNC is but one ugly part of a larger system keeping us down.

So, of all the summits and conferences, why this one? It's a dog-and-pony show, after all. A horrifying act in the theater of oppression, sure, but just that- political theater.

By the time of the RNC, the party's candidate has already been chosen. The convention is a time for networking, fundraising and grandstanding, but not a time for decision-making. And the Election goes forward in November, whatever happens at the party conventions. So maybe our options in relation to the event itself are, from the outset, relegated to the symbolic

We need to seriously ask ourselves, and give enough time to answer: is the era of the mass demo over in the U.S.? Should we finally tuck Seattle away and look to new forms of resistance?

Yes and no.

At this stage in the game, our collective obsession with Seattle is only holding us back. Yeah, it was awesome. Yeah, it was a huge milestone in the struggle against globalization. Yeah, there are important lessons to be taken from it. One of those is that the element of surprise can't be copied and pasted into a new context. Another is that Big Protests can define an era, for better or for worse. Seattle was a high point, and folks rode that high for a couple years following. But the crowds were thinning and the losses mounting. And then came Miami, and the prevailing sentiment shifted towards one of disenchantment with the summit-hopping model.

And thank god.

Because mass demos have their place- a significant place- but a small place in something much bigger, and we needed desperately to refocus our energies. The real work is to be done, day-to-day, in our communities. And we know this. The past

When Minnesota was declared a state in 1858, representatives of several bands of Dakota, including Chief Taoyateduta, traveled to Washington, D.C. to make further negotiations. The negotiations resulted in the Dakota losing the northern half of the reservation along the Minnesota River along with rights and access to the sacred Pipestone quarry. The ceded land was quickly split up into several townships and farmland for settlers. This resulted in the wild prairies, forests, and wild lands, used for traditional lifeways, being destroyed. Traditional lifeways were so devastated by colonial settlement that Dakota people in south and western Minnesota had to sell fur pelts to make a living.

Payments guaranteed by treaties were never made. The populations that had supported Dakota communities were nearly wiped out. Land was being stolen by the United States government and occupied by settlers. Additionally, broken treaties, food shortages, and famine all added to growing tensions.

On August 8, 1862, representatives of the Sisseton and Wahpeton bands of Dakota successfully negotiated for food in the Upper Sioux Agency. However, the Mdewakanton and Wahpekute Dakota turned to the Lower Sioux Agency with the same demands and were denied food. Indian Agent and Minnesota State Senator Thomas Galbraith would not distribute the food without payment, and lead trader Andrew Myrick responded to the Dakota by stating, "So far as I'm concerned, if they are hungry, let them eat grass."

Three days later, Andrew Myrick was found dead, grass stuffed in his mouth. Chief Taoyateduta had led a band of warriors to attack settlers in the Lower Sioux Agency. Food stores were taken and several buildings were burnt to the ground. A militia that was sent to suppress the uprising ended up suffering 44 casualties and losing the Battle of Redwood Ferry. The Dakota band continued to attack the settlement and New Ulm and then mounted an attack against Fort Ridgely on August 22.

Raids on farms and settlements continued throughout south and central part of Minnesota. Counter-attacks by Minnesota troops resulted in heavy casualties of white soldiers at the Battle of Birch Coulee. Thirteen United States soldiers were killed and over 47 were injured. The Dakota only suffered two deaths.

In northwestern Minnesota, Dakota warriors attacked several trail stops and river crossings along the Red River Trail. This stopped trade along this route to forts further west. Mail carriers, stage drivers, and military transports were all attacked between Fort Snelling and St. Cloud. Abraham Lincoln was finally forced to assemble troops from the Third and Fourth Minnesota Regiments.

Governor Alexander Ramsey formulated a plan, carried out by Colonel Henry Sibley, to free settlers held captive and to “exterminate” or otherwise drive the Dakota “forever beyond the border of the state”. Sibley’s troops ranked in around 1,600 men, while the Dakota only had around 700 warriors.

The fighting lasted over six weeks. Most of the major fighting occurred at the Battle of Wood Lake in September, where Taoyateduta attempted to ambush soldiers of the Third Minnesota Regiment marching along the Minnesota River. The soldiers returned fire and were quickly aided by other soldiers from Sibley’s camp. The fight lasted two hours with the Dakota warriors suffering heavy losses. This would be the last major battle fought in the Dakota War of 1862.

Dakota warriors ended up surrendering at Camp Release on September 26. Six weeks later, 303 Dakota prisoners were convicted of rape and murder and sentenced to death. There is much reason to believe that these trials were heavily biased, most of them lasting only five minutes. Lincoln reviewed trial records and distinguished between those who fought and those who he believed had been part of the murders and rapes. Thirty-eight who had been part of the latter were hanged in Mankato on December 26, 1862. The remaining convicted Dakota stayed in prison that winter and were later transferred Rock Island, Illinois where they were imprisoned for four years. Over one third died of disease, and the remaining returned to their families that had been relocated to Nebraska, Wisconsin, and the Dakotas.

As a result of the conflict, the United States abolished the reservations, declared all treaties null and void, and expelled all Dakota from Minnesota. A bounty of \$25 per scalp was placed on all Dakota men, women, and children within the state’s boundaries. The only exceptions were several groups of Dakota referred to as the “friendlies” who allied themselves with the white settlers and

day of the greatest activity, featuring a march in which over 200 protestors set out to “Reclaim the streets and reclaim the genes.” After a rally in Peavey Plaza, demonstrators moved out to Downtown Minneapolis. Police tried to block the group from public spaces and herd it into a “demonstration area”, but by following a spontaneously charted path, the marchers succeeded in confusing the police and deviating from the official route. At one point, they used their banners to break through a police line and into Loring Park. Eventually the demonstrators were surrounded, and police were ordered to arrest everyone involved for allegations of earlier violence. Some of their harsh measures were justified by

encouraging panic about “chemical weapons” found in three canisters at locations around the Twin Cities. Upon examination (and after overreaction), these suspicious “unknown chemical agents” turned out to be stink bombs. Typically, the mainstream media reported the day’s events concentrating on protestors’ violence and ignoring the many episodes of gross police misconduct.



The main mobilization was over by July 26 but police reprisals were not. The headquarters of Sisters Camelot, a nonprofit food sharing organization, was raided, and several members were abused by armed police. The operation was carried out under the guise of a drug bust, although as a strong supporter of the ISAG protesters the Sisters’ Camelot house was clearly a political target.

At the ISAG protests of 2000, geneticists’ subordination of natural diversity went hand in hand with brutal repression of dissent carried out by police. It was by embracing decentralized organization and spontaneity in mobilization that the resistance succeeded in staying ahead of their opposition and making their voices heard.

## Shut em Down at ISAG

When the International Society of Animal Genetics descended upon the Twin Cities in July of 2000 for their 27<sup>th</sup> biennial conference, they met with resistance from hundreds of protestors opposing their dubious agenda. Despite police repression at every step, these demonstrators succeeded in disrupting the conference's control of the city, and in injecting their too-valid condemnations of bioengineering into community discourse.



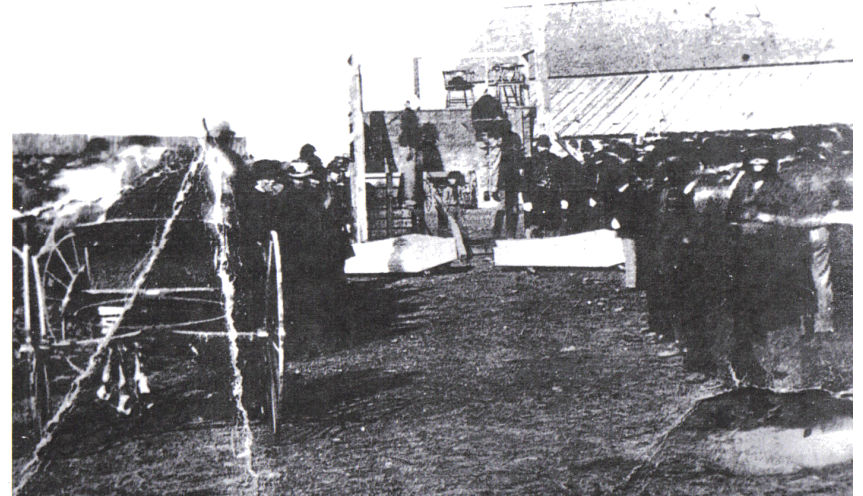
While profiled in the media as “animal rights activists,” resistance to ISAG included a wide variety of actors concerned with environmental degradation, destruction of biodiversity, corporate control and commoditization of life, as well as issues of animal cruelty. This diverse coalition included the Upper Midwest Resistance Against Genetic Engineering (GrainRAGE) and the Bioengineering Action Network (BAN), as well as many unaffiliated individuals voicing personal concern.

With a budget of between two and \$500,000 for the event, city police were armed and ready to meet protestors with brutal force. Sixty units of riot-gear officers met demonstrations on foot, reinforced by patrols in commandeered city buses, on horseback, and in helicopters. The FBI is suspected to have been involved, and cases were also reported of infiltration by undercover agents. By the end of the conference, and North America's first demonstration against animal biotechnology, between 65 and 80 people had been pepper sprayed, 93 arrested (the majority for “unlawful assembly”), and countless others beaten or otherwise abused.

On July 23 a teach-in and speak-out in Loring Park kicked off the week's events, followed by a march through the city. July 24 was the

were allowed reservations, such as the Shakopee Mdewakanton Dakota.

During the winter of 1862-63, around 1,700 Dakota were rounded up into concentration camps on Pike Island below Fort Snelling. Only 1,300 Dakota left the following spring, and were exiled to surrounding states. The others had died or been killed in the camp. It is believed there were mass graves located near this site



and the site of the current Mall of America. It is also believed that four oaks were later planted in the contemporary Minnehaha Park to commemorate those who died. The four oaks were planted in each cardinal direction in the shape of a burial scaffold used to mourn the dead.

While many Dakota were exiled from Minnesota into the surrounding areas, many eventually returned and found their ancestral territories turned into settlements and townships. They reestablished several smaller reservations; however, many assimilated with the white settlers and attempted to obscure their identities while others braced themselves for the harsh realities of colonialism and attempted to maintain their traditions.

The Dakota War of 1862 was the beginning of a long period of resistance by the Dakota and Lakota nations against United States imperialism. It was followed by the Battle of Killdeer Mountain in 1864. Red Cloud's War in 1866-68 resulted in a complete victory for the Oglala Lakota and the preservation of their control of the Powder River country. The Battle of Greasy Grass in

1876 was another victory for Lakota and Cheyenne, which saw the complete annihilation of a U.S. detachment led by Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer. The last major conflict was the Wounded Knee Massacre in which over 300 Lakota men, women, and children were gunned down by the brutal U.S. 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry.

For me, this story is filled with both honor and pain. While the conflict resulted in the removal of my ancestors from their territory, it makes me proud to know that my relations fought against this colonization. Many of the Dakota people assimilated, but there were some who held on to their traditions for a future generation who might reclaim their lifeways and territories. As for this story, it serves as a clear indication of where I am to stand in the struggle for this land.

the highway where we couldn't see the blockade. After an hour, the fire department arrived. After blowing the gaskets on a jaws of life, they cut both lockdowns out and didn't arrest them. We even got our blockading devices back. Just as the last person was getting cut out, the AAN rally arrived 75 strong with puppets and huge banners. A festive rally proceeded, the centerpiece being a mock trial of Cargill. Evidence was given by a local organic farmer, who testified about genetic engineering affecting his livelihood. An activist spoke about the plight of farmers in Minnesota, emphasizing the 1,500 family farms being lost this year to large agribusinesses like Cargill. A teacher talked about educating our children on the real history of America. A woman from the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy spoke about Cargill's ties to the World Trade Organization. Two Grain RAGE activists spoke about the need to increase actions against genetic research, citing the three acts of direct action that have happened in Minnesota. An organic farmer provided final evidence, dumping 50 pounds of genetically modified soybean seeds. He then urged the crowd to grab handfuls of organic seeds and take them as a remembrance of what we are fighting for. After hearing all the evidence, the jeering crowd found Cargill guilty (well okay, a lot of us came in biased) and dragged away its "spokesperson" who was being pelted by soybean seeds.

It was a great action. The idea of teachers, students, farmers, anarchists and local townspeople slowing up traffic and reminding all their employees that they are implicated in the corporation's crimes is probably causing executives to lose sleep. People were respectful of other groups' tactics, and the AAN folks even joined in on chorus of "We don't need no water, let Cargill's fields burn!" We are planning similar actions, and with Minnesota being a hotbed of agricultural biotech research, we shouldn't be lacking for targets. Join us in July when we shut down the International Society for Animal Genetics (ISAG) Conference. Join Earth and animal liberationists and help us tell the mad scientists to stop now!



## Grain R.A.G.E. Cremates Cargill

*From the Earth First! Journal*

On March 20-21, 2000, 3,000 or so farmers gathered in Washington DC for the "Rally for Rural America." In opposition to the destruction that genetic engineering is inflicting on the planet and in solidarity with the farmers worldwide who are resisting globalization, activists from Grain RAGE (Resistance Against Genetic Engineering) and the Agricultural Action Network (AAN) decided to bring the resistance to the front doors of one of the companies responsible, Cargill, who happens to have its world headquarters just minutes from Minneapolis.

Cargill was chosen because it is one of the largest privately owned corporations and the largest grain handler in the world. It is a major player in food distribution, agricultural biotech research and the push for globalization. Cargill recently gave the University of Minnesota \$10 million to help build a molecular biology research building and claims the solution to the farm crisis is to open up China to Minnesota grain, something our Governor Jesse "No Mind" Ventura also espouses.

Employees coming to work at Cargill on the morning of March 21 were not in for business as usual. The company was expecting a rally at 9:00 a.m. What it was not expecting were two junked cars with people locked down blocking both sides of its four-lane divided main entrance at 7:30 a.m. As the teams drove in, the laughter couldn't be contained as we watched groundskeepers hammering temporary "No Trespassing" signs and hanging yellow tape to create an enclosure for the scheduled rally. We drove right past them. Some magical beings also managed to close and chain the back gates.

Employees arriving found themselves in a two-mile traffic jam, as Cargill security and police managed to squeeze cars (just barely) past one blockade. Employees had to drive past huge signs proclaiming "Cargill burn your fields!" and "Cremate Cargill!" and had to endure white-clad RAGE'ers yelling, "Burn the buildings, pull the crops, this is where the research stops!" and singing, "Take these crops and shove it." This clearly was not the sign-waving rally Cargill expected. The police finally arrived and pushed us all back to

## The Battle up North

Nearly one hundred years ago, Minnesotan workers decided that they would band together in a way that they never had before and fight the exploitation of cruel bosses. That new style of fighting was by joining and organizing with the union known as the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). The Minnesota IWW's fiery membership, made up at the time of mostly unskilled and immigrant laborers, provides a model for those who continue to fight for a better life.

The IWW, founded in 1905 in Chicago by accomplished and well-known labor organizers and left-wing radicals, is a union based on the idea that workers can fight the bosses better when they do it together. Shunning the AFL's "craft-based" organizing, the IWW organizes all of its workers by their industry. This means that where they might be six AFL different unions with representation in one factory, the IWW would organize all of them together, so that they could support each other's struggles. In addition to this radical notion of how workers should work together, the IWW is distinct from other U.S. unions in two key ways: it is committed to the abolition of the wage system and that disgusting capitalist machine that supports it and it is a union made up almost entirely of rank-and-file. Since its founding, the IWW has paid more attention to the idea of "industrial democracy" than any other union in this country. They reason that since workers know how to run their places of employment, there's no reason they can't run a union. All a union is, after all, just a bunch of working people taking action together.

Back in the early 1900s, workers in Minnesota were looking for a better life. The AFL bureaucrats only organized among skilled, high-paid workers and left everybody else high and dry. Up north in the Mesabi Range, miners were being ruthlessly exploited by their rich bosses. It was common for workers for the steel companies who supported their whole families to make a dollar seventy-five a day (about \$25 in today's money). The IWW sent organizers into the area to help the workers get together and fight the bosses' greed. In 1916, a small strike began in the eastern Range, which quickly spread to workers all over the area. Families and friends set

up a strike kitchen in Hibbing and solicited funds to help the strikers while they were on the picket line. Immigrant Finns, Slovenes, Italians, and Croatians united across ethnic lines to build a working class organization. While the strike failed to receive recognition for the union, wages went up around the Range. Despite the AFL's typically liberal denouncement of the strike, workers acted together.

By the fall of 1916, the IWW was everywhere in Minnesota. Branches were set up in Gemmill, Bemidji, Virginia, Duluth, and Minneapolis. A huge IWW strike amongst sawmill workers and lumberjacks went up like a wildfire, with thousands of workers walking out of work to get higher wages, a 9 hour workday, and clean and safe work environments. Employers and politicians worked together to try and put down the strike. Wobblies (as IWWers have traditionally been called) were called terrorists, thieves, criminals by newspapers. Minnesota passed one of the first Criminal Syndicalism laws, which gave more power to the bosses and their lackeys in government to declare strikes illegal and throw uppity working people in jail.



Timber workers during strike?  
 Photograph Collection 1930-1939  
 Location no. HD5.7 p187

1/26/02 St. Paul, MN

*"The construction site for the new Microbial and Plant Genomics Research Center at the University of Minnesota had incendiaries left in the main trailer and two pieces of heavy machinery, including a bulldozer. Heavy damage was caused to the machinery and trailer by the fire, which then spread to the adjacent Crop Research building. The construction of this research building is being funded by biotech giant Cargill Corporation who develop, patent, and market genetically modified crops, making people dependent on GE foods. We are fed up with capitalists like Cargill and major universities like the U of M here who have long sought to develop and refine technologies which seek to exploit and control nature to the fullest extent under the guise of progress. Biotechnology is only one new expression of this drive.*

*For the end of capitalism and the mechanization of our lives,  
 -Earth Liberation Front"*

March 2005, Moorhead, MN: Arson at construction site, later claimed as an action taken on behalf of the ELF.



## The ELF in Minnesota

The Earth Liberation Front is a moniker often used by individuals or groups taking direct action to defend the environment. The idea is to sabotage harmful corporations and take the profit motive out of environmental exploitation. The ELF started in England in 1992, born out of Earth First!, and taking its name from the Animal Liberation Front. Major ELF actions did not start in Minnesota until the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

*Timeline of ELF actions in Minnesota and the surrounding area:*

February 9, 2000, St. Paul: University of MN, ELF Crop Destruction, \$1000+ damages.

March 24, 2000, Minneapolis: Highway 55 reroute, \$500,000 in damages done to construction equipment. A communiqué read:

*"We see highway 55 as symbolic of the larger system that is strangling us of our air and water. The NAFTA superhighway and the roads into the forests are all a symptom of the sick capitalist system that puts profits before people or ecosystems. As long as the trees continue to fall, so will the profits made of this project. This is just the beginning of a new level of battling against highway 55 and car culture. We urge the elites of MN and the world to unite against the profit hauling infrastructures around the globe. Target machines, offices, and equipment used to build roads. We are everywhere and we are unthching. We will be back."*

July 20, 2000, Rhinelander, Wisconsin: Vandals hack down thousands of experimental trees, mostly poplars, and spray-paint vehicles at a U.S. Forest Service research station. The ELF claims the attack was against bioengineering, although researchers say the trees were bred naturally to grow faster and resist diseases. Damages: \$1 million.

January 26, 2002, St. Paul: University of MN Microbial and Plant Genomics Research Center soil-testing lab and construction trailer burned down, construction equipment, including a bulldozer damaged. Damages: \$630,000. Claimed by ELF. A communiqué read:

The bosses, the politicians, and the union bureaucrats have always tried to keep working people obedient, divided, and hungry. But on the Range, as everywhere in Minnesota and the world, workers have found ways to overcome these tricks. The capitalists have new and different weapons to use on us: "unions" that don't represent workers, TV shows that keep us quiet and submissive, wars that make us forget the old saying "the working person has no country." Still, no matter how many times the bosses divide us up, skilled vs. unskilled, white-collar vs. blue-collar, whites vs. people of color, native vs. immigrant, we continue to embody the old IWW slogan "An injury to one is an injury to all."



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## The 1934 Teamsters Strikes

*Prelude: February in the Coal Yards*

On February 7, 1934, during a spell of subzero weather, Minneapolis's coal drivers voted to strike. Teamsters Local 574, under the radical leadership of three brothers Dunne (no relation to the coffee mascots), cruised downtown Minneapolis in rusty pickup trucks. When they spotted a scab driving a coal truck, the cruising pickets would stop the fool, dump his coal in the street, and shout curse words at him.

With 65 of 67 coal yards paralyzed and Minnesotans freezing their asses off, the bosses caved to the union's sole demand— union recognition— just three days into the strike. Employers reasoned that due to the seasonal demands of the coal industry, they would have to deal with this upstart union maybe through March and April, but come next Fall they would have their blacklists handy and just not hire any union workers. Sadly for the suits, by Fall the Teamsters had emerged victorious from two prolonged and bloody strikes, transforming Minneapolis into a union town in the process.

News of the militant February strike spread like wildfire. Truckers approached the Central Labor Union office by the score seeking the union that had organized the coal workers. Local 574 organizers, who of course all lost their jobs in the first round of seasonal layoffs, embarked on an ambitious campaign to organize the entire trucking industry.

The Trots leading the organizing drive insisted on an industrial strategy – they wanted a union not just of truck drivers, but also of anyone who loaded a truck or painted one or had any significant emotional attachment to one. If you ever wondered why the airline industry is organized into multiple unions separated along craft lines while the trucking industry is organized into a single industrial union, this is why: because a group of Minneapolis radicals made the union into a force through militant struggle.

## The Bolt Weevils Resurgence

*"The direct action campaign against genetic engineering and corporate agriculture in Minnesota is underway. ..."* -Bolt Weevils Communiqué

The name Bolt Weevils was originally used by saboteurs of a massive power line that cut through farmland in western Minnesota from 1978-80. There was a resurgence of this destructive force in the late 1990s, at a time of focus on genetic engineering (GE) in the U.S., Europe, and other parts of the world. Resistance to genetic engineering took the form of demonstrations (Greenpeace shut down some supermarkets and coffeehouses that sold GE products) as well as direct destruction of GE crops. In late summer and fall of 1999, the Bolt Weevils targeted seed research fields along with other clandestine groups across the country and in Britain. On September 3, corn crops were destroyed at a Novartis Seed Research field in Goodhue County, MN. On September 12, the Bolt Weevils trampled 50 rows of research corn at Pioneer Hi-Bred's seed research facility in Mankato. Company vehicles parked at the property were damaged, and "free the seed" and "stop agribusiness" were spray-painted on a shed at the site. The Pioneer sign in front of the facility was amended to read, "Pioneering Farmageddon". Pioneer, one of the most massive seed companies in the world, had recently been purchased by chemical company DuPont for \$7.7 billion. The Bolt Weevils issued a WARNING to the entire 'life-sciences' industry that "opposition to its sinister plan is far more widespread than they think, and growing exponentially."

Also during the fall of 1999, a group called "Reclaim the Seeds" ripped up a sugar beet field at the University of California, Davis. In Woodland, CA, two groups destroyed crops and dismantled an irrigation system. A group called "Seeds of Resistance" hacked down a half-acre plot of research corn at the University of Maine. On October 27, another Pioneer Hi-Bred field was targeted in Eau Claire, WI.

*"Our strike against Pioneer is a call to the Weevils and Borers of the world to join the growing resistance to the quickly approaching 'Farmageddon'. Crops, research facilities and corporate offices are all sources of this technological threat and should be targeted. Genetic modification of plants is a dangerous experiment on nature and people, and should be stopped.."* -Bolt Weevils



## The UMN Raid

The University of Minnesota aims to serve as an icon of progress for our state, representing a commitment to scholarship that eliminates programs for disadvantaged students, and a dedication to groundbreaking scientific research that tortures and kills animals to the tune of 150,000 dead each year. Resistance to animal cruelty has been strong in Minnesota, most evidently in the landmark blow dealt to vivisectionists on April 5, 1999, when activists under the banner of the Animal Liberation Front raided twelve UofM animal laboratories in Minneapolis, initiating a resurgence in actions aimed directly at researchers, which that hadn't been seen much in the 12 years previous. 48 mice, 36 rats, 27 pigeons, and 5 salamanders were liberated; research documents, photography and video evidence were taken to expose the animals' cruel living conditions; cages, computers, and scientific equipment were destroyed. The most destructive ALF action since 1987, over \$2 million worth of damage was inflicted on the two buildings housing the targeted facilities: Elliot Hall, a psychology building, and the Lions Research Building, a biomedical center hosting a variety of projects centered around the scientific exploitation of humans and non-humans alike. In the aftermath of the raid, the University and the local media expressed vehement outrage that ALF "terrorists" had thrown tacks in the way of the grand march of Progress, impeding the scientists' right to distill cures for Alzheimer's and cancer from the dissected bodies of living animals. Clearly, radical Minnesota has a different idea of the values for which it wishes to be known.



## The May Battles

"MISS DEWSON.

CHAIRMAN [DEMOCRATIC] NATIONAL COMMITTEE WAS DC TERRIBLE STRIKE HERE UTTERLY MISMANAGED ONE OF OUR FINEST YOUNG MEN JUST KILLED AND HIS BROTHER SERIOUSLY INJURED AND MANY OTHERS IN JEOPARDY SACRIFICING THEMSELVES AS DEPUTY SHERIFFS IN SUPPORTING POLICE AGAINST RIOTERS WOMEN OF MINNEAPOLIS FINDING NO SECURITY AFFORDED HERE BEG YOU TO USE YOUR INFLUENCE TO SECURE SOME IMMEDIATE FORM INTERVENTION BY NATIONAL ADMINISTRATION.

MRS CHARLES S PILLSBURY MRS ELBERT CARPENTER

*[penciled on telegram] (I have written Mrs. Pillsbury (the flour magnates) that I would give this to the President. It would be fine if it was answered by the White House. She is a strong Democrat. Molly Deuson)*



On the zero hour of May 16, 1934, commerce in Minneapolis ground to a halt. Bosses awoke to find thousands of picketers guarding some fifty entrances to the city. Strikers forced

gas stations to shut down their pumps. Absent the usual roar of trucks, the Market (our modern day Warehouse District) remained eerily quiet.

The first few days of the strike passed peacefully, but on Saturday, May 19, with the city's food supply beginning to wane, the employers carried out their first major offensive against the strike. A union man who later admitted to being a paid spy lured two trucks full of picketers— women and men— to what was known as Newspaper Alley. There, police surrounded and clubbed the unarmed picketers. They returned that night to strike HQ (1900 Chicago Ave., by Peavey Park) beaten and bloodied.

All day Sunday picketers brought bludgeons to strike headquarters in preparation of another battle with police. They packed garden hoses with lead to make saps. The Carpenters Union donated two-by-twos of club length. Workers packed cardboard into their hats to make improvised helmets. One striker recalled an old man who came into HQ and asked if spokes of banisters would be handy as clubs. The strikers said 'sure,' and two hours later he returned with spokes he had pulled out of two flights of stairs in his house (Charles' Walker, *An American City*, 1937).

The employers spent the weekend deputizing several hundred suburbanites, whom they gave clubs and sent into the Market on Monday, May 21. Doubtless these young fellas had no idea what they were getting into, and when 600 strikers marched four abreast into the Market, and then when 900 more strikers arrived from HQ and encircled the cops, these "special" deputies took off and left the city police to deal with the union. At the end of the day, some thirty uniformed police and a number of deputies lay in hospital beds. No clear victor emerged from Monday's battle, but folks felt pleased they had fought armed policemen to a draw and kept any trucks from moving.

On Tuesday, the two armies again assembled in the Market. As many as 25,000 spectators crowded on sidewalks, rooftops, or peered out of open windows, cheering or jeering as they pleased. Reporters from KSTP radio and all the major local newspapers had come; in KSTP's case, ready to relate play-by-play commentary to eager Minnesotans not in attendance.

The final blow might seem anti-climactic in the wake of the preceding events. The death knell sounded just weeks after the WTO protests in Seattle, which were attended by many Free Staters. On December 11, a State Patrol search-and-rescue squad in coveralls and full-body harnesses removed the protesters. Troopers used a cherry picker and even a Minneapolis Fire Department ladder truck to reach the protesters and pull them from the trees. The arrests proceeded mostly without incident, lacking the rancor of the earlier confrontation. This happened because EF!ers and others respected the wishes of Native activists to avoid the scenes of chaos that had become commonplace. Authorities seemed to have gone out of their way to prepare, warning Free Staters of the raid earlier in the week; State Patrol Capt. Kevin Kittridge even joined in an Indian pipe ceremony at the site in November 1999. By the end of the day, dozens were pulled from trees and the Minnehaha Free State became a piece of history.



As mentioned, this was the first urban anti-road occupation in US history. There are many lessons for future anti-road activists, including those currently fighting against I-69, the NAFTA Superhighway. It took EF! out of the woods and into the streets, and became a playground for experimenting with new ways of resisting and living. Indeed, many here in the Twin Cities look back at the Free State as their introduction to radical politics and are still active in the community today. Nothing since has been a focal point (or tinderbox) for so many different people to get active.



Inside the houses, young women and men woke to the horror of tear gas-filled rooms (rooms as small as 10' x 10' were bombarded with up to five canisters of the toxin). Those who did not vacate quickly discovered troopers penetrating their barricades.

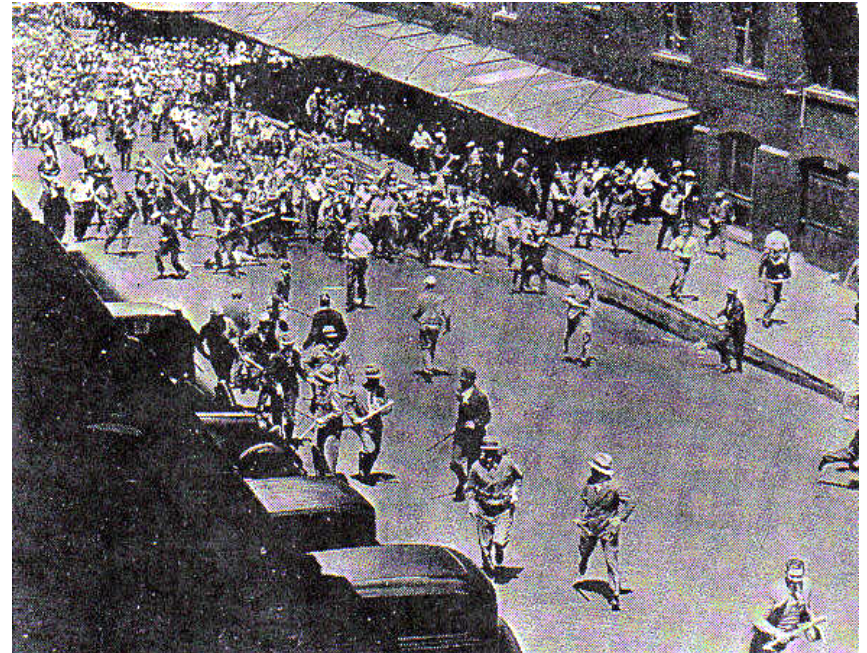


The troopers beat some people severely; a woman's nose was pushed back so hard that it broke, and a man had his head beaten bloody as the raiders carried him out of a basement, forcing his head into each stair. Many of the 37 people arrested had pepper spray applied directly and repeatedly to their open eyes. Nearly all were denied medical attention. In one iconic photo, Santa Claus is shown

locked down to the chimney of the EF! house, an image seen around the country five days before Christmas. Nationally syndicated *Democracy Now!* broadcast the tear gas-induced gasps of two resisters who called during the raid.

On Dec 26, 1998, the Coldwater Nation set up a village in the middle of Minnehaha Park, complete with places to sleep (the "Star Lodge") places to eat ("Coldwater Café"), places to worship (the Sacred Fire), and places for security—"treesitting" describes one of those. And then there were the Four Sacred Trees, which were originally planted in 1862 at the time of the Dakota uprising, and which represented a spiritual signpost to Native Americans. MNDOT and the state didn't agree that the trees were sacred, and so, shamefully, the trees were cut down.

The Second Encampment quickly became another hotspot, with daily incursions against surveyors and construction crews. The Summer of 1999 saw resistance at its highest, with tree-sits sprouting up and down the corridor like morels after a rainstorm. Mass trespasses and solidarity actions, including several ELF actions that caused close to \$1 million in damages, were cheered by radicals and community members alike.



This time the union victory was decisive. Within an hour, the cops and deputies had fled the Market. By evening, strikers were in absolute control of the streets, directing traffic at street-corners. In what came to be known as the Battle of Deputies' Run, two special deputies were killed, one of whom had been a lawyer and vice president of the American Ball Company.

In the fallout of the Tuesday battle, Governor Floyd B. Olson mobilized 3700 National Guardsmen and secured a 48-hour truce between the workers and bosses. Employers were adamant about not bargaining with the commies of Local 574, but, losing money and sensing unfavorable public opinion, they returned to the negotiating table. On May 31, both parties signed an ambiguously worded agreement guaranteeing Local 574's right to arbitrate wage scales for its members.

#### *Bloody Friday and the July/ August Strike*

By the middle of July, Minneapolis found itself on the brink of another truck drivers' strike. In most cases, employers were refusing to meet with 574 leaders. When they did meet, they were

refusing to recognize the right of the union to represent inside workers. On July 16, workers voted to strike yet again.

If the May strike had been an example of victory through effective club-to-club battle, strike leaders' actions prior to the July strike showed that armed militancy was, for the union, a *tactic* rather than a *strategy*. Local 574 had taken the bosses by surprise in May; they knew that would not again be the case. So strike organizers successfully lobbied the workers to accept a strike program in which, if there were any violence, it would not be 574 that started it.

On July 19, Police Chief Mike Johannes, who had been embarrassed in May, decided to break the strike. Police officers were issued sawed-off shotguns and ordered: "We're going to start moving goods. Don't take a beating. You have shotguns and you know how to use them" (Minneapolis Tribune, July 19<sup>th</sup>, 1934). 150 armed cops publicly convoyed a truck conspicuously labeled "Hospital Supplies" through the Market district. Johannes hoped to draw strikers into a confrontation, but strikers avoided the convoy and the day passed without event.

The next day, on what came to be known as "Bloody Friday," an unmarked truck drove into the Market and began unloading merchandise. When the scabs were finished, they returned to the truck and, with an escort of 48 armed cops in twelve squad cars, pulled out and turned onto Third Street North. Another truck, this one filled with picketers, flew down the road and rammed into it. Police quickly exited their cars and lined the sidewalks. Before the picketers could leave their truck, cops opened fire from both sides of the street. When they were finished with the workers in the truck, the officers turned their guns on anyone in the area not in uniform. Strikers hurried the fallen picketers back to union headquarters. One woman recalled:

*"When the first man was carried in, foaming at the mouth, gray as cement, unconscious, someone screamed. In less time than it can be told, 47 men lay on improvised cots, their bodies riddled with bullet wounds. ... One of them was a red-haired boy who had been a bystander. His hand shook as he accepted his cigarette. He smiled, whispered a weak 'thanks lady,' as he fainted." (Farrell Dobbs, Teamster Rebellion, 1972)*

American Indians, from whom all land on this continent was stolen in the first place.

The urban setting gave Earth First! an opportunity to unite with other revolutionary struggles. The Free State regularly sent large contingents to Free Mumia protests, anti-police brutality marches, and rallies and civil disobedience to end the bombing and sanctions against Iraq. This drew many of the people fighting for those causes into the campaign to stop the reroute. And as a result of Earth First! taking on a fairly mainstream community's struggle, many seemingly extreme tactics were taken out of the fringe, without compromising Earth First! principles. Entire elementary school classes would tour the encampment, learning not only how to lockdown to a tripod or concrete barrel, but also why someone might do such a thing.

The encampment was one of our country's longest urban occupations, second only to the 18-month occupation of Alcatraz Island, where thousands of Native Americans occupied the abandoned remains of the island's federal penitentiary to protest the U.S. government's human rights abuses, myriad broken treaties, and lack of respect for tribal sovereignty.

On December 20, 1998, just after 4 a.m., seven Ryder trucks stormed into a residential Minneapolis neighborhood at dangerously high speeds with their lights turned off. As each drove up beside a different house, men dressed in black piled out, some wearing gas masks, some carrying tear gas canisters, some touting laser-scope assault weapons. Soon an area about the size of a full city block was cordoned off. Helicopters hovered overhead. Sniper units were visible. Over 800 cops were present in what became the largest police action in Minnesota history, "Operation Coldsnap."





Minnehaha Falls. It was bordered by 52nd Street on the north, Fort Snelling State Park on the east, the Bureau of Mines complex on the south (adjacent to Coldwater Spring) and Mailbox Road, 54th Street and Riverview Road on the west.



A multi-tactic, popular campaign ensued, carried out by a broad-based, cross-cultural coalition. While members of the “Stop the Reroute” neighborhood coalition continued pursuing lawsuits and other legal means, Earth First! set up lockdowns in and around the condemned homes. Tree houses went up. The Mendota Mdewakanton and AIM set up tipis, sacred staffs, and a sacred fire, and began effective organizing within the native community. Supporters from all over the city brought supplies such as batteries for the radio communications system, food, clothing, tents, and blankets. An empty shed made way for a free store in order to distribute the goods, and occupants shared labor and food in the free kitchen. Late-season victory gardens replaced neatly mowed lawns.

Soon the occupation became a cultural center in the Twin Cities despite “NO TRESPASSING” signs, which individuals and even families routinely disregarded. A stage was erected to host open-mike coffeehouses. The Critical Mass bike ride made a point of swinging by on its monthly routes. Sweats and other Native American ceremonies were held regularly, including a pow-wow attended by over 500 people. The “diggeresque” presence on state-acquired land challenged the very notion that land can be owned, especially in light of the fact that half the camp was comprised of

All told, 67 picketers and bystanders received bullet wounds; many were shot multiple times and two, Henry Ness and John Belor, died.



Bloody Friday sparked a wave of indignation from Minneapolis residents. Farmer-Labor Governor Floyd B. Olson, feeling that his labor constituency would not tolerate the deaths of any more strikers, declared martial law in Minneapolis on July 25.

Olson tried to pressure the bosses into bargaining by supporting the strike and issuing permits only to those trucks deemed essential to public safety (medical supplies, food, cigarettes, etc). When the employers didn't budge, Olson, utilizing his own diversity of tactics, sent 1,000 National Guards and a company of machine gunners to union HQ to arrest the Dunne brothers. He hoped that removing 574's radical leadership would give rise to a new, more conservative leadership. This did not occur.



The experience of the three strikes had made leaders out of hundreds of rank-and-file unionists. Far from conservative, these guys operated with the same militant, class-conscious mindset as the Dunnes. When guardsmen shut down HQ (this time located on S. 8<sup>th</sup> St.), picket captains responded by decentralizing the union, establishing some twenty “curb headquarters” throughout the city. Resentful of the raid, picket captains ordered the immediate resumption of wide-scale picketing in the face of the National Guard.

After witnessing the capable secondary leadership and resurgent militancy of the union, Olson completely reversed his strategy. Strike leaders were set free, the union was allowed to return to its headquarters, and on August 5, Olson revoked all trucking permits.



Three days later, President Roosevelt came to Rochester, MN, to attend a ceremony in honor of the Mayo brothers. Olson spoke to him about the strike, and together they devised a strategy to put financial pressure on the employers’ organization and force them to settle. On August 21, both sides reached a settlement that

## The Minnehaha Free State

A recent act of resistance in Minnesota was the Minnehaha Free State. Much has been written on the subject, including two books and countless articles. It is important to look at this occupation, as much can be learned from the motley coalition of direct actionists, Native activists, and neighborhood residents. Some were inspired by British anti-road campaigns, some wanted to save their sacred lands and reclaim their history, and others wanted to preserve their backyards and dwindling parklands. Together, they set in motion an historic 16 months that still reverberate in the mythology of the Twin Cities. This article cannot do full justice, nor will it attempt to; it is a short piece meant to show the power that exists in collectively saying “NO!” to the Powers That Be.



When the legal system failed them, the community resistance to the Highway 55 Reroute invited Big Woods Earth First! to utilize its nonviolent direct action tactics in defense of the area. Through Earth First!, the Mendota Mdewakanton Dakota community and the American Indian Movement (AIM) became involved in the struggle. The Mendota were the original inhabitants of the condemned area, and were actually promised this land- and much more- by the US government in an 1863 treaty. On August 10, 1998, the day the first homes were scheduled for demolition, Earth First!, the Mendota, AIM, and others, began a nonviolent occupation on the condemned corridor. They declared it the Minnehaha Free State.

The Free State encampment encompassed a portion of the B’dota, or traditional sacred area—stretching from the confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers up to



*Minnesota has also been home to ALF actions that were not taken as part of Operation Bite Back:*

April 5, 1999: University of MN labs vandalized. Vandals destroy research on neurological diseases, cancer vaccine. Damage: \$2 million. ALF claims guilt.

November 14, 2004: Iowa University Psychology Dept. vandalized, animals stolen. Damage: \$450,000. ALF claims guilt.

November 12-15, 2004: Science building extensively damaged. Over \$1 million in damage to a building under construction at University of Minnesota Duluth.

May 14, 2007: Quail released at Town of Mitchell hunting club, in Sheboygan, Wisconsin. Damages of vandalism and releases totaled \$12,000. 30 quail released.

guaranteed, among other things, union recognition and wage increases for all workers who had been involved in the strikes.

#### *Lessons and Reverberations*

#### *"VICTORY"*

*-Organizer headline, August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1934*

After the summer of 1934, the violent tactics of Local 574 became the model for unions in Minneapolis. Within the next year, strikers at the Flour City Ornamental Iron Works and Strutwear Knitting Company factories followed 574's lead by taking a militant stance towards strikebreakers- police and scabs alike.

Workers learned from the experience of the July-August strike that though the official role of the police department was to protect people- *all* people- the police program was not formulated by the police themselves or even necessarily those with authority in the state bureaucracy; it was instead dictated by those with the greatest financial resources- the employers.

An incident in 1938 demonstrated that the union took this lesson to heart. The economic downturn that began in 1937 gave rise to fascist groups throughout America mirroring those in Europe. One of these organizations, the Silver Shirts of America, was invited by a group of bosses in the summer of 1938 to begin an organizing drive in Minneapolis. The Minneapolis business community funded the Silver Shirts with the understanding that they would carry out a "vigilante attack" on the Teamsters' union. Rather than look to the police for protection, the Teamsters formed their own militia called the Union Defense Guard, which succeeded in intimidating the Silver Shirts out of Minnesota without a battle.

For us 21<sup>st</sup> century cats, the Teamsters Strike demonstrates the importance of organizing with a commitment to a diversity of tactics. In the May Battles, 574 endorsed a violent strategy of stair banister vs. billy club battle. In July, when the violence had escalated to sawed-off shotguns and federal troops, the union called for pickets to go unarmed and rely on public opinion.

Since the successful nonviolent organizing of the Civil Rights Movement in the '60s and '70s, the American labor movement has turned away from advocating the violent suppression of scabs. But the story of the 1934 Teamsters Strikes raises the question, would we have unions in Minnesota if the radicals who came before us had not used violence? More importantly, if you were fighting with your fellow workers to improve your lives and the bosses called in scabs to defeat you, what would you do?



February 13, 1999: Annendale, MN; Davidson fur farm, 6 foxes  
 August 3, 1999: Bristol, WI; Krieger fur farm, 3000 minks  
 August 8, 1999: Wisconsin; Fur farm feeding supplier arsoned  
 August 8, 1999: Plymouth, WI; Gene Meyer mink farm, 2500 minks  
 CLOSED!  
 September 12, 1999: Chandler, MN; Calvin Gunnink fur farm, 100  
 foxes  
 October 25, 1999: Chandler, MN; Calvin Gunnink fur farm, 5 lynx  
 March 13, 2000: Viraquo, WI; Fur farm feeding supplier arsoned  
 September 7, 2000: New Hampton, IA; 14000 minks  
 October 16, 2001: Iowa; 2000 minks  
 October 20, 2001: Iowa; 1600 minks  
 August 18, 2002: Iowa; 3000 minks CLOSED!  
 February 4, 2005: Eitzen, MN; Wiebke Fur Co., fire destroys  
 building  
 March 29, 2006: Howard Lake, MN; Latzig Mink Ranch, 200 mink  
 FOR PETER CLOSED!

*A communiqué for the most recent action (Howard Lake) read,*  
 "To all fur farmers, furriers, and profitters of death, this is the last  
 warning: close down your businesses, or with bolt cutters, fire, and  
 storm, we'll do it for you. You can try to scare us, you can try to  
 imprison us, and you can even try to kill us, but the day we stop will  
 be the day that the last animal has been freed from its cage."



*Totals from Operation Bite  
 Back 1995-2006 for  
 Minnesota Region Alone:*  
 57,610 Mink  
 536 foxes  
 5 lynx  
 1 coyote  
 2 fur companies arsoned  
 4 Fur Farms CLOSED!



## The ALF in Minnesota

The Animal Liberation Front is the name used by some autonomous groups or individuals who take direct actions in defense of animals. These actions vary from liberating mink from fur farms to burning down labs that test on animals.

While the first ALF action in the U.S. was reportedly the release of two dolphins in 1977, ALF actions did not become common in Minnesota and the surrounding area until the mid-nineties. Operation Bite Back, which had its first run in 1991-1992 as a campaign targeting research labs, hit the Midwest hard in its second incarnation: a campaign calling for the destruction of the fur industry. These actions began in 1995, and are continuing to this day.

### *Operation Bite Back*

August 13, 1995: Annendale, MN; Davidson fur farm, 1 coyote

January 1, 1996: Sheboygan, WI; Zimbal minkery, 400 minks

April 7, 1996: Howard Lake, MN; Latzig mink ranch, 1000 minks

November 12, 1996: Bloomington, MN; Alaskan Fur Co., arson  
\$2.25 million damage!

October 16, 1997: Watertown, SD, Turbak Mink Farm, 2500 mink

October 17, 1997: Sioux City, IA; Circle K fur farm, 5000 mink, 100  
foxes

October 24, 1997: Independence, WI; Smeija fur farm, 800 minks  
CLOSED!

October 25, 1997: Tomohawk, WI; Ott's mink farm, 300 minks

October 25, 1997: Medford, WI; Jack Dittrich minkery, 3000 minks

July 3, 1998: Middleton, WI; United Vaccines Research, 310 minks,  
vandalized

August 18, 1998: St. Cloud, MN; Mueller fur farm, 4000 minks

August 20, 1998: Guttenburg, IA; Hidden Valley fur farm, 330  
foxes CLOSED!

August 21, 1998: Jewell, IA; Isebrand fur farm, 3000 minks

August 27, 1998: Beloit, WI; Brown mink farm, 3000 minks

August 28, 1998: Rochester, MN; Zumbro River fur farm, 3000  
minks

October 26, 1998; Powers, MI; Pipkorn Inc, 5000 minks

## Minnesota s Antiwar Movement

Protests & protests. They symbolize the antiwar movement. We've had lots of those in Minnesota. We're kind of proud of it, in fact. We've consistently been able to stir shit up throughout our past. Maybe not as much as San Francisco or New York or Chicago, but, hey, we're working on it! From run-of-the-mill street protests to extended campaigns to masked direct action, it's all happened here.

The logical place to start is the anti-Vietnam War movement. Minnesota played a key role in politics because of Eugene McCarthy, but plenty happened among the common folk as well. There were several marches with more than 10,000 people, with much of the action happening around the University of Minnesota. One of the larger ones was on Vietnam Moratorium Day in October 1969. It was dwarfed a few months later on May 9, 1970, when a rally 100,000 strong took place in response to the invasion of Cambodia and the Kent State shootings. Draft resistance was also very strong here. There had been around 1000 criminal cases pertaining to the selective service by the end of the war, and surely many resisters slipped through the cracks.

But what exactly makes Minnesota special? These kinds of antiwar protests are everywhere- always have been. Well, for one, the state is well endowed in terms of arms manufacturers. We used to have Honeywell Corp, and today Alliant Tech is around (They're at 5050 Lincoln Drive, in Edina). But their presence does not go unchallenged; in fact, resistance to these corporations has been one of the strongest fronts of the antiwar movement. A group called the Honeywell Project has been around for decades. They started in 1968 with the Vietnam War and continued work until 1990, when the arms branch of Honeywell Corp spun off into Alliant Techsystems. The Honeywell Project primarily organized civil disobedience acts outside company quarters, and at its high point thousands of people were showing up.

As time went on protests became routine: sometimes police showed up with school buses for arrestees, other times they provided coffee and doughnuts, and the company became adept at planning around any disruptions or rallies. When the Honeywell

Project disbanded in 1990, energy was redirected towards the new Alliant Tech Corporation. Sit-ins and protests have been happening there every week from at least 1996 through the present, and more radical actions are not unheard of.

So speaking of more radical actions- what else has been going on? Maybe something in the streets instead of a corporate lawn? What about the Revolutionary Anarchist Bowling League? Ever heard of them? "Bowl a strike, not a spare/Revolution everywhere," went one of their slogans. Their "claim to fame" comes from some broken recruiting station windows, admittedly not the most creative direct action. Lots of cities have done it, Milwaukee and DC for two. What sets RABL apart is in their name; they did their shit with a freaking bowling ball. It went down on March 18, 1988 at a recruiting station on Lake Street in response to U.S. military actions in South America and the invasion of Honduras.

The sound of breaking glass was heard as the ball went flying in. Many other antiwar/peace groups strongly disliked the militancy and openly denounced it, but not everyone you might expect; at least one local newspaper article from around the time printed quotes sympathetic of direct action. Some former members believe bowling balls helped stop the war (apparently a Reagan official was quoted saying so), but at the very least the action built more active resistance to go along with the traditional methods- "there were barricades in the streets, and a major business and traffic intersections of the city were occupied for three days," reported one participant. RABL and a related group called Love & Rage aren't around anymore, but they were active back in the late 80s, from about 1986 to after the first Gulf War in 1991.

Today in Minnesota there's a lot of the same old stuff; nothing as exciting as what happened with Vietnam, Honeywell, or in the late 80's, but similar to what is happening nationwide. Protests in the thousands, but not tens or hundreds of thousands; small acts of civil disobedience and direct action. Yet, nothing overarching. But, as these kids somewhere like to say, "The future is unwritten." We can draw on the past and start something new today.

after us. Realizing what we were up against, we decided to keep our zoning and live with it.

This whole zoning thing is fucked because it's totally bureaucratic, classist, and has this whole façade that somehow the community is controlling its own destiny. Like all good government agencies, zoning is totally bureaucratic. We were constantly on the phone with the zoning office, the neighborhood association, and Tony Scallon's office trying to find out what we could do, whose approval we needed, what our options were, and other headaches. If bureaucracy isn't an argument for anarchy, I don't know what is! Like most government agencies in the U.S., the whole rezoning procedure is totally biased toward the middle and upper classes. Note that we needed signatures from surrounding property owners; never mind that everyone who lives or works around us rents. Hmm: White property owners having decision-making power over the fate of neighborhoods significantly occupied by lower and lower-middle class Blacks: how unusual! The actual residents of the neighborhood have little or no say as to what goes on around their homes. Equally infuriating, this whole process has a smelly air of legitimacy because the "community" supposedly has the power to influence the city council's decision. The "community" is supposedly represented by the neighborhood association- who actually do have influential power with the city council in these matters- but from what I can tell, our neighborhood association board of directors is overwhelmingly white, middle class, and own property, which is not an accurate reflection of the community's racial and class makeup. Of course, this doesn't even address the fact that hierarchical representation of this form is a joke that only direct participation by the neighbors themselves can accurately represent a community's interests.

zoning. They asked us if we were zoned for the things we wanted to do, if we had off-street parking, if we had run this through the zoning office and our local city council “representative,” etc. Uhhhh, errr, we don’t know.

So we called the zoning office the next day and found out that half the stuff we wanted to do, we can’t because we aren’t zoned for it. Making a long, painful story short, we finally went down to the zoning office, talked to a zoning aide, and found out exactly what we could do: sell books, “gifts,” have a reading room in the front of the store, and allow “private clubs” to have meetings at the space. This won’t cramp our style too much, as we’re still going to do a lot of great things, but it is a drag.

The moral of the story is: if you’re going to do things the legal way like we have (i.e. by not squatting), check out the zoning of a space before you sign a lease, because it’s really hard to change the zoning, as we found out. You see, we decided to try to upgrade the zoning because it would give us more flexibility with the space, but to change zoning you have to get a list of property owners within 100 feet of the space and have 2/3 of them sign an affidavit saying that they approve of you trying to change your zoning. Theoretically, you then take these signatures to the City Council, who then votes to approve/disapprove the rezoning proposal. However, the politics of the situation are quite different. Property owners’ signatures are not enough. If you don’t have the approval of your ward’s city council person (ours is Tony Scallon, an ex-cop) and your local neighborhood association (for you out-of-towners: Minneapolis is broken up into 88 different neighborhoods and each one has a neighborhood association that has been christened by the city as the “voice” of the neighborhood), your chances of getting a zoning upgrade are next to zero, no matter how many signatures you have. Of course, both the neighborhood association and our good ex-cop friend strongly discouraged us from trying to rezone, because it supposedly lowers the surrounding property values and because once you rezone a space it stays at that zoning even after you move out. So, while both groups said they had no problems with what we wanted to do with the space, rezoning would allow “less savory” businesses to move in

## Stop Making Bombs and Go Back to Making Honey

### The Honeywell Project vs. Honeywell Incorporated

*“It’s aerial terrorism.”\**

Until the late 1980s, Honeywell Inc. was Minnesota’s largest military contractor, manufacturing guidance systems for nuclear weapons and military aircraft, as well as cluster-bombs (steel ball bearings imbedded in a steel shell that, when exploded, project at 2,200 feet per second). During the Vietnam War in 1968, anti-war activist Marv Davidov started the Honeywell Project—a non-violent direct action group that sought to stop corporate war profiteering. The project demanded that Honeywell Inc. convert into a worker and community controlled business without the loss of jobs, and end all manufacturing of components for nuclear and other conventional weapons systems.

*“To be moral in America is to be subversive”*

In the beginning, the Honeywell Project was primarily involved with putting on educational events and large-scale demos in South Minneapolis at the Honeywell Inc. corporate headquarters. By the 1980s, nonviolent civil disobedience became the tactical focus of the group. Actions quickly grew in size—in November of 1982, 36 people were arrested for blocking the entrances of the corporate headquarters, by October of 1983, thousands sustained a blockade at the same entrances resulting in the arrest of 577, including the wife of then-Minneapolis Police Chief Tony Bouza.

*“It’s all connected. It’s never a single-issue.”*

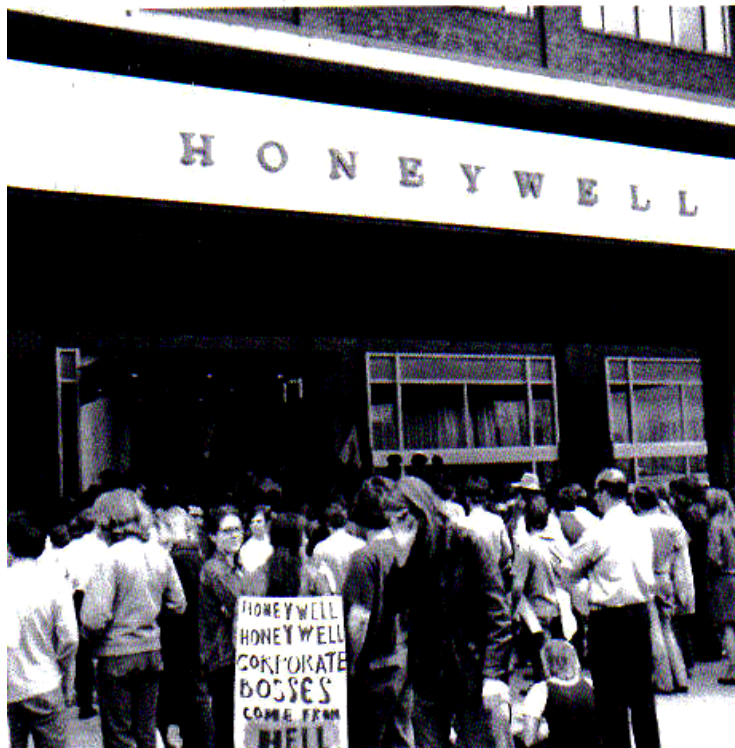
Made up of activists from various religious and political backgrounds as well as ages, the Honeywell Project was open to anyone. The group subsequently endured over three years of FBI infiltration, which culminated with the American Civil Liberties Union winning a lawsuit filed in 1977 against the U.S. Federal Government and the Honeywell Corporation. \$70,000 in damages was paid to the activists, which was donated to the Shovels for Laos Project that worked to prevent Laotian, Vietnamese, and Cambodian farmers from triggering old landmines by providing



them with shovels in order to dig slower so that when they hit metal, they can stop without detonating any hidden devices.

*"Everybody's got deep private thoughts and feelings about justice, peace...and the problem then becomes how you live out these deep yearnings for truth and justice in a public way."*

Participation in the Honeywell Project was on and off. Founder Marv Davidov once explained in an interview: "the Honeywell Project fell apart three times during the 22 year history...and we put it together each time and went on, because the average staying power of protest is maybe six to eight months and what it takes is a lifetime—many, many people taking a little part of the wheel and then turning it." Overall cops made over 2,100 arrests at Honeywell Headquarters from 1982-1989, and Honeywell Inc.'s inability to install a testing site for weapons systems in the Black Hills of South Dakota has been widely credited to the opposition mounted by Native Americans and white ranchers in coalition with the Honeywell Project.



### *Hassles and Other Crap*

There have been plenty of headaches in putting Emma together. Besides some really long meetings and a lack of money to put into getting merchandise, we've had hassles from the nice, liberal City of Minneapolis. First, they decided to tear up the street in front of our store for a half mile in either direction. Right now the street is total chaos, putting a hamper on a lot of walk-in and drive-by business we hoped to get from the neighborhood and making the space inaccessible enough for people to avoid coming over. Right now, Emma is accessible via 35th Street, but Bloomington Avenue won't be open until September at the earliest, and maybe not until Thanksgiving, so this was a fine welcome by the City of Lakes.

### *Zoned Out*

However, road construction has been but a fleck of dust on a rare 7" compared to the major headaches we've had with the Minneapolis zoning commission. You see, when we began thinking about how great it would be to have an anarchist community center, we brainstormed a bunch of ideas and then made more formal proposals to the collective. Once we approved the proposals and developed some idea as to what we wanted to do with the center (which included selling books, zines, records and locally made arts and crafts, offering daycare, having gigs and plays, having an anarchist coffeehouse, providing an open space for meetings, etc.), we thought it was as simple as finding a space and doing it. Oh naïveté! We went out, found ourselves a cool, cheap space, began fixing it up, and generally had our hopes sky high and the cockles of our little antiauthoritarian hearts all warm and cuddly. However, trouble soon brewed. After a routine call to the neighborhood association by the community relations committee to say "Hi! We're here!" and to establish some sort of communication with them, we were met with all sorts of questions, concerns, and furrowed brows (okay, so we talked to them on the phone, but I'll bet their brows were furrowed). We went to one of their Land Use meetings, and to our surprise, found ourselves at the top of the agenda. The people were nice enough and I doubt they were out to get us, but they introduced us to a nightmare from which we're still recovering:

the center. Assembly decisions are made on a one-person, one-vote basis where each person has equal power. Optimally, decisions are made by consensus, but if consensus cannot be reached on a matter that requires a decision, decisions are made based on a two-thirds majority vote within the collective. Dissenting opinions are given full expression before and after any vote, and efforts are made to accommodate minority interests as much as possible without damaging the integrity of the collective and the democratic process. However, despite our charter, ultimate power resides in the general assembly, not some written document. The charter, which merely helps us formalize (and remember!) our structure in order to prevent informal hierarchies from developing, can be changed at any general assembly (and it has!) so long as the changes made are in keeping with the spirit of the original charter and Emma's policies and Statement of Purpose. This keeps Emma's organization flexible to the needs of the collective and (hopefully) the community, while keeping folks from being able to change the charter so they can elect a King or a Vanguard Committee or some other form of authoritarian bullshit.

### *Paying the Bills*

So how in the hell are we going to pay for Emma? There are two primary methods: selling merchandise and soliciting pledges. Selling merchandise (mostly books, periodicals, records, and locally made stuff) is pretty self-explanatory, but pledges are a bit unorthodox for a store. Basically, to ensure that we can pay our rent and guarantee our financial stability, we ask people (mostly from the anarchist and punk communities) to pledge a certain amount of money to Emma per month. We ask for anything people can afford to send whether it's \$5 or \$50. If people pledge \$10 or more per month, they are considered collective members and thus can vote in general assemblies and serve on committees. The pledge system, as long as people take it seriously, really helps the center financially and allows us to worry about more important things than money, like how to have an anarchist good time in the space!

*"There's only one way to take your name off the slaughter. You have to publicly resist...you have an obligation to do something, otherwise you're a fucking sellout."*

In 1989, Honeywell Inc. tried to sell their entire conventional weapons division to no avail, instead spinning off most of their military contracts to form a new company—Alliant Techsystems. While this was seen as a victory for the Honeywell Project, AlliantTech quickly grew to become the biggest producer of landmines in the United States, doing over a billion dollars of business annually. In 1997, the U.S. Federal Government sued AlliantTechsystems for exaggerating costs for a 1990 weapons contract, being accused of having fixed prices as the sole source of AT-4 Light Anti-Armor bazookas. Despite the lawsuit, AlliantTech remains open for business, but not uncontested, as many activists formerly involved with the Honeywell Project now campaign against AlliantTech in the group AlliantACTION that has been conducting weekly vigils outside of AlliantTech headquarters in the Minnesota suburbs since 1996, and continue to regularly engage in acts of non-violent civil disobedience. Marv Davidov, now an active member of AlliantACTION explains: "what we're doing at Alliant is an extension of what we started in 1968, so 28 years later, we're gonna win this one."

*\*all quotations taken from an interview with Marv Davidov, except for title which is a Jerry Rubin quote published in the STrib, April 28<sup>th</sup>, 1970*

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## Eight Days in May. Eight Days of Rage.

Despite the few successes the anti-war movement has had in the past few years, any means to real change has been hijacked by a shrill minority that wishes to impose permits, routes, parade marshals (e.g. peace police), zones of “protest” and other such nonsense, turning our rage and creativity into a well-ordered media spectacle, or worse, mass arrest. The constant and insincere calls for “solidarity” and “protecting others” have turned our once raucous resistance into an exercise of well-organized crowd control.

But it hasn't always been like this...

*University of Minnesota, May 10, 1972*

At about 1 p.m., University police were watching paper fall from broken windows. It was windy and the papers blew every which way, just as the rocks being thrown by protestors. Protestors were tearing down an iron fence surrounding the Armory. An overturned 1962 Chevrolet burned in the streets as protestors chanted: “One. Two. Three. Four. We don't want your fucking war.” A few blocks away, three 30-man squads of police in full riot gear were preparing to march



### *Membership*

Emma is a membership-run organization. Only those who are members of the collective have a vote and may serve on a committee. Members are those people who pledge \$10 a month to Emma to keep it financially stable or those who volunteer five hours a month to keep the place running. We made Emma a membership collective so that those people who are directly involved with Emma are the ones who decide its future. If we weren't member-run and anyone who walked into one of our meetings could vote, Emma could be overrun by Commies, liberal do-gooders, or even fascists. Emma is our space and we plan to keep it that way. Anyone is invited to be a member as long as s/he is willing to put in the time and/or money and agrees to abide by our policies.

### *Organizational Structure*

The basic organizational structure of Emma is federal: power is distributed among small (3-5 person) autonomous committees who are accountable to and united by the whole collective in monthly general assemblies. Some of the committees we have are financial, merchandise, coordinating, propaganda, women's space, security, and community relations. Committees do the bulk of the work and are autonomous in their day-to-day activities, but each committee is accountable to the entire collective and each committee's goals and proposals are subject to approval by the collective. All actions by committees are subject to criticism by any member of the collective (as well as from people outside the collective) at general assemblies. All committees work in a direct democratic fashion. Rotation of committee membership is voluntary, though strongly encouraged. We want anyone who is interested in working on a committee to have an opportunity to do so.

General assemblies meet on the last Monday of every month. Their purpose is to ensure that Emma is run in a direct-democratic, egalitarian manner and to encourage as much member participation in the running of Emma as possible. While only members may have a vote, any person from the anarchist or local community is welcome to come and voice his/her concerns about



be devoting more time to the advancement of the community center beyond more than a theory or idea. So TCAF decided to form a caucus that would deal solely with the community center. What came out of these weekly meetings was the establishment of proposed working groups that would keep Emma functioning as a collective of independent, autonomous bodies that would be held accountable to a larger general assembly. We wrote a proposed Community Center Charter, and set of community center principles. We then went ahead and applied for nonprofit status, which we now have.

Our lease started on July 1, so that makes seven months that we've been talking, researching and planning this action. In that period of time, many of us learned a lot about anarchist structure and collectivity. After signing the lease, many people became active in a massive cleanup and reconstruction. We had five big general assembly meetings in the center before we opened. They have been the most participatory large group meetings I've ever taken part in. What's come out of assemblies is the hope that as we become a stronger collective of anarchists working together under the principle of mutual aid and as we develop greater trust and commitment amongst each other- stuff that's already happening as we become more solidified as a larger collective- we will be able to make ties with the larger community and make them familiar with anarchist forms of organization and antiauthoritarian ideas.

### *Running Emma Anarchically*

One of the purposes of Emma is to demonstrate to people that anarchist forms of organization work and that they work better than exploitative, alienating forms of liberal capitalist organization. Therefore, the structure of Emma is as important as the merchandise we sell or the activities we have planned. Emma's structure is designed to ensure that the Center is a volunteer-run, non-profit, collective enterprise that is organized in an antiauthoritarian and nonhierarchical manner compatible with the basic anarchist principles of equality, individual freedom, and mutual aid. The basic structure is written up in our charter, approved unanimously by the collective, which provides some basic guidelines that help us run the center in an anarchistic way.

towards the armory. The University Vice-President had gotten wind that protestors planned to burn down the armory. So he called in the police.

The preceding weeks had been filled with attempted occupations at an Air Force base and Morrill Hall. Then on May 8, Nixon announced the bombing of Haiphong Harbor. What followed has come to be called the "Eight Days of May" occurring between May 9 – 16, 1972. These were the largest and most violent protests at the University. Beginning with a May 9 protest against the opening of the Cedar-Riverside Housing development, the protests quickly spread to the East Bank where confrontations between police and protestors occurred.

More than 3,000 protestors overtook the campus to protest the bombing. It began as a planned march to the Air Force recruiting office in Dinkytown, but a group of individuals occupied the building and trashed the recruiter's office. The protest quickly increased into a full-blown riot.



Rows of patrolmen moved toward the crossover bridge near the student union. Protesters standing on the crossing hurled bricks into the rows of police officers. One brick slammed a patrolman in the head, breaking the shield on his helmet. They were nearly in the midst of the crowd when they were ordered by their commander to retreat.

Windows had been broken at the recruiting station and Armory. Barricades were built at intersections along Washington. Teargas was dropped from helicopters throughout the Campus and surrounding Dinkytown since police could not get near the bands of protestors. With the growing hatred for the police and with no end in sight, the Vice-President of the University turned to the Governor for help. They called in the National Guard.

Over 550 guardsmen were called in the next day to patrol the campus. Yet, protestors continued to build barricades, and a group had gathered on I-94 and stopped traffic. A rally at the Coffman Union drew 6,500 people. Several explosions and fires occurred on the campus throughout the evening and night. There was an explosion in a Kolthoff Hall chemistry laboratory; a fire in the basement of Ford Hall; and a gasoline bomb thrown through a chemistry building window.



At 5 a.m., May 12, protestors confronted police and National Guardsmen who attempted to remove a barricade at University and Church St. After a rally at the Coffman Union at noon, protestors reoccupied Washington and eventually established a blockade at the bridge near Ford Hall. Occupations and blockades were seen as a way of stopping "business as usual" at places that

## The Emma Center

The Emma Center was a collectively run anarchist community center opened in South Minneapolis during the summer of 1992. As a project formed by the Twin Cities Anarchist Federation, it also meant involvement by Profane Existence collective members from the onset.

The following article, which appeared in *Profane Existence* #16 (September/October 1992) gives a pretty thorough background of the formation and internal workings of the space. Profane Existence members would maintain official involvement in the space until late 1993 when disagreements over policies, politics, and personalities finally created an unbridgeable chasm between the two collectives. But that is a story for another time..

### *His/Herstory of Emma*

The opening of Emma Center is a small victory in a larger revolutionary struggle for collectivization and self-determination and freedom from authoritarian, sexist, homophobic, racist, classist, ableist, and ageist structures (sound P.C.?, you bet your fuckin bootie girlfriend, and damn proud). Part of an anarchist vision is to work towards creating a new society and Emma is a step towards that for the Minneapolis anarchist community.

The idea to open an anarchist-organized community center came out of discussions in TCAF (Twin Cities Anarchist Federation) meetings last winter. Some general goals were laid out in the beginning: The center would function to tighten the anarchist community in the Twin Cities, serve as an educational information tool and network, and be able to provide certain services to the surrounding communities, like child care, a food shelf, a soup kitchen, a bookstore, a meeting place for anarchist organizing, and a place for accessible all-age gigs and events like art shows, theater, and other forms of performances. TCAF spent a few months trying to brainstorm and hash through all this talk in the hopes that talk would lead to action. So, because discussion was starting to feel just like that and only that, we realized that TCAF was not the place for organizing the center because TCAF is not, and should not be, singularly focused on one issue. But many of us also felt the need to

Aryan Nations and heavily infiltrated by police and FBI, shot and killed five anti-Klan protestors in Greensboro, North Carolina.

Like the subcultures that were the social base for this particular anti-racist movement, the gathering was predominately white, although people of color of all ages played important roles. Women were outnumbered but vocal. The dominant political tendency was anarchist, but there was a commitment to non-sectarianism and small groups of Trotskyists were also involved. Some of the key older organizers had a long history of work, dating back to Students for a Democratic Society in the 1960s.

The ARA Network grew like crazy for several years. Annual gatherings drew hundreds of people and new groups were forming all over Canada and the US. By 2003, the growth spurt had ended. The anti-globalization movement became the next "new thing" and many kids who wanted to get into activism were more turned on by Seattle, Washington and Quebec City than in confronting some loser boneheads. Now, with US aggression sparking the biggest anti-war movement in world history, anti-racist and anti-fascist activists have to look within themselves again and ask -how are we relevant to what's going on today?

But ARA has kept with the program and is into something more slow and steady. There are dozens of committed and experienced ARA organizers across North America and several strong chapters with a lot of history. ARA is still fighting the fash at Klan rallies and white power shows all over North America. It's writing to prisoners and standing up for First Nations and immigrant rights. In lots of places, ARA has become part of youth subculture, something taken for granted like punk or hiphop. And it's learning more about how it fits into a world of social movements and struggles as ARA puts down roots in South and Central America.

For years, ARA has been able to popularize the ideas of direct action in the fight against racism. It's also been an arena for debate and action around the connectedness of various forms of oppression. As we ACT we become CONSCIOUS, and our consciousness flows into our action. And all of it outside of the control of the government, multinationals, religious institutions or other authorities.

contributed to the war effort, either directly or indirectly. One protestor had remarked, "Vietnam permeated everything. By stopping traffic, you could help stop the war."

Teach-ins were called for May 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>. This was hosted by Communities for an Open and Peaceful Education, a group of students, faculty, and staff to communicate campus action towards Vietnam. "The feeling was that things had been taken too far," recalled a COPE member. "We'd channel the energies people had in protesting the war towards positive things." Meanwhile, Marv



Davidov helped to lead an occupation of Johnston Hall. By the time of the teach-ins, campus tensions had died down.

U.S. military involvement in Vietnam ended in 1973 as a result of sustained guerilla warfare on behalf of the National Liberation Front and the Viet Cong. Student moods changed quickly after the war. One of the participants later noted, "By the late '70s, apathy set in, and it's continued to this day."

## No Longer AIMless

The American Indian Movement was born in the ghetto streets of Minneapolis, MN during the summer of 1968. However, many members of AIM suggest that it is only the most contemporary manifestation of a long history of indigenous resistance to colonial powers. Minneapolis is home to a sizeable Native American population, many of whom were displaced as a result of treaties and boarding schools, and others who transit back-and-forth between reservations and the urban center.

The Minneapolis police were known by many for their brutality, and not much has changed since the 60's. After extensive police abuse against indigenous people, AIM was formed to patrol the streets and fight this brutality. Using a communications system of CB radios and police scanners, the AIM patrol would get to scenes of alleged crimes before or just as the police would arrive.

Many of the early members of AIM were urban Indians who had felt alienated from the dominant, white society and were also disconnected from their Native heritage. In fact, one of the founders Clyde Bellecourt knew very little about his Ojibwe heritage until he met Eddie Benton Banai in prison. It was in the prisons of Minnesota that the idea of a national Indian liberation movement began to form.

Modeling themselves after the Black Panthers, AIM's initial work included finding work, housing, and legal aid for Indians in the Minneapolis neighborhoods in addition to help at protests and establishing the AIM patrols. When the occupation of Alcatraz Island began in 1969, several AIM members went to aid the United Indians of All Tribes to reclaim the federal island for Native Nations.

Minneapolis' AIM chapter also staged an occupation at the abandoned Naval Air Station near Minneapolis. The purpose was to focus attention on Indian education. Later that year, AIM assisted the Lac Court Orieles Ojibwe in Wisconsin in a takeover of a dam. The dam was controlled by Northern States Power and had caused extensive flooding on reservation land. The result of the dam takeover was a settlement including a return of 25,000 acres to the tribe.

cue from the words of groups like Public Enemy, for many ARA Skins America was a racist nightmare and the Stars and Stripes a symbol for "a land that never gave a damn."

Up in Canada, anti-racist skinheads and others in the youth subcultures were also uniting to get Nazis out of their scenes. From 1990 to 1992 in Edmonton, the Anti-Fascist League waged a street-level propaganda war against a racist gang called the Final Solution, who were recruited and manipulated by the Aryan Nations. In Winnipeg, the United Against Racism crew fought to keep the bars and streets free of fascist violence, and in 1992, Toronto's Anti-Racist Action formed to take on a similar threat posed by the neo-Nazi Heritage Front.

Toronto's ARA was inspired especially by the Minneapolis chapter, where anarchists and feminists had tried to broaden the mandate of the early skinhead fighting crews. From the jump, ARA Toronto included several activists with lots of experience in feminist, anarchist, and First Nations solidarity groups.

In 1994, ARA Toronto attended the first conference of the Midwest Anti-Fascist Network in Columbus, Ohio. The conference was called by Columbus' ARA group to coordinate and sustain the constant protests against Klan rallies throughout the Midwestern

**ANTI-RACIST**



**ACTION**

U.S. -- rallies that were often protected by legions of heavily armed police. Most conference-goers were high-school students, punks, and kids who fought with their schools over dress codes and the right to distribute political literature. Several veterans of the early ARA crews of Chicago and Minneapolis drove in for the gathering even though their own groups were pretty inactive.

This was not a government-funded, corporate-sponsored conference. The keynote speaker was a survivor of the "Greensboro Massacre" of 1979, when a Klan cell linked to the



## Anti-Racist Action (ARA)

ARA originally came out of the efforts of Minneapolis anti-racist Skinheads to create an organization that could combat the presence of Nazi skinheads in that city and its neighboring city, St. Paul. The Baldies, a multi-racial skinhead crew having members of Black, White, Asian, and Native American origins, was fighting the Nazi skinhead group, the White Knights, and had set a code within the local punk and skinhead scenes: if Baldies came upon White Knights at shows, in the streets downtown, or wherever, the Nazis were warned once. If Baldies came across them again, then the Nazis could expect to be attacked, or served some of what the Baldies called "Righteous Violence."

While the Baldies' actions went a long way toward limiting the presence and organizing efforts of Nazis in the Twin Cities, the Baldies realized that a successful drive against the Nazis would mean having to form a broader group that appealed to kids other than just Skins. ARA was that group. However, the attempt to make ARA into a group beyond the Baldies was met with limited success, and ARA remained predominantly skinhead.

The experience of the Baldies was not limited to Minneapolis alone. Across the Midwest, Nazi activity was growing and anti-racist Skinheads were organizing in similar ways to what the Baldies had done. Soon, these different anti-racist skinhead crews were meeting up with each other and deciding to create a united organization of anti-racist skinhead crews. ARA as a name was adopted and a brief network of the crews was formed: the Syndicate.

Like Minneapolis, Chicago had multi-racial crews. These ARA skins were generally left-wing sympathetic and in Chicago it was not uncommon to find some Skins warm to Black liberation/Nationalist ideas. And it was not just racist and Nazi ideas that were confronted. The Chicago ARA crew banned the wearing of American flags patches on jackets. At this point in time this was a rather significant step in Skinhead circles. While many Skinheads could claim to be "anti-racist", a vast majority also were ProAmS (Pro American Skins). It was generally unheard of to find whole crews of Skinheads rejecting patriotic trappings. Taking their

In 1972, several members of AIM helped to establish the Heart of the Earth Survival School. This was one of the first schools that was community-based, culturally-oriented, and operated under parental control. The school offered cultural programming and education for American Indian youth, who were otherwise dropping out of high school.

In 1973, Lakota elders at the Oglala Lakota reservation in Pine Ridge contacted AIM. The reservation was facing corruption in the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the tribal council. The GOONs (Guardians of the Oglala Nation) were waging the infamous "Reign of Terror" against traditionalists in the native community. AIM assisted the elders and traditionalists in the communities and ended up establishing an occupation of the town of Wounded Knee. This led to a 71-day standoff between 200 AIM members and federal agents.

The Wounded Knee incident had ended as a result of a two casualties, Buddy Lamont and Frank Clearwater. Despite the risk posed by the ongoing repression of native traditionalists and activists, members of AIM stayed at Pine Ridge to protect elders in the community from the GOONs. By the end of 1976, over 69 members of AIM or the traditional community had been killed by GOONs, BIA, police, and FBI agents. Included in this time was a botched FBI raid which left two FBI agents and one native defender, Joe Stuntz-Killsright, dead.

AIM members and veterans of Wounded Knee helped out when the occupation of Ganieneh in New York State began in 1974. The Mohawk warriors and the AIM supporters began a takeover of their traditional territories, and when an armed standoff began with the state police, every member of the community men, women, children, and elders were all trained and armed by the Mohawk Warriors Society in the re-occupation of Ganieneh. Negotiations ended in 1977 with the Mohawks receiving a parcel of land in upstate New York. Ganieneh still exists today as sovereign and liberated territory, free of influence from the United States or Canada, and is the only Mohawk society functioning solely under the Kaianerehkowa (The Great Law).

In 1978, Minneapolis AIM helped establish the Circle of Life survival school on the White Earth reservation. Also in White

Earth, the Anishinabe Akeeng, with the help of AIM, begins to regain stolen and tax forfeited land.

AIM comes full circle in 1987 when they reestablish their AIM patrols after increasing police brutality and the murder of two Indian women. AIM members also help protect traditional spearfishers in northern Minnesota and Wisconsin. The spearfishers faced numerous accounts of violence, arrests, and threats from various white racists, sportsfishers, and police. A study was released showing that traditional spearfishing only accounted for 6% of fish that are taken; sportfishing accounted for the rest.

The Peacemaker center was established in the center of Minneapolis' Indian community in 1991. The Peacemaker center was a community center with an American Indian spiritual base. It housed the AIM patrols and offered many services to the youth in the community. This was the same year that there was a spiritual resurgence as a result of the Sundance at Pipestone.

AIM split in 1993 into two major factions. The Grand Governing Council was based in Minneapolis, MN and associated with the Bellecourts. The GGC was more centralized and presented a more spiritual, however more mainstream, approach to activism. The other faction was the AIM – International Confederation of Autonomous Chapters, which was led by Russell Means and others. The autonomous chapters rejected the centralized control of the Minneapolis group as contrary to both indigenous political traditions and the original philosophy of AIM. While the autonomous chapters are spiritually guided, they tend more towards third world liberation struggles, indigenous nationalism, and traditional sovereignty.

The original tactics of AIM were based on the fact that Indian activists and advocates that worked within the American political system were ignored and not effective. A more aggressive approach was adopted in order for our voices to be heard by both the media and the American public. More importantly, this approach, which embraced a diversity of tactics, resulted in many concrete results. In the almost 40 years that AIM has been around, they have, and in many cases still are confronting police brutality, establishing alternative institutions, and most importantly, reclaiming land and territory.

from distributors. Facing such an uphill battle, the remaining collective members voted to disband and went their separate ways. In December of 1998, the "final issue" of Profane Existence was published, and an era of anarcho-punk unity seemed at an end.

In the aftermath, two former PE Collective members, Joe and Dan (one of the original editors of *PE Magazine*), went on to start Blackened Distribution. The goal of Blackened was to keep many of the old PE Records in print as well as pay off all of the old debts of the former Profane Existence Collective. In spring of 1999, Dan auctioned off his record collection, which funded "Aftermath," a Profane Existence benefit compilation CD and double LP, and repressed many out-of-print PE Records releases.

### *The Long Resurrection*

Blackened Distribution carried on the spirit of *Profane Existence Magazine*, with news articles and commentary regularly showing up in the mail order catalogs. However, this did not seem like enough, so in the summer of 2000, former editor Dan decided it was time to bring back the magazine and *PE #38* was published. 10,000 copies were printed and it was distributed free of charge around the world. The return issue was so successful that 20,000 copies of the follow up issue were published in spring of 2001. The huge response to these two issues proved that there was still a demand for *Profane Existence Magazine*.



Nonetheless, bringing back the magazine was a rocky road, full of obstacles. For the second half of 2001 and first three months of 2002, Dan and Joe took a break from Blackened to deal with personal issues. When Blackened reopened in April of 2002, it was also announced that *PE Magazine* would again be published on a regular basis. After more setbacks for the relaunch, *PE #40* finally appeared in October of 2002, with its notorious "Fuck 'Em All!" cover. Profane Existence Records has also been relaunched.

## Profane Existence

Profane Existence was formed in the spring of 1989 by a group of politically active punks in South Minneapolis. Having already worked on various local projects, the collective's goal was to make projects that would have an international reach towards bringing political punks together from around the world. The projects of the collective were originally to publish *Profane Existence Magazine*, an international political-punk journal, and to run a record label featuring politically active bands from around the globe.

Over the years, the collective's activities grew and took shape in many forms. These activities included running both mail order and wholesale distribution services, a screen printing workshop producing T-shirts and patches for bands as well as containing political slogans, and a printing press that produced hundreds of a pamphlets on subjects ranging from animal liberation to anarchist history to DIY healthcare.

Profane Existence has participated in organizing benefit events and projects for such groups as the Mohawk Warriors of Oka, New York City and European squatters, Anarchist Youth Federation, Anti-Racist Action, Love and Rage Federation, Class War Federation, TCAF (Twin Cities Anarchist Federation), and others. In 1992, we co-published the first issue of "Book Your Own Fucking Life," a DIY networking resource magazine, with help from Maximum Rock'n'roll.

Members of Profane Existence have also been involved with local activist and punk community spaces. We helped start up the Emma Center, Extreme Noise Records, and the Insurrecreation Center, and have worked with other local spaces for events, activities, educational forums, etc.

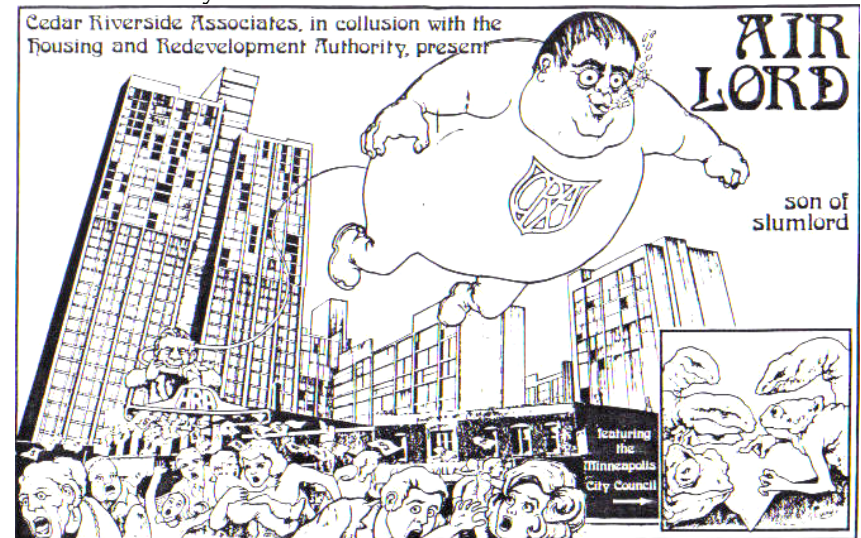
### *Down the Road to Ruin!*

By late 1998, the collective had published 37 issues of *Profane Existence Magazine* (with a peak circulation of 12,000 copies) and released more than 50 music and video titles. At that time, two longtime collective members and *PE Magazine* editors had decided it was time to move on to other things. The collective was also in dire financial straits, caused mainly by slow or nonexistent payments

## Rent Strikes on the West Bank

The University of Minnesota opened its West Bank campus in the early 1960s. By the end of the decade, the neighborhood had changed from one of mainly Scandinavian immigrants to one comprised largely of students and members of the white youth counterculture. During the same time, Keith Heller, a professor at the University, was quietly buying up land in the area. His plan was to raze the neighborhood and build ten high-rise apartment buildings in its place. This project was going to be called "New Town in Town."

Needless to say, residents of Cedar-Riverside weren't exactly thrilled with the looming prospect of their houses and community being replaced with a maze of intensely developed high rises. At a public hearing on the plan, 400 people showed up to oppose the plan. But despite their anger, the plan passed. Heller's inside connections probably helped nudge HUD (Housing and Urban Development) to waive certain policies, and the development was approved and funded. The project was to be built in ten phases. Housing organizers, including the Minnesota Tenants Union, fought the Cedar-Riverside complex with both demonstrations and environmentally related lawsuits.





At the same time, residents were creating a community worth saving. A Community Union was formed, as well as a free clinic (the Cedar-Riverside People's Center) and the collectively run New Riverside Café. Folks began publishing a community newspaper called, "Snooze News". In the neighborhood, vacant lots were turned into parks and marked with hand painted signs. Multiple organizations fighting New Town were formed, some of which existed as fronts to navigate through the bureaucracy of the housing authority.

As the first stages of the plan were completed, producing several high rises, the community continued to mobilize. George Romney, the secretary of HUD, was invited to come up from Chicago for the opening ceremony. Heller's corporation, Cedar-Riverside Associates (CRA), went around sprucing up the neighborhood, painting the fronts of houses and planting geraniums on the corners they knew Romney'd have to turn. New Riverside Café collective members held an impromptu stenciling extravaganza the night before, proclaiming, "This neighborhood is being 'REDEVELOPED' with no concern for the residents or environment." The dedication that day was also the site of an anti-war demonstration, and a battle between the police and eggs, rocks, and marshmallows. Romney ended up deciding it was too dangerous a situation and that he'd be unable to attend the opening ceremony.



New York (CUNY), a Living Wage campaign in Vermont, and connections with Welfare Rights organizers in Minneapolis.

By 1996, major divisions began to appear in the organization. One or two of the most active members were moving away from anarchism. Another trend made up mainly of older former members of the RSL who argued for an anarchist politics focused on the working class, in opposition to two other factions, both which focused on race: one which wanted to make "white skin privilege" the central concern; the other of which focused more broadly on what some would call a Third World Marxist program which included an endorsement of nationalism by non-white racial groups, combined with a focus on gender and sexuality. The regional division in the organization, related to differing priorities in the locals based in New York City and Minneapolis also played a role. The Minneapolis local focused primarily on building relationships with local organizations, building a large and regular Cop Watch project, playing a significant role in local efforts around Mumia Abu Jamal's case, police brutality, Zapatista solidarity, and abortion rights. As the fight over Marxism took off between ex-RSL, many in Minneapolis found the debate to be irrelevant to organizing work, and began to leave the organization. The Love and Rage Revolutionary Anarchist Federation formally dissolved in 1998.

While the formal membership of Love and Rage never exceeded 150 at any one time (and fewer than 40 attended the final conference), several times that many people passed through the organization and it enjoyed an even larger circle of sympathizers and readers of its newspaper. (The print run of the last issue was 9,000.) Love and Rage had a very lively culture of internal debate that -- for most of its life -- successfully avoided sectarian bickering. While they largely rejected its emphasis on building a disciplined revolutionary organization, Love and Rage influenced the political perspectives of a fraction of the young activists who would go on to play major roles in the anti-globalization movement, in particular their understanding of the distinct role of racism in the workings of U.S. society.

other for a more federated and localized group were based roughly in New York, where members involved in organizing within the multi-national and largely working class student movement at the City University of New York (CUNY) came to question some central tenets of anarchism, and Minneapolis, where the political environment was more focused on community organizing projects. The emergence of two opposed trends was one of the factors that led the group to split.

In 1991 the groups putting out the newspaper formed the Love and Rage Network. That same year an anarchist gathering in Cuernavaca, Mexico led to the creation of the first Amor y Rabia group in Mexico City. In 1993 the Mexico City group, with the support of others in Mexico, began publishing their own newspaper, Amor y Rabia. The U.S. based newspaper became monolingual at this point and the Mexican paper was distributed to Spanish readers in the U.S.

In 1993, the core New York, Minneapolis, San Francisco and Mexico City groups and others expressed the desire for a tighter federal structure, which caused some other groups to leave and new people to join. This is when the Love and Rage Network was renamed the Love and Rage Revolutionary Anarchist Federation. At this time, Love and Rage members were very active in doing anti-Klan and anti-Nazi work and in building up Anti-Racist Action (ARA). Others were active in defending abortion clinics and doing prisoner solidarity activism.

The 1994 Zapatista uprising in Chiapas, Mexico focused much of the attention of the organization on Zapatista solidarity work. Members of Amor y Rabia made quick contact with the Zapatistas and Love and Rage members in the United States were early participants in setting up Zapatista solidarity groups and in disseminating English translations of their communiqués. At the 1994 convention of Love and Rage, "Mexico Solidarity," "Prison Abolition" and "Anti-Fascism" (including anti-police brutality, anti-KKK, and abortion/gay rights) were decided as the three main areas of work for the organization.

Love and Rage members also participated in a variety of fights against neo-liberal measures in the U.S. These included the fight against budget cuts and tuition hikes at the City University of

Opposition to the plan fermented in the mid-70s, when hundreds of tenants in the neighborhood simultaneously received a notice of rent increases. Cedar-Riverside Associates owned most of the houses in the area, and as opposition grew and the success of the New Town plan grew dim, CRA struck out with rent hikes of as much as 50%. A community meeting was called, which a few hundred people showed up for. There they decided to form a tenants' union and begin a rent strike. The group formed a Negotiating Team, which was responsible for most of the organizing work. Frequent big meetings, in which decisions were made by discussion and debate, ensured that the team remained accountable to the residents.





The group, calling themselves the East-West Bank Tenants union drafted a response letter to the increase notices that stated, in part:

*"We find it necessary to refuse to pay exorbitant rent increases \_or\_ vacate our homes...We can not honestly state that we value your landlordship as you say you value our tenancy. It is we, after all, who are paying your bills. Should you see fit to carry out your threat of mass eviction contained in the 'offer' you gave us by evicting even one tenant, we will find it necessary to terminate your tenancy in our neighborhood."*

The strike ended a few months after it began, with most of the rents returning to their original levels, and written leases where previously there had only been oral agreements. Occasional rent strikes continued through the early 80's. Tenants of the first high rises also went on strike over rent increases. The strikes and lawsuits eventually helped to bankrupt the development company, and most of the housing was either sold off as co-ops or received project-based Section 8 subsidies. Only the first stage of the development project- the few multi-colored high-rises that are a trademark of the West Bank scenery- was completed. Today these house primarily Somali immigrants.

than the 20-30 something base of the rest of the group, and not directly involved in the ongoing activist work that occupied the time and energy of most members.

In its various incarnations (as newspaper, network and federation) Love and Rage had a strong activist orientation and its members participated in a variety of struggles around different issues. The first major action supported by Love and Rage was the 1990 Earth Day Wall Street Action, a day of direct action targeting the ecological consequences of capitalism.

Love and Rage called the first national black bloc in the United States as a breakaway from the main body of a January 1991 March on Washington DC against the first Persian Gulf War which attacked the headquarters of the International Monetary Fund.

From the beginning Love and Rage members showed little regard for anarchist orthodoxies, and adopted positions heavily influenced by several varieties of Marxism, most notably support for national liberation struggles and embracing a white skin privilege analysis of racism in the

U.S. that argued that the material and psychological benefits received by white workers at the expense of non-white (especially African American) workers undermined the basis of multi-racial working class unity and therefore had to be confronted directly if such unity was desired. These ideas came into the organization especially because of the role of prison-solidarity work, which forged personal relationships between Love and Rage members and former members of groups such as the Black Panther Party, the Black Liberation Army, the Weather Underground Organization, and the George Jackson Brigade. Some members of Love and Rage



also echoed Lenin in arguing for the need for disciplined forms of revolutionary organization. The two most clearly opposed positions: one calling for a cadre type organization and the

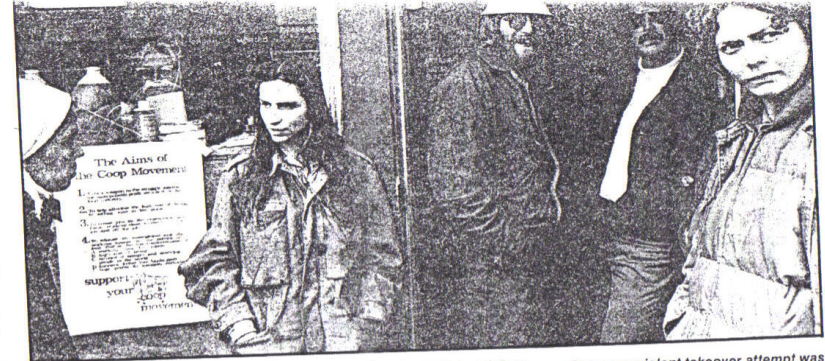
## Love and Rage

The Love and Rage Network had its genesis in a November 1989 conference to launch a North American revolutionary anarchist newspaper. The "newspaper project" grew out of a series of North American Anarchist Gatherings in 1986 (Chicago), 1987 (Minneapolis), 1988 (Toronto) and 1989 (San Francisco). At the 1986 gathering, a network of groups began to cohere. At the 1987 gathering the loose Mayday Network was established and the following year discussions of a North American Anarchist Newspaper led to the production of two one-shot newspapers, 'Rage' and 'Writing on the Wall', that were precursors of 'Love and Rage/Amor y Rabia.' The main initiative, however, came from the Minneapolis-based Revolutionary Anarchist Bowling League (RABL). The formerly Trotskyist Revolutionary Socialist League (RSL) (who disbanded immediately before a fraction of their members participated in founding the new project, and gave them their 501(c)(3), the Aspect Foundation) was also one of the main forces behind this. The initial supporters included anarchist collectives from Chicago, San Francisco, Miami, Atlanta, Toronto and Knoxville.

Another strong influence on the organization was the "Free Society" collective, which was influenced by the social ecology theories of Murray Bookchin. They began publishing their bi-lingual newspaper - Love and Rage/Amor y Rabia -- in January 1990. Some anarchists were wary of the network and their federation, wondering if they were truly anarchist, some anarchists even wondered if the RSL was a Trotskyist group performing some kind of entryist tactic. More lifestyle-oriented anarchists, particularly those at Fifth Estate, had accused Love and Rage of being a secretly Leninist sect from its very beginnings. While some members of the New York City local did eventually become Leninists, this accusation did not make sense to most members of the group, who defined themselves as anarchists and rejected Leninism. Subsequent developments revealed the former RSL members to be among the most orthodox anarchists in the organization. For members of Love and Rage, the "Trotskyist" influence on the group never made much sense, as the ex-RSL group tended to be a generation older

## The Co-op Wars

In the wake of the anti-Vietnam war movement, many new projects and struggles offered the hope of delving deeper into the deconstruction of socio-political ills, and an opportunity to turn the theoretical rhetoric into practice in the creation of counter-lifestyles. The new wave co-op movement that sprung out of the twin-cities was one such effort.



### Locked in?

This group of cooperative workers thought they had a rival faction locked in the Powderhorn Food Coop last week after a non-violent takeover attempt was staged there. But those inside were un-cooperative. For details turn to page 2.

APRIL 7, 76 - SOUTH SIDE NEWSPAPER

### Southside dole out dollars allocated

At the start, the idea sprung out of self-liberation sentiments. In May of 1970, a group of "hippies", most notably three sisters Debbie, Susan, and Jeannie Shroyer decided to try to save money by buying nutritious, whole foods in bulk and selling the goods to the neighborhood at cost. It was a sort of public service sprung from the anarchistic belief that if people's basic needs weren't being met, then it made sense that they would find ways to meet them themselves.

They started by distributing food off a friend's back porch for 8 hours a week. It quickly became apparent that the co-op was a bigger deal than the back porch could handle, and so, with help from local activist Dean Zimmerman, the "Peoples Pantry" moved to a space in the "Cedar Riverside Peoples' Cooperative Center". It was shut down after its first year by the Minneapolis Health Department. It became clear that a certain bare minimum of mainstream compliance was needed to operate publicly. In 1971,



with enough structure and accountability to satisfy their landlord, Augsburg College, North Country Co-op was born.

People came from all across the Twin Cities area to take advantage of North Country's low prices on natural food. Instead of trying to monopolize the business, however, North Country encouraged the opening of co-ops in other neighborhoods. North Country even spearheaded the creation of The People's Warehouse, which was owned and operated by the co-ops who used it.

The co-op movement grew rapidly and was constantly trying to find a balance between key issues. They dealt with issues such as how to create strong communities without being escapist or elitist, how to compensate full time staff without encouraging careerism, and, perhaps most importantly, how to maintain direct democracy while keeping operations streamlined and efficient enough to keep the doors open. Two opposing forces began fracturing the movement, beginning with the re-inventing of the Beanery Co-op in South Minneapolis by, amongst others, Rebecca Comeau and Bob Haugen. The new Beanery's more Marxist line claimed to be the correct ideology for the co-op movement. In *The Beanery Paper*, current movement leaders were criticized for being bourgeois and elitist. In their own papers, the creators of the co-ops countered that they had never turned anyone away and refused to

of El Salvador in local news media. And to a joyfully creative action—producing a truth-telling front page for the Star Tribune and moving quickly, in the dead of night, to place the fake front page in display window of Star Tribune news boxes on Minneapolis street corners.

The assassination of the Jesuit priests and their housekeeper and her daughter in 1989 galvanized opposition to the right-wing regime in El Salvador. Fasting protesters occupied the St. Paul Cathedral.

"Cell phones had just come out," one organizer recalls. "We tried to get one to communicate with the people in the Cathedral, but no one could even figure out how to use it."

Locally focused actions targeted local connections to the wars. The late Mary Swenson organized the O'Connor and Hannan campaign, targeting a law firm paid to lobby for the Salvadoran government. Using tactics that ranged from marches through the IDS Crystal Court to lobbying the city council, the campaign ultimately succeeded in ending Minneapolis city contracts with the firm and inspiring some O'Connor and Hannan lawyers to resign in protest, before the law firm closed its doors.

When the Minnesota National Guard flew missions to Central America, protesters scaled the fence at the National Guard air base fence. Officials turned water cannons on them, in the sub-zero cold, and the water froze on contact. Maynard Jones broke both ankles when he was shaken off the ladder by the water cannons.

The Central America Resource Center (now the Resource Center of the Americas), Project Minnesota-León, the Nicaragua Solidarity Committee, Witness for Peace, Vets for Peace, CISPES, the Pledge of Resistance, solidarity committees for Guatemala and Honduras, School of the Americas Watch ... the list is necessarily incomplete, because so many Minnesota groups worked in so many ways. We disagreed on tactics – direct action, electoral politics, grassroots organizing, lobbying, education, accompaniment, material aid – but each group kept going, making its own contribution in its own way. And many of us are still here, in our various ways still *en la lucha*.



Members of the Powderhorn Food Co-op, at 35th St. and Bloomington Av., conducted a non-violent picketing effort and "shop-in" March 27 to protest control of that alternative food store by a dissident co-op faction called the Co-op Organization (CO). The protesters, protesting men, women and children marched into the store when it opened for business and set up an alternative cash register. Claiming the protesters were shoplifting, the CO managers locked them in. Undaunted, the protesters used a back window and into a waiting truck. Police arrived soon after and asked everyone to leave the store. The protesters have filed an unlawful detainer with the city attorney and a judge is expected to rule on the case.

## Solidarity with Central America

During the 1980s, the situation in Central America was disastrous. The U.S. government supported a genocidal regime in Guatemala, a brutal right-wing reign of terror in El Salvador, the contra war against Nicaragua, and the militarization of Honduras as a U.S. base of operations. The U.S. maintained that it was fighting communism, promoting democracy, opposing dictatorship.

*And that was when a load of manure was dumped in front of the Federal Building. That's what the government's messages about Central America were. Let them get a little of their own back! Too bad that the get-away on the bicycle didn't work out.*

Rooted in a solidly Minnesotan tradition of left-wing politics, local opposition to the U.S.-backed wars in Central America ranged from creative, non-violent, direct action to material aid. Heated disagreements over tactics and principles split, but never stopped, the movement.

*Non-violent training came first, and a phone tree, and the Pledge of Resistance to the war. Singing, chanting, weaving a spider web of string (to represent a web of solidarity?), the Pledge of Resistance activists sat in Senator Rudy Boschwitz's office until they were all arrested.*

Thousands of people visited Central America, traveling in study groups, in solidarity delegations, in work brigades. Ben Linder, a U.S. *brigadista*, was assassinated in Nicaragua by the U.S.-backed contras in the mid-1980s. The message was clear: go home, or you could be next.

*Instead, solidarity groups pledged to double their presence. Minnesotans joined in APSNICA's construction brigades, in teaching in witness and sharing the danger.*

Many churches stood on the front lines of the movement. St. Luke's Presbyterian Church in Minnetonka was among the most prominent sanctuary churches in the country, sheltering Rene Hurtado, a refugee from El Salvador. Nuns sheltered families on the new Underground Railroad, taking refugees north to Canada. Some congregations debated, but did not join, the sanctuary movement, but the debates served as a forum for truth-telling.

*At the same time, the media version of truth often seemed to come direct from D.C. That led to a serious study and documentation of miscoverage*

compromise their key values in order to reach the masses. Their natural foods co-ops, they argued, were all about fighting the disenpowerment that comes with capitalism.

It came to be known in the co-op community that those who had recently taken over the Beanery were allied with a group called the Co-op Organization (CO). The CO was working, through infiltration and intimidation, to gain control over other co-ops as well as the warehouse, and to delegitimize the current co-op leadership. In April of 1975, the CO stormed into the warehouse with clubs and dragged everyone who didn't agree with the CO party line outside. They then closed themselves up inside the warehouse, claiming that they represented the people and the people owned the warehouse.

After a short struggle to gain back control through the legal system, the co-ops that weren't allied with the CO decided to boycott the warehouse and get their products elsewhere. They had to ship goods in secret to avoid CO violence. The CO began to see that the economic clout they hoped to gain from controlling the warehouse was a fantasy.

The co-ops not attached to the CO moved quickly to decentralize the power held by the warehouse, and thereby undermine the CO's power.

Many papers and articles were written, and many long emergency meetings were held in an effort to unify the two sides of the struggle. Later that year a new warehouse opened. The Distributing Alliance of the Northcountry Cooperatives, or DANCe, took the war into the economic realm. The effects on the warehouse were huge and the CO demanded the closing of DANCe, backed up with threats of violence.

The CO made moves on the Seward Co-op and the Mill City Co-op. They showed up, kicked everyone out of the store, and moved in. Although they saw some contradiction in calling the police, the leaders of both co-ops chose to do so in order to take back the stores. Beer bottles full of gasoline were thrown into Bryant Central, and Selby Community Foods was vandalized with paint. Both Bryant and Selby were supporters of DANCe. That same week a CO worker was beaten by an assailant who he

identified as a Bryant Central member. These proved to be last ditch efforts on the part of the CO. The CO had no power, but it was responsible for payments on the warehouse. Payments it couldn't make now that DANCe had cut into its business.

The CO was rendered powerless, and the co-ops were safe from its influence. There were, however, unforeseen forces waiting in the wings.

Corporate grocers began to sell natural foods, old activists moved on to projects that they thought had more future, and young co-op members didn't share the same fire left from confronting the establishment during the Vietnam war. Today, Apathy and Cynicism are the greatest enemies of our co-ops and worker democracies. Perhaps they no longer fulfill the same needs in the physical, political, and social lives of the radically minded.



The Mylar balloons have a 1000th-of-an-inch coating of aluminum, which is an excellent conductor of electricity. When a stray balloon gets caught between two power lines, it can cause electricity to arc between the lines, melting the lines and sometimes blowing up transformers and causing live wires to fall to the ground.

In 1987, PG & E blamed balloons for 140 power outages, while Southern California Edison reported 229 balloon-caused outages. An outage on Valentine's Day in 1986 caused by a silvery heart balloon affected 20,000 customers. A balloon-caused outage in Antioch, California, in August 1987, affected 2750 customers and fried wires in microwaves, VCRs, and TV sets. The problem caused by holiday balloons has only been recognized recently, because the balloons usually disintegrate when they hit power lines, leaving no trace.

### *Field Notes*

One item in Murphy's Law states, "When loosening bolts, one of them is bound to be a roller (a bolt that will not simply spin off, but must be wrenched off millimeter by millimeter). It will either be the last bolt or the one most difficult to reach.

So, for the soloist, it is wise to carry a cheap 3" C-clamp (which can be bought at any hardware store) and a flat box-end wrench. Put the "fixed" head of the C-frame on the outside of the angle iron (the flat side) of the power tower and the floating head of the screw on the inside (sloped face). This gives you a brace to hold the box wrench so you can use both hands on the ratchet. This set-up will sometimes slip, so be careful to avoid skinned knuckles (wear gloves). An off-set wrench will only roll off the nut, adding to your frustrations.

Guy wires support some power line towers. It would be extremely dangerous to cut the guy wires. They are under great tension and the resulting snap could easily kill a nearby person. Also, the tower would be quite unstable after the last guy wire is cut - there is no telling where it would fall.

A safer method is to use a 4 foot long bar on the turnbuckle connecting the guy wire to ground and just unscrew the sucker most of the way. Let the wind do the rest-do not unscrew it all the way or you will be in the same danger as from cutting the wire.

Power lines are generally patrolled at least once a week at irregular times.

Any work near power lines or other sources of electricity must be done with extreme caution. The high voltage will kill you if you are careless. If you have the opportunity, watch a power company crew doing "Hot Stick" work. If you must work around live wires, use proper equipment.

According to a recent report from UPI, utility companies are warning the public that small, metallic balloons (such as those sold for birthday parties and Valentine's Day) have been implicated in several recent power failures. "In the past couple of years these metallic balloons have come up from nowhere and have escalated into a major source of power outages," said Harry Arnott, a spokesman for Pacific Gas & Electric, a major California utility.

## **Power: Electrical, Political, and Popular in Rural Minnesota**

An interesting example of popular sabotage was born in Minnesota during the late 1970's. It was here that a group of farmers in Western Minnesota perfected the art and science of toppling high-tension electrical towers. After federal agents began investigating these incidents, the farmers would only reply, "Hmpf...Must've been those bolt weevils."

The trouble began when United Power Association and the Cooperative Power Association were looking to exploit coal reserves in North Dakota and needed a 453-mile transmission line through Minnesota farmland to the industrial center of the Twin Cities. As is typical, poor people were screwed so that rich corporations could benefit. Most of the electricity would be used by industry, not people. The utility corporations chose to plan power lines through land belonging to poor farmers rather than huge corporate farms.

What these corporations did not expect was opposition. And that is just what they received.

Virgil Fuchs, one of the farmers, became aware of what this would mean for the small farmers. The plans would require strips 160-feet wide cut through their fields, and 180-foot pylons erected to support the wires. The health problems associated with electromagnetic pollution (from the currents running through these power lines) were also a concern. It was already known that electrical lines lower conception rates and milk production in dairy cows. And the state's own guidelines warned farmers against refueling their vehicles under the transmission lines and warned school bus drivers against picking up or discharging children under them.

Fuchs went knocking door-to-door at his neighbors', informing them of the plans. Soon after, corporate representatives were on his tail trying to get farmers to sign agreements, but not one farmer signed.

Local townships soon passed resolutions disallowing the power lines, and county boards refused to give permits for the



power line construction. The corporations planning the construction ignored the local concerns and turned to the state. The farmers also turned to the state looking for help from their "representatives." The state's Environmental Quality Council responded by holding public hearings. The public opinion at the meetings ran overwhelmingly against the power lines, but these unfavorable testimonies were left out of the transcripts

Throughout the years 1974 to 1977, farmers tried lengthy and ineffectual legal channels such as these to block the construction. They were only permitted to request that the construction happen on someone else's land, rather than their own.

Not surprisingly, the state granted the permit for the construction in 1977. One county attempted to sue, but the case was dismissed. At the very least, government representatives promised they would let the farmers know when construction was to begin. But again, they lied.

When surveyors showed up in Virgil Fuch's fields, he fought back. He drove his tractor over the surveyors' equipment and rammed their pickup truck. Farmers from across the counties began gathering and planned to fight the surveyors any way they could. Such tactics included getting permits to tear up roads, and running chainsaws or other loud equipment so that the surveyors couldn't communicate. The network of farmers that had formed through legal battles helped to increase the resistance to the construction. When surveyors would show up to begin work, hundreds of farmers would block their way.

Even the local sheriff was sympathetic. "In my opinion this is a situation that began with the Environmental Quality Council, at the request of the power companies, and that's where the problem should be remanded for resolution. I will not point a gun at either the farmer or the surveyor. To point a gun is to be prepared to shoot, and this situation certainly does not justify either. It does justify a review of the conditions that bring about such citizen resistance."

It also seemed as if Philip Martin, the head of United Power Association, sympathized too. He had grown up on a farm and had even known Virgil's mother. He had said of her: "She reminded me

Another effective method, where noise is not much of a problem, is to shoot out the insulators holding the power cables themselves. A twelve-gauge shotgun loaded with double-ought shot is the best tool. Walk under the line until you are directly beneath the insulators on a tower. With your back to the wind, take two large steps backwards, aim at the insulators, and commence firing. Be prepared to dodge large chunks of falling glass.

Large power lines are suspended from strings of 20 or more insulators. Breaking 70 to 90 percent of them in one string is usually enough to ground out the conductor. This may take several rounds (the record is two), and will cause bright sparks. A team of three shotgunners, each taking a string of insulators for one conductor or conductor bundle, is best for a typical AC line. The lines are seldom shot through and fall, but stay alert for this possibility. Keep in mind that the use of firearms will result in additional charges if you are caught.

When insulators are shot out, the line quits carrying power and has to be shut down until the point of disruption is found and repaired. A helicopter may have to fly several hundred miles of power line to find where it has been monkey wrenched. Monkey wrenching at a number of locations on the same night compounds the utility company's problems.

Because of the noise from the use of shotguns, extreme security measures are necessary and several escape routes should be planned. Furthermore, the use of firearms makes this a potentially dangerous activity. Do not leave any empty shotgun shells at the scene, since they can be positively traced to the gun that fired them.

Smaller power lines are vulnerable to having their insulators shot out by a .22 rifle from a car or a hiker. ("Power line? What power line? I'm just hunting rabbits.") This is an effective way to discourage power companies from spraying rights-of-way with toxic herbicides if you let the power company know that the damage is being done because of herbicide spraying and that it will stop when they stop poisoning the area.

*The following guidelines on monkey wrenching power lines come from anonymous Bolt Weevil veterans:*

Power lines are highly vulnerable to monkey wrenching from individuals or small groups. The best techniques are: 1) removing bolts from steel towers; 2) if tower bolts are welded to the nuts, steel towers can be cut with hacksaws, cutting wheels, or torches (be careful not to breathe the vapors of galvanized metal); 3) shooting out insulators (a shotgun works best) or shooting the electrical conductor itself (use a high-powered rifle) which frays it and reduces its ability to transmit electricity.

Chain saws (or crosscut saws work when noise is a problem) are appropriate for the large wooden towers. Otherwise, techniques that connect the conductors directly to each other are also effective (cable lifted by balloons or shot by harpoon guns). But be warned: these are more dangerous to ecoteurs. These techniques can completely baffle the opposition if used creatively. Most power line towers are attached to a concrete base by large bolts and nuts (with or without the addition of guy wires). Check the size of the nuts, get a socket set for that size nut, a cheater pipe for better torque, and remove the nuts. You may also want to tap out the bolts with a hammer. Wind will do the rest after you are safely away from the area.

The more vulnerable towers are those spanning a canyon, at corners, on long spans, going up or down mountains. **Any place there is added stress or powerful wind.** The "domino effect" can be achieved by monkey wrenching a series of towers leading up to a corner or otherwise stressed tower, and then monkey wrenching the stressed tower. **Be prepared: a monkey wrenching, stressed tower will probably come down in your presence.**

If the nuts are welded to the bolts to prevent removal, use a hacksaw to cut through the bolts or even through the supports. This is more difficult, but a night's work can still prepare a good number of towers for toppling in the next storm.

A cutting torch can also be used for cutting through tower. Keep in mind that use of a cutting torch may result in additional arson charges. This has happened with a case in Arizona.

somewhat of my own mother." But that did not stop his decision that would affect so many small family farmers.

It seems to make sense why Martin was so upset. In North Dakota, they had only faced one protester and dealt with him quickly. In Martin's own words: "The law enforcement there initiated the action to put him in prison, or jail. And pretty soon he said, 'I'll be a good boy, I won't do any more,' and they let him out, and we built a transmission line."

However, in Minnesota: "The law enforcement refused to enforce their own laws. We could go out and try to survey, and they would simply pull up all our stakes, they would destroy everything we had out there. And there was never anything done."

The farmers continued to file lawsuits, which ended up going to the Minnesota Supreme Court. However, the Supreme Court decided against them. This act radicalized many of the farmers.

More than 60 percent of Minnesotans supported the farmers against the power line. However, they were outmatched by the power companies' lawyers and technical experts. In the end, state government and the courts took the companies' side.

In the winter of 1978, the confrontations in the fields would span weeks, and governor Perpich sent in nearly half of the highway patrol. Many of the cops who had been sympathetic turned against the farmers and told them that they couldn't assemble, couldn't drive on county roads, couldn't stop on township roads, etc. When confronted about this, cops stated, "We will do whatever we can to get that power line through."

In August 1978, a 150-foot steel transmission tower came crashing to the ground. Upon inspection, authorities found that the bolts of the base had been loosened. Over the next few weeks, three more fell down. Guard poles had been cut in half, step bolts had been cut three-quarters through, bolts at the base were loosened or removed, and insulators were shot out.

Minnesota Public Radio reporter Greg Barron visited West Minnesota and described the situation as nothing short of "guerilla war." Helicopter crews patrolled 170 miles of power lines, and squad cars combed the countryside. The governor eventually called out the FBI to help conduct heavy surveillance.

Seventy-two arrests were made in just one county. Six of these were for felony charges. Everyone refused to testify against the farmers arrested. The only information the cops got from farmers was the response, "Hmpf! Must be the bolt weevils." And even though two farmers were eventually convicted of felonies, they were only sentenced to community service.

An interview with dairy farmer Tony Bartos revealed the sentiments of most the farmers:

*"Yeah, I go along with it. I wish a few more would come down, and I think they will, as time goes on. They shouldn't have did this to us in the first place. We've did everything we could lawfully. We went to Minneapolis, got lawyers, went through the courts. But either the judges are paid off, or they just don't realize what's going on out here. I think there's a lot of different laws and ways you can look at it. There's moral laws, too. I don't know, I don't figure it's wrong what we're doing out here. Sure people think you gotta stay with the law, but what is the law? Who makes it? We should have more of a say with what goes on in this state too, you know. They can't just run over us like a bunch of dogs."*

The power line was constructed, and operations began in 1979. Despite this loss, an impressive wave of sabotage continued to hit the power line. Within only two years, fourteen towers were toppled, and over 10,000 insulators were shot out. The project could only continue after the energy corporations turned ownership over to the U.S. government. This was a direct result of the economic losses caused by sabotage and the costs of security. Even with this turnover to the State, a fifteenth tower was toppled on New Year's Eve in 1981.

Many lessons can be drawn from the experiences of those who fought against this project. Legal channels only revealed that in the eyes of the State, industrial development would always take priority over the healthy and livelihood of its citizens. As a result, a social struggle manifested and *directly* attacked the source of the problem. Sabotage proved to be far more costly to the energy corporations, and direct action was a manifestation of public sentiments, especially the sentiments of those most ill-affected by the project.

