The Surrealist Adventure and the Poetry of Direct Action

Passionate Encounters Between the Chicago Surrealist Group, the Wobblies and Earth First!

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> Automatism, in painting as in everything else, is a form of direct action, above and beyond 'law' and 'technique.'
>
> –Franklin Rosemont, *Revolution in the Service of the Marvelous*

By Way of Introduction

The name of this journal notwithstanding, surrealism has always considered itself beyond aesthetics in much the same way that it is beyond realism. Automatism, by allowing for the free flow of the uninhibited imagination, is at the heart of the surrealist project. Automatic writing or drawing practices need not submit to any mannered stylistic interference or be forced to bow down before confining aesthetic considerations. Though popular conceptions of surrealism tend to focus on such cliched and easily imitated tropes as Dali's melted clocks, the surrealist embrace of automatism seeks to unleash the radical imagination revealing knowledge and inspiring possibilities located outside of the narrow boundaries of reality. Eschewing any particular form of aesthetic expression, and rejecting the certainty of authority in favor of the surprise of a chance encounter with the Marvelous, surrealism is experimental in nature rather than didactic.

In rejecting the impoverished version of reality that we are expected to embrace, surrealism is sometimes unfairly accused of being escapist. Rather, instead of accepting an artificial dichotomy between dream and reality, in Andre Breton's conception, the two can be seen as "communicating vessels" which can be reconciled in action. In this transformative sense, surrealism cannot simplistically be reduced to one of the passing cavalcade of avant-garde art movements in painting, literature, film or sound. The latter mediums of expression are merely expedient points of entry in the surrealist quest to create a more exalted reality by realizing poetry in everyday life.

What then is the nature of the passional attraction between surrealism and the anarchist notion of direct action. If a radical subjectivity is needed to overcome the miserabilist stranglehold of mutual acquiescence, then the revolutionary romanticism of surrealism can be a fecund basis for mutual aid. From the very start, the surrealist movement, in word and in deed, has allied itself with the struggle for freedom. Embracing what I will refer to as a "radical inclusivity," surrealism has not confined itself to the art world but has repeatedly sought out kindred free spirits from among those that the dominant society dismisses or condescendingly labels as "other". Rather than perceiving oppressed peoples exclusively as victims, surrealists have seen as mentors and accomplices all those who desire to, or who in effect, actively sabotage the absolutism of the reigning reality of industrial civilization with the poetic truth of the dream. In this struggle, the affinity between surrealism and direct action is a combination of radical refusal and emancipatory exhilaration.

As Penelope Rosemont of the Chicago Surrealist Group has urged: "Take chances! Subvert the idols! Disobey the masters! Be implacable! Be irreconcilable! Withdraw your attachment to the slave system! Revolt against work! Assert your right to dream, to make love, to be lazy! Throw the floodgates through an open window!"[1] These are the poetic watchwords of individual and group autonomy that provide the liberatory context for the surrealist adventure.

[1] Penelope Rosemont, p. 144.

The Wobbly Surrealist Axis

> "Whenever you find injustice, the proper form of politeness is attack."
>
> –T-Bone Slim

The Chicago Surrealist Group has been practically the opposite of an artistic or literary school. Rather, and uniquely, it has combined elements of a highly mobile potlatch festival, the old-time Wobbly "flying squadron," and an anarchist affinity group. Its early history is deeply connected to the radical unionism of the Industrial Workers of the World. The Wobbly emphasis on direct action, imagination, creativity, improvisation, humor, and its hobo heritage were at once mirrored in the surrealist-based activism of Franklin and Penelope Rosemont and their Chicago cohorts. To Franklin, the Wobblies resembled the "free associations of artists, poets, musicians and other creative dreamers"[2] more than traditional revolutionary parties or trade unions. It was the Roosevelt University Wobbly chapter which was founded by Franklin and Penelope during their sporadic college days, along with the Solidarity Bookshop, and a Windy City publication known as *The Rebel Worker* that were the precursors of the Chicago Surrealist Group. Because surrealism was always a constant in all of these endeavors, the activist history of the Chicago Surrealist Group was bathed in an incendiary brew of radical art and politics right from the start.

The RU Wobbly Club was the first student group anywhere to be affiliated with the unruly radicalism of the IWW. As a Wobbly chapter, its career was short but sensational. When African American anarcho-pacifist poet Joffre Stewart gave a talk there, as was his custom, he burned a US flag. The student club was promptly suspended by the university administration. The flag-burning and suspension made headlines, but the "Wobblies-in-Exile" (as the suspended group called itself) held protests in Grant Park, and coordinated a well-publicized free-speech fight that won the support not only of most students, but also of a large part of the faculty. The struggle, brought to national attention by anarchist writer Paul Goodman and others, ended in the group's reinstatement, and was written up in the New Left press. A few months later, the Berkeley Free Speech Movement made national headlines. The original Wobblies, of course, had themselves been involved in free speech fights on many occasions in the early part of the twentieth century.

As Franklin saw it, his focus as a Wobbly organizer was to revitalize the IWW to help restore it to its historic role as a vehicle for exuberant direct action. Consequently, in 1964, he started a new IWW journal in Chicago, *The Rebel Worker* (seven issues, 1964–67). What distinguished the Rebel Worker from mainstream leftist union publications was a passional attraction to the "practice of poetry" in assisting the imaginary to become real. Franklin remembered *The Rebel Worker* days as being "undisciplined and playful to a degree that surely seemed carnivalesque to our critics, we dreamed of the wonders of revolutionary thought and action free of the shackles of all hand-me-down ideologies. While others patiently published platforms, programs and policy statements, we rushed into print with our wildest dreams and desires."[3]

Over the years, some wags have claimed that the initials I.W.W. actually stand for "I Won't Work," and part of the appeal of the union to the budding surrealists was that for the Wobblies the refusal of work had a much more radical foundation than did the cynical hipster stance often associated with the Beats. As Franklin has put it in his reminiscence of those years, Dancin' In

[2] Franklin Rosemont. *Joe Hill*, p. 27.

[3] Franklin Rosemont and Charles Radcliffe. *Dancin' In The Streets*, pp. 1 and 15.

The Streets, "Our aims were simple: We wanted to abolish wage-slavery and to smash the State–that is, to make total revolution, and to have lots of fun–really live it up–in a new and truly free society. We called ourselves anarchists, or surrealists–or Wobblies… What excited us were the limitless possibilities of the free imagination in conditions of playful anarchy."[4]

Not wanting to get bogged down in sectarian ideology, *The Rebel Worker* did not see surrealism and anarchism as antithetical, but, in a surrealist sense, as potentially "communicating vessels." The Rebel Worker published reprints of Andre Breton, Rene Daumel, Benjamin Peret, Leonora Carrington, and selected tracts by the Surrealist Group in Paris, alongside the writings of young Wobs and more seasoned Wobbly organizers, sages and hobo philosophers. One of the latter Wobbly agitators was boxcar-riding poet and verbal alchemist T-Bone Slim. Franklin, in his later years, collected T-Bone's poetically playful ramblings in book form under the aegis of "vernacular surrealism," noting that his writing "often approaches the method systematized by the first generation of surrealists under the name 'psychic automatism.'" 5 It should then come as no surprise that in the 1976 Chicago Surrealist Group's massive World Surrealist Exhibition: Marvelous Freedom/Vigilance of Desire, which opened on May Day of 1976 at their very own low-rent Gallery Black Swan, the Chicago Surrealist Group would include among its "Eleven Domains of Surrealist Vigilance," one named for T-Bone Slim.

Franklin considered himself to be a "thoroughgoing Wobbly" until the day he died in 2009. Aside from The Haymarket Scrapbook, a major collection of pre-Wobbly radical labor material relating to the Haymarket uprising of 1886, which he co-edited with Dave Roediger, a large part of his work as a grassroots labor historian stemmed from his early embrace of Haymarket anarchism and his experience of a still surviving Wobbly hobohemian culture. His "Short Treatise on Wobbly Cartoons," appended to the expanded edition of Joyce Kornbluh's *Rebel Voices: An IWW Anthology*, is one of the very few detailed studies of radical labor iconography.

In pioneering the process of intermedia experimentation by means of connecting Wobbly visual art to IWW songwriting, Ernest Riebe's politically clueless Mr. Block cartoon character inspired one of singing Wobbly organizer Joe Hill's most popular songs for which the blockheaded one is name-checked in the title. Franklin eventually did a full-length study of Hill himself, which, along with much else, discussed for the first time anywhere the Wobbly bard's contributions to labor cartooning and wilderness radicalism, as well as uncovering the IWW's subliminal relationship to surrealism. In 1997, he produced a volume of the "selected ravings" of Slim Brundage, the Wobbly founder and janitor of the dadesque College of Complexes, aka "the playground for people who think" and "Chicago's Number One Beatnik Bistro." Brundage himself was a rare living link between the older radical working class intellectual community of the North Side's IWW/Bughouse Square/Dil Pickle Club soapboxing nexus and their Beat Generation/New Left countercultural successors.

As to Solidarity, because of its welcoming atmosphere, the bookshop became a hangout for the young rebels of the Louis Lingg Memorial Chapter of SDS and the Anarchist Horde, both of which played a significant role in the Chicago anti-Vietnam war protest movement. Clearly, surrealism in the US was steeped in anarchism, and anarchist theory and practice provided much of the revolutionary ardor that has characterized "Chicago Idea" surrealism from the very beginning. Several of the original band of Windy City surrealists were active as anarchists long before they encountered surrealism. Anarcho-pacifist Tor Faegre did jail-time for his part in the Com-

[4] Ibid, pp. 42 and 50.

mittee for Non-Violent Action (CNVA) campaign against nuclear submarines. Bernard Marszalek, who considered himself a Bakuninist, had been the Chicago rep for the British-based Anarchy magazine. Robert Green was an energetic civil rights and anti-war activist. And when "blues as poetry" aficionado Paul Garon chanced to walk in the door of the Solidarity Bookshop one day, and responded affirmatively to Penelope's in-store inquiry about whether he knew where she might find the elusive records of bluesman Peetie Wheatstraw (alternately known as both "The Devil's Son-in-Law" and "The High Sheriff From Hell"), the Chicago Surrealist Group discovered a comrade for life.

From 1964 through 1968, the Rebel Worker group, the Solidarity Bookshop group, the Anarchist Horde, and the "Left Wing of the Beat Generation" were more or less synonymous. Most of these people also considered themselves surrealists, or were at least strongly "under the influence." *The Rebel Worker* surrealists also took part in the Chicago-based Student Peace Union (SPU), the largest New Left group before the heyday of SDS. Far from isolating them from larger struggles, *The Rebel Worker* group's extremism found wide support. Their contingents on major anti-war marches, under the IWW's huge red banner and a bevy of black flags, were among the largest, loudest, and most youthful. They were a radicalizing force that helped make the New Left newer and stronger as it moved from reform to revolution.

Between 1966 and 1968, the Chicago surrealists' could be reached c/o Solidarity Bookshop. Solidarity was also the mailing address and general headquarters of Black Swan Press/Surrealist Editions, the publishing imprints of the Chicago Surrealist Group and the Surrealist Movement in the United States. Since 1967 almost every participant in Chicago surrealism has published under the sign of Lautreamont's black swan: in books, pamphlets, the Surrealist Research & Development Monograph Series, and of course in *Arsenal*. In 1970, *Arsenal: Surrealist Subversion* appeared as a fully surrealist successor to Rebel Worker. Like other Black Swan imprints, *Arsenal* was produced with a typographical excellence, a distinctive design, and a special tone of its own–qualities then all too rare in Left publications in the USA. Edited by Franklin with an editorial board consisting of Paul Garon, Joseph Jablonski, Philip Lamantia, and Penelope Rosemont, *Arsenal* became US surrealism's journal of research and discovery.

> Workers of the World, Be Wild!
>
> White mountain looking down
>
> Disdainfully upon the upstart town
>
> Where men built Banks and burned the forests down!
>
> – Ralph Chaplin "Only The Drums Remembered" (excerpt)

In the above poem, legendary IWW bard and graphic artist Ralph Chaplin, author of the anthemic class struggle song, "Solidarity Forever," expressed his sadness and anger that the forests were destroyed, but not merely because of the jobs that would be lost as a result. The poem is dedicated to Leschi, the martyred Nisqually chief who fought against the imposition of European civilization. In it, Chaplin sings a lament for the hills that had become stark, naked and barren, the springs that had gone dry, and "the sun a phantom in a fogged-out sky." All of these civilized, and therefore unnatural, disasters he attributes to the industrial civilization juggernaut.

The poem ends on a note of resistance with Leschi urging his people "to ring the wilderness with battle drums."

In May 1988, Franklin Rosemont edited a special issue of the Wobbly newspaper, the *Industrial Worker*, in which he republished Chaplin's poem. His aim with the paper was to bring Earth First! and the IWW–two distinct but related direct action movements–together for the first time. Although the usual run of the IW was only 2,000, Franklin arranged to print 10,000 copies of the Earth First! issue, and it had its impact. A month later, Earth First! organizer Judi Bari joined the Wobblies. And then came Redwood Summer, a direct action organizing project that linked the causes of California lumber workers and environmental activists under the Wobbly agitprop banner of "Dump The Bosses Off Yer Backs," itself the name of the IWW direct action standard by John Brill with the tune based upon a detourned version of the Christian hymn, "Take It To The Lord In Prayer." Redwood Summer so infuriated the lumber barons that Bari had a contract taken out on her life and a bomb was planted in her car which, when it exploded, caused her serious injury and, later, a premature death.

Before delving more deeply into that seminal May 1988 issue of the *Industrial Worker*, let us examine the historical connections between the surrealist movement and the natural world that led the Chicago Group of surrealist-oriented rebel workers to involve themselves in such a project in the first place. Though the surrealist movement's historical affinity for revolutionary and anti-colonial struggles is well known, its celebration and defense of the natural world has been less remarked upon. In particular, surrealists have long revered the ability of primal peoples to tap into the poetry inherent in nature.

Perhaps the title of a 1937 article by Benjamin Peret that appeared in the signature surrealist journal, Minotaure, expresses it best, "Nature Devours Progress and Surpasses It." Andre Breton, in the Forties, sung the praises of the birds he watched and listened closely to during his 1944 days of exile on the Gaspe Peninsula of Quebec at the end of the Second World War. In his book, Arcanum 17, written during his Gaspe sojourn, he laments, "At the top of the list of initial errors that remain the most detrimental stands the idea that the universe only has intelligible meaning for mankind, and that it has none, for instance, for animals. Man prides himself on being the chosen one of creation."[5] Instead of exhibiting such anthropocentric arrogance, Breton often invoked the ancient Chinese precept, "Follow Nature," and, with this alchemical incantation in mind, he challenged the domesticated social order in the name of Mad Love.

Later the Chicagoans coined the term Ecology of the Marvelous to express their poetic sense of wonder in relation to the natural world from a surrealist perspective upon being inspired by Philip Lamantia's 1986 poetry book, Meadowlark West. Lamantia, who was a longtime philosophical anarchist, had at 16 been a precocious contributor to the New York-based wartime surrealist magazine, Triple V, edited by a flux of exiled Paris surrealists in the Forties. He later became a part of Kenneth Rexroth's Anarchist Circle in San Francisco, and a co-editor of Ark, a seminal single issue magazine which featured many of the Circle's writers along with the work of anarchist George Woodcock. In fact, it was Lamantia, champion of the " poetic criminal," who first called the Earth First! movement to the attention of the Chicago group.

The Chicago Surrealist Group's encounter with painter/writer Leonora Carrington, a surrealist elder of great stature, during her stay in Chicago for several years in the late Eighties proved fortuitous for all concerned. Like Breton, she had a deep interest in the "special knowledge"

[5] Andre Breton, *Arcanum 17*, p. 58.

possessed by birds and other wild creatures and wondered how we might learn from that knowledge. Of all the social movements of that time, the one Carrington talked about most, and with the greatest sympathy, was radical environmentalism. She was a militant supporter of Chicago Earth First! which was co-founded by Chicago Surrealist Group members in the mid-Eighties. In particular, she liked the most radical part of the Earth First! program–that the movement's aim should be not only to preserve existing wilderness, as was the case in their denouncement of the clearcutting of the Shawnee National Forest in Southern Illinois, but to expand wilderness by dismantling highways, malls and other cement-blighted areas and letting wilderness take over. Invoking mythology, she constantly returned to the theme that the Earth is a living being, and that until people realize that basic truth, and act accordingly, they will continue to destroy the planet and their own lives. She hated the mining industry for maiming the Earth's flesh, along with electric utilities for brutally plundering the Earth's nervous system, and had an early interest in the Greenhouse Effect and climate change.

Chicago surrealists have always been especially attentive to the radicalizing effect of nature in an urban context. They found the Great Snow of '67 an occasion for celebration as the workday mentality that ruled the city came to a grinding halt, and a large part of the population suddenly found time to play, to build snowpeople, to ski in the streets, and even (wonder of wonders) to fraternize with strangers! This same liberatory theme was further elaborated upon in a May '92 surrealist broadside honoring the Great Flood, as the Chicago River wrought its subterranean havoc through the Central Business District. In A River's Revenge! Surrealist Implications of the Great Flood, the Surrealist Group gleefully noted that:

"Any sudden end of 'business as usual' ushers in possibilities for everything that is neither business nor usual. Momentarily freed of the stultifying routine of 'making a living,' people find themselves confronted with a rare opportunity to live. In these unmanageable situations, the absolute superfluousness of all 'management' becomes hilariously obvious. Spontaneously and joyfully, those who have always been 'bored to death' reinvent, starting from zero, a life worth living. The oppressive tyranny of obligations, rules, sacrifice, obedience, realism and a multitude of so-called 'lesser evils' gives way to the creative anarchy of desire. The 'everyday' begins–however fleetingly–to fulfill the promise of poetry and our wildest dreams. In the river's subterranean fury every rebel against unfreedom has sensed a kindred spirit."[6]

With unashamed joy, the surrealists effectively offered a radically utopian reading of what the ruling bureaucracy defined as a disaster, and like Philip Lamantia, in his apocalyptic poem "Voice of Earth Mediums," they invoked a riverine version of the "Great Ocean Wave" as a weapon against industrial civilization.

Similarly, when wolves were being ruthlessly eradicated by the US government at the behest of the ranching lobby, these wild creatures were championed by the Chicago Surrealist Group and Chicago Earth First!, and this defense of wolves still resounds today with so-called "recovered" wolf populations once again coming under the threat of bounty hunters in Idaho and Montana. Wolves were one of Leonora Carrington's passional attractions, and she loved the Chicago Earth First! sticker which read, "Let Their Be Wolves!" Such agitprop stickers, which are so ubiquitous today but seemed relatively new to activist organizing in the Eighties, had originally been pioneered much earlier in the US by the Wobblies, who called them "silent agitators." The "Let There Be Wolves!" slogan was in turn the title of a short Chicago Surrealist Group piece about resis-

[6] Chicago Surrealist Group in Sakolsky, *Surrealist Subversions*, pp. 447–8.

tance to the war on wolves that appeared in *Arsenal* #4 (1989), along with the article "No Jails For Whales" on the captive whale racket as practiced by the Shedd Aquarium–which also achieved sticker status–and another which pointedly warned: "Hands Off Antarctica!"

In fact, even in the early Chicago Surrealist Group tract, "Thesis on Vision," originally published in 1966, the year the Chicago Surrealist Group was formed, the Group's affinity with wolves was clear and the article concludes with the words, "The forest is deep and the night is long, but we know the wolves are on our side."[7] Later in a 1970 article published in the special surrealist issue of Radical America, Franklin argued that "there is something empty, rotten and wrong about any 'politics' which has nothing to say about the near-extinction of polar bears."[8] So when Leonora Carrington arrived on the Chicago scene, she was delighted to receive a copy from him of the Earth First! publication, Grizzly Bear Report.

But what does defending wolves and grizzlies have to do with wage slavery? Plenty! In the opening article of *Rebel Worker* #1, "Why Rebel:," Wobbly class war veteran, Fred Thompson, accused capitalism of destroying the Earth. In his words, "Capitalism is wrecking itself, damaging the earth that nurtured it, and threatening to drag humanity into oblivion with it."[9] It was within such a longstanding Rebel Worker context, and with an understanding of the contradictions inherent in using the industrial unionism of the IWW as a vehicle for dismantling industrial civilization, that, in 1988, Franklin decided to edit the aforementioned "Special Issue on Radical Environmentalism" for the *Industrial Worker*. He chose the May Day issue as having the most propitious date for unleashing such an ambitious project on the world.

After a front page lead story, "Workers' Direct Action Saves Rainforest," the second page editorial was entitled "May Day, Red, Black–and Green." Written by Franklin himself, it said in part, "The green May Day is itself more militant, more radical, more consciously in opposition to things as they are than its far more innocent antecedents–a consequence no doubt, of the precarious condition of all things green, and indeed of all life, on our endangered planet. This coming together again of the red and black and green traditions of May Day is a promising sign, hinting at the possibility of a more general radical renewal beyond the narrow boundaries of stifling ideologues and sects. A festival of singing and dancing, poetry and solidarity, May Day should offer a chance for all the dispossessed to assert their desire and will to change life, to heal the Earth, to build a new society in the shell of the old."[10] In this red, black and green spirit, alongside an article appearing later in the newspaper that was placed on a page featuring a brawling May Day centerpiece poster by Gallery Bugs Bunny director Robert Green, was a glowing account of the previously mentioned new edition of Joyce Kornbluh's *Rebel Voices* book done by surrealist collaborator and radical labor historian David Roediger. Facing it on the same page was an animal liberation book review (of which more will be said later) by visual artist, instrument designer, experimental musician and participating Chicago Surrealist Group member, Hal Rammel. The review saluted Earth First!'s April 21 Day of Outrage against the US Forrest Service while alluding to the date's synergistic confluence with both wilderness advocate John Muir Day and National Laboratory Animal Day.

Earlier in the newspaper, on the same page as Franklin's editorial, was a poem by Wobbly poet and printmaker Carlos Cortez, who, in subsequent years, was the organizer/curator of the

[7] Chicago Surrealist Group in Rosemont, et al, eds. *The Forecast Is Hot!*, p. 9.

[8] Franklin Rosemont. *Revolution in the Service of the Marvelous*, p. 11, footnote 1.

[9] Fred Thompson, "Why Rebel?" in Franklin Rosemont. Dancin' in the Streets, p. 85.

[10] Editorial, *Industrial Worker* (May, 1988), p. 2.

"Traveling Wobbly Art Show," and who, along with the Rosemonts, was a longtime board member of the radical Charles H. Kerr Publishers. The poem, "Adios Tecopita" was an homage to the Tecopa pupfish, which in 1982 became the first species ever removed from the US government's list of endangered species because it had become extinct. In the poem, he placed the blame for its demise squarely on the shoulders of industrial civilization or, as T-Bone Slim once called it, "civilinsanity." Franklin in the article "Workers and Wilderness" appearing on the previous page used the surrealist weapon of black humor to sum up the costs of such insanity: "It was a hell of a price to pay for indoor plumbing, plastic slipcovers and a medicine cabinet full of Valium."[11] And in his regular IW column, written under the name CC Redcloud to reflect the indigenous part of his ancestry, Cortez made a related point. "If one listens to our captains of industry, the environmentalists are the enemies of human progress. Such may be true but the human progress they are enemies of is the progress of only a few humans–those who now own and control the machinery of production, those who can demand a higher price on things as they come closer to extinction."[12]

While these days, corporate "greenwashing" attempts to mask the inherent violence of capitalism toward nature, and corporate media spin a "jobs versus the environment" web over the eyes of the public, the name of the game for the capitalist state has not changed in relation to both the workplace and the natural world: exploitation. In describing the dynamics of resistance to such a state of affairs Franklin concluded, "The struggle for wilderness is also a struggle against Capital, and the renewal of wilderness contributes to the struggle for the abolition of wage slavery." Therefore, he urged his readers, "Workers of the World, be wild![13] Then, on the page appearing opposite an announcement of how to subscribe to the Earth First! Journal, were two articles penned by Franklin and pointedly signed with his Wobbly red card number (X322339) rather than his name, as contributors to *IW* often do to this day.

In the first, "Fellow Workers, Meet Earth First!," he wrote, in making a link between Wobblies and Earth First!ers from an IWW point of view, "Uniting the wilderness radicalism of the great 'Yosemite Prophet' John Muir and the flamboyant direct-action tactics of the IWW, Earth First! has transformed the most vital current of the old conservation movement into something qualitatively new and incomparably more radical, and at the same time has helped to bring out a new and wilder dimension to the old Wobbly dream expressed by Fred Thompson of making this planet 'a good place to live.'"[14] Noting that these two radical movements have a lot to learn from one another, the companion article, "Earth First!ers, Meet the IWW" made a key distinction between the self-organizing milieu of the IWW and the top-down business unionism of the AFL-CIO whose main function in the capitalist system is to control labor. Rather than seeking to abolish wage slavery, the latter organization only wants to mitigate its consequences and acts as an apologist for the miserabilist bargain offered to workers between employment and a green planet.

This same special *IW* issue also included an unattributed interview with Roger Featherstone, entitled, "Earth First! and the IWW." Featherstone was then a "roving editor" of the Earth First! Journal. In the interview he said, "I think the jobs' issue is a red herring. It's a bone thrown out by those in charge to get folks fighting with each other. We need to have the guts to say no to jobs

[11] Franklin Rosemont. "Workers and Wilderness," IW, p. 3.

[12] Carlos Cortez (CC Redcloud). IW (May, 1988), p. 4.

[13] Franklin Rosemont. "Workers of the World Be Wild," IW (May, 1988), p. 3.

[14] Franklin Rosemont. "Fellow Workers Meet Earth First!", IW (May, 1988), p. 6.

and a system that destroys the environment, and to fight for a society free of such devastation. A blow to save wilderness is a blow to the assholes that are screwing the workers. A lot of people in the Earth First! movement admire the early history of the IWW. We admire the IWW spirit, sense of humor, art and music: it's direct action tactics; its unwillingness to buy into the political scene; its no-compromise attitude, and, most importantly, its guts. I think the spirit of the Earth First! movement today would make Bill Haywood and Joe Hill smile and say 'right on!'"[15]

In this latter sense, it is interesting that the *Ecodefense Manual* (reviewed elsewhere in this special issue) listed as one of its co-editors the by then long-deceased Wobbly organizer Big Bill Heywood. Along with the *Li'l Green Songbook* (reviewed by the mysterious Punapilvi in the same issue), which was modeled on the IWW's *Little Red Songbook*, these Earth First! publications owed a great debt to the subversive counterculture of direct action and sabotage created by the IWW. While the former two publications are now regrettably out-of-print, the Wobbly songbook was recently reprinted in expanded form by the Rosemonts through Charles H. Kerr Publishers. Perhaps a song written by an Earth First!er with the moniker of Walkin' Jim Stoltz best explains the link between Earth First! and the Wobblies in that it is a friendly appropriation of Joe Hill's call to arms, "There Is Power in a Union," which is reworked by Stoltz into a song called "There is Power in the Earth." Of course, Hill's original had itself cleverly detourned the melody of the well known Christian hymn, "There Is Power In The Blood Of The Lamb."

In the *Ecodefense Manual*, Dave Foreman of Earth First! clearly stated in the introduction that monkeywrenching was an ethical form of nonviolent resistance rather than a type of terrorism since it was not directed toward human beings and other life forms. In the newspaper's book review entitled "Subvert The Dominant Paradigm," the reviewer, Lobo X99, gave a verbal wink and nod to this monkeywrenching statement, and said with approval: "It does an old Wobbly's heart good to see that this new how-to book sets the record straight in regard to the dignity and decency of sabotage."[16] The following year another review of the book appeared in *Arsenal* 4 (1989) under the title "Why Not Try Monkeywrenching?" written for "those who prefer poetry to property–those who realize that subverting the dominant paradigm is a sacred obligation as well as one of life's supreme pleasures."[17] The back cover of that same issue of *Arsenal* tellingly displayed two quotes–one by Andre Breton defining "pure psychic automatism,' and the other by John Muir, which said, "a little pure wildness is the one great present want."

Facing the *IW* review on the same page was an article by Montana Earth First!er Randall Restless entitled "Common Ground." Reaffirming the direct action tactical affinity between the Wobblies and Earth First! found in previous articles, and similarly lambasting "the mindless industrial technocracy" which worships profit and power, Grass went on to expand the hallowed Wobbly slogan, "An Injury To One Is An Injury To All" to include the natural world. As he put it, "What is the value of freedom from political repression if there is not clean air left to breathe, no clean water left to drink, no untainted food left to eat? The exploiters of the working class are also the exploiters of the Earth. Let's work together to rid the planet of all exploitation! An injury to one is an injury to all!"[18]

While, in this *IW* Special Issue, Franklin was consciously trying to forge linkages between the Wobblies and Earth First!, he did not shy away from also including the Chicago Surrealist Group

[15] Roger Featherstone, *IW* (May, 1988), p. 9.

[16] Lobo X99, "Subvert the Dominant Paradigm," IW (May, 1988), p. 7.

[17] Chicago Surrealist Group. "Why Not Try Monkeywrenching?" in Sakolsky, Surrealist Subversions, p. 478.

[18] Randall Restless. "Common Ground: An Open Letter to Wobblies Everywhere," IW (May, 1988), p. 7.

in this melange of direct action solidarity. Unlike other so-called avant garde art movements, the Chicago Surrealist Group has always rejected the exclusivity of considering itself, or being considered, an avant garde, and has used a radical inclusivity strategy as one of its most subversive tools. Accordingly, under the sign of a totemic surrealist collage by Joel Williams on the page following the "Common Ground" piece was the article, "Surrealism in the Service of Revolution (and Vice Versa)" which noted that many American surrealists carry IWW red cards and have also been actively involved in Earth First! Reprinted in this boxed portion of the page were two no holds barred Chicago Surrealist Group tracts: "Why Say No?" and "An Unjust Dominion."

The first piece, predictably in this context, listed among its "immediate surrealist demands" the "global suppression of wage slavery" and the "expansion of wilderness everywhere," but it did not neglect to mention related surrealist demands for "absolute sexual freedom and the eroticization of everyday life," "emancipation of children" and the "destruction of family, church and state."[19] Similarly, the "Unjust Dominion" article by Chicago Surrealist Group members Hal Rammel and painter Gina Litherland (originally published in the International *Surrealist Bulletin* of September, 1986), again upped the ante by raising the issue of animal liberation as part of an emancipatory project to confound the corporate media's miserabilist emphasis on promulgating a dichotomous "endangered spotted owl vs jobs" mindset. The reactionary strategic context of this divide and conquer strategy was further addressed in an article by Barbara Hansen, complete with a vintage cartoon by IWW artist CE Setzer featuring a wise Wobbly May Day owl asking, "whose side are you on for the four hour day?"

The previously mentioned book review by Rammel of BR Boyd's The New Abolitionists: Animal Rights and Human Liberation later in the newspaper further clarified the "Unjust Dominion" point of view that the terrain of capitalist injury should include animals. In order to enhance that argument, it mentioned that the book under review included a reworked version of a well known quote from Eugene Debs, one of the founders of the IWW, that had been expanded in scope beyond humans: "While there is yet a class of exploited beings, we are of it." Similarly, Rammel noted in his review that the book's back cover further brings such a "big tent" idea home by reproducing a photograph of animal liberation demonstrators unfurling a banner that reads, "An Injury To One Is An Injury To All."[20]

In both cases, surrealists were attempting to situate animal liberation in the context of past and present battles against the exploitation of the working class. Perhaps even Rammel's humorous "May Day Greetings" front page illustration, which featured no less than six feisty cartoon cats under the "Sab Cat" banner of "Direct Action Gets the Goods," was at least partly about solidarity with animals by questioning pet animal stereotypes of subservience to a master and obsequious cuteness. Moreover, the review of Donald Roum's Wildcat: Anarchist Comics, which appeared on the same New Abolitionists review page, linked the Wobbly image of the black cat of sabotage as a symbol of workplace resistance to Roum's later creation of Wildcat as a feline symbol of anarchy, and alluded to a cartoon in the book connecting the coal industry to the exploitation of both workers and the environment. Finally, the back page of the newspaper featured an article provided by the Chicago IWW chapter critiquing the all-American hamburger McInstitution, a favorite target of animal liberationists everywhere, entitled, "What's Wrong With McDonald's?"

[19] Chicago Surrealist Group, *IW* (May, 1988), p. 8.

[20] Hal Rammel. "Book Review of The New Abolitionists," IW (May, 1988), p. 10.

The Continuing Relevance of Surrealism in the Twenty First Century

A deep concern for the Ecology of the Marvelous, has not merely been a passing fancy for the Chicago Surrealist Group. In May of 2010, the Surrealist Movement in the United States (which has the Chicago Group at its core) published an ecological manifesto online entitled, "Another Paradise Lost! A Surrealist Program of Demands on the Gulf of Mexico Oil Disaster"[21] which linked the consequences of that oil explosion for both wildlife and humans. The manifesto, which begins under the Maldorian sign of the octopus, was dedicated to Wobbly/Earthfirst!er Judi Bari and the following political prisoners: imprisoned ecoactivist Marie Mason, Mexican Robin Hood bankrobber Oso Blanco Chubbock, and the "coming insurrectionaries" known as the Tarnac 9. In this manifesto the true face of ecoterrorism is revealed to be a corporate one.

Once again under the Wobbly banner of "an injury to one is an injury to all," and with a nod to the eight workers killed in the explosion, the manifesto indicted BP oil executives and their governmental collaborators for ecocide. It then went on to demand that these oil barons be tried by a popular tribunal consisting of residents of the Gulf Shore communities directly affected by their actions (and inactions), with the Earth Liberation Front and Earth First! to be brought in as witnesses, especially those among them who were then serving hard time in prison for their work in defense of the natural world. As the manifesto declared in ringing tones of disgust and contempt, "The least we can hope for as an outcome is that the accused will be tarred with their own petroleum wastes and feathered with the soiled plumage of murdered birds."[22] In a similarly outraged vein, they called for the dismantling of all oil, coal and nuclear power companies engaged in extractive violence. This uncompromising refusal to accept the false solution of bureaucratic mitigation is firmly in the anarcho-surrealist tradition of "demanding the impossible," in this case in the name of brown pelicans, shrimp, frigate birds, marlins, gannets, sea bass, laughing gulls, octopi and piping plovers. The manifesto ended with an insurrectionary graffiti sighting in Mobile, Alabama, "When life gives you oil spills, make Molotovs!"

Because of their continuous history of radicalism in relation to the ecological outrages being perpetrated by industrial civilization, the Chicago Surrealist Group, in recent years, has found a radical green affinity with such direct actionist-oriented magazines as *Green Anarchy* (which is now sadly defunct) and the Earth First! Journal (which is still alive and kicking). In 1971, years before the Animal Liberation movement started making headlines, the Chicago Surrealists issued The Anteater's Umbrella: A Contribution to the Critique of Zoos, a tract initiated by Penelope Rosemont, who once noted that her first word as a child was "outside." It was initially distributed by the Chicago Group at the entrance to Lincoln Park Zoo. The unsuspecting zoogoer who took the proffered leaflet read:

> It is not without significance that animals in zoos are captured and brought against their wills to this, the penitentiary of the instincts. Here, in the zoo, in this place of hypnotic fascinations, human beings come to see their own instincts caged and sterilized. Everything that is intrinsic to humankind, but smothered by capitalist society, appears safely in a zoo. Aggression, sexuality, motion, desire, play, the very impulses to freedom are trapped and displayed for the alienated enjoyment and manipulation

[21] "Another Paradise Lost!" <www.surrealism-usa.org>

[22] Ibid.

> of men, women and children. The cages are merely the extensions of the cages that omnipresently infest the lives of all living beings. The brutal confinement of animals ultimately serves only to separate men and women from their own potentialities.[23]

This "zoo-as-Bastille" polemic problematizes an unexamined part of everyday spectacular reality considered to be as normal as a family picnic. In turn, it also causes us to reflect deeply, not only on the problem of animals as victims, but also on our own victimization and submerged desire for freedom. In this regard, "The Anteaters Umbrella" would later be republished in *Green Anarchy* magazine in the Fall of 2002 because of its anti-civilization affinities and commended therein for attacking the animal liberation issue from a revolutionary rather than a moralistic perspective.

Later, two other articles excerpted from Penelope Rosemont's Surrealist Experiences book would also be published by *Green Anarchy* in their Winter 2004 and Summer 2005 issues. One of them, "The Psychopathology of Work" is of particular interest in reference to our previous discussion of the Wobblies. Because her argument was based on a refusal of work in the revolutionary context of an end to wage slavery, it was welcomed by *Green Anarchy* for publication. Though *Green Anarchy* has sometimes been mistakenly criticized, particularly by anarcho-syndicalists, for being anti-worker, their editorial philosophy was actually more nuanced. Penelope's article appealed to the GA editors precisely because while the magazine had always been critical of workerist tendencies in the anarchist movement, it did not seek to self-righteously direct its editorial wrath at wage slaves themselves, but rather at the institution of wage slavery. Similarly, before their demise, *Green Anarchy* would publish surrealist-inspired pieces of my own on miserabilism and Eurocentrism[24] as being compatible with a green anarchist analysis.

In addition to these *Green Anarchy* reprints, the Earth First! Journal's Special Thirtieth Anniversary Issue, volume 1 (November 2010) decided to run an excerpted version of a recent collaborative text by the Chicago Surrealist Group/Moon First! Collective: "No Compromise In Defense of the Dark Side of the Moon."[25] The tract was originally written in response to NASAA's LCRoss (Lunar CRater Observation and Sensing Satellite) Project A119 which committed the "unimaginable poetic atrocity" of engaging in the nuclear bombardment of the dark side of the moon. And volume 2 of the Earth First! Journal's Thirtieth Anniversary Issue (February 2011) reprinted an excerpt from a much earlier article co-authored by Franklin Rosemont and David Roediger entitled, "Three Days That Shook the New World Order" which had originally appeared in both the 1993 Chicago Surrealist Group publication, What Are You Going To Do About It?, then soon after in Race Traitor (Summer, 1993), and a decade later in my own Surrealist Subversions anthology.

As to the latter article on the Los Angeles Rebellion of 1992, the original piece began with Wobbly T-Bone Slim's quote on injustice and the politeness of attack that I have used earlier as an epigram for the "Wobbly Surrealist Axis" section of this essay. The text emphasizes solidarity between ghetto/barrio street fighters, eco-activists, radical feminists and point-of-production

[23] "The Anteater's Umbrella," *Green Anarchy* (Fall, 2002), p. 19 or Chicago Surrealist Group in Sakolsky, *Surrealist Subversions*, pp 374–5.

[24] The articles in question are respectively:Ron Sakolsky. "Why Misery Loves Company?," *Green Anarchy* #23 (Summer/Fall 2006), p. 17. Later appearing in Ron Sakolsky. Swift Winds, pp. 25–30. And, Ron Sakolsky. "A Surrealist Re-Imagining of Canada," *Green Anarchy* #14 (Fall, 2003), p. 3. Later appearing in Ron Sakolsky. Creating Anarchy, pp. 158–161.

[25] Chicago Surrealist Group/Moon First! Collective "No Compromise in Defense of the Dark Side of the Moon" Earth First! (Nov 2010), p. 104 or <www.surrealism-usa.org>

rebel workers in order to inspire the kind of radical inclusivity that will destroy the toxic institutional structures that are killing both the planet and its human inhabitants. It is alternately a call to mutual aid, play, and adventure that proclaims:

The struggle for wilderness is inseparable from the struggle for a free society, which is inseparable from the struggle against racism, whiteness and imperialism, which is inseparable from the struggle for the liberation of women, which is inseparable from the struggle for sexual freedom, which is inseparable from the struggle to emancipate labor and abolish work, which is inseparable from the struggle against war, which is inseparable from the struggle to lead poetic lives and, more generally, to do as we please. The enemies today are those who try to separate these struggles. Outsiders of the world unite! Freedom Now! Earth First! These three watchwords are for us but one."[26]

The Earth First! editors pointed out in a footnote that accompanied the excerpted reprint that this deeply surrealist article has been commonly read around the campfire at recent Earth First! gatherings. Lately, it has been especially relevant in rejecting the warped USAnian interpretation of ecology that would exclude Mexican immigration to what historically is actually "occupied Mexico," in favor of a more expansive "no borders" approach to understanding the nature of revolutionary solidarity.

Conclusion

The Chicago Surrealist Group, which is known for its scathing polemics aimed at toppling the institutions of oppression and repression, has correspondingly been a voice for radical inclusivity in seeking to join forces with like-minded direct actionists fighting to break the authoritarian grip of industrial civilization. Yet, as Franklin has duly noted, poetry matters: "Unless it is rooted in the practice of poetry–the experience of 'outside' from within–even the deepest 'deep ecology' barely scratches the surface."[27] From a Chicago Surrealist Group perspective, the poetic practice of taking direct action to destroy the miserabilism of industrial civilization which has been exhibited by both Wobbly and EarthFirst! activists can animate the creative power to envision and construct a multiplicity of exciting new possibilities that are located at the unmapped crossroads of dream and reality.

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