

anchorage anarchy

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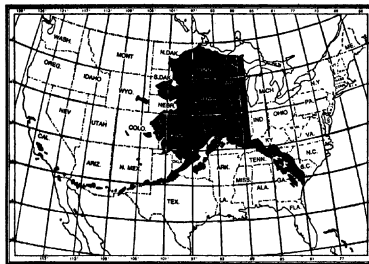
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Great Land of Government

There is a perception both here in Alaska and elsewhere in the United States and the rest of the world that this state is some sort of last frontier, peopled by independent sorts who prefer to fend for themselves and live in a less encumbered relationship with nature, the land, and each other. The local press refers to the rest of the country as the "Outside," as though conditions here are somehow uniquely different from those in the lower 48. This impression is largely inaccurate, a romantic myth not unlike others which enable Americans in general to see themselves as different from, and better than, people elsewhere in the world. Just as it is mistaken to portray the United States as a land of freedom populated by rugged individualists, Alaska is no model of free and unmediated interaction with the natural world and the people and other creatures within it.

While the Eskimo, Aleut, and Indian societies that existed before the arrival of the Russian and other European explorers, traders, and settlers were more egalitarian in many ways than those of the newer

arrivals, Alaska was never any sort of libertarian paradise. These earlier communities were all more or less authoritarian and riddled with social and work roles based on a person's sex, and violence between different groups was not uncommon. The first human occupants of Alaska may well have done without a state, but they were certainly not lacking in arbitrary, inequitable, and sometimes brutal social relationships.



The later settlers from Europe and the United States introduced the institutions of the political state to the "Great Land." These various governments, with their laws and the weapons to enforce them, protected the newer arrivals in their economic exploitation and abuse of the residents and resources of the area, granted titles to land to those they favored, and arrogated to themselves the power to regulate the affairs of those they claimed to represent. The story of modern Alaska is the story of ever-growing, ever more powerful governmental institutions ordering people around and protecting the interests of the political and economic elites.

Alaska takes up around 365,500,000 acres, 235,100,000 of which are owned by the federal government and 90,300,000 by the state. Of the 40,100,000 acres in the “private” sector, 37,400,000 are owned by corporations to whom this land was granted by the federal government in the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act in 1971. Just like all the other corporations in the state which own or lease land or other property through the good graces of various government agencies, these businesses would not exist without government largesse and protection, and serve primarily the interests of those who own them at the expense of those who work for them. All other non-governmental lands taken together make up merely 2,700,000 acres, or just over 7% of the total area of Alaska.



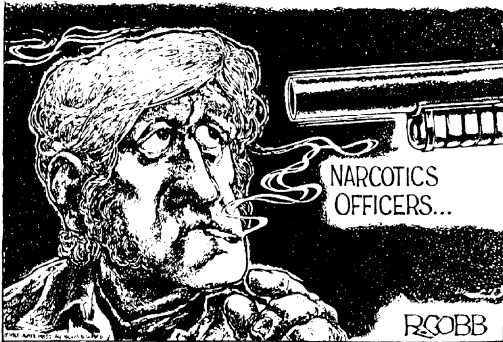
Much of this government-owned real estate is considered “public” land, but average people are not really free to use and enjoy it as they wish. One cannot enter a federal building, including the social security offices and the public lands building, without producing identification

and passing through a metal detector. People are hemmed in by regulations when they want to camp, hunt, fish, or otherwise utilize the various “wilderness” areas around the state. Representatives of a plethora of government agencies patrol and police these “public” lands, telling people how, when, and where they may go about their business when traveling or staying in these areas. And when they wish to spend their money elsewhere, those who run these parks simply close them to the “public” who are the purported owners. Despite the abysmal record of government “management” of wilderness and wildlife, most recently demonstrated by this year’s devastating fires in the southwest, as well as one costing \$3,000,000 that was set by state biologists in Alaska, the bureaucrats and politicians persist in monopolizing the ownership and running of vast areas of land here and elsewhere.

Besides possessing most of the land in this state, governments also presume to dictate how we behave even when we are not on “their” property. Like their counterparts elsewhere, government officials, regulatory bodies, and police interfere constantly in the lives and business of us all, regulating our conduct in matters from the most important to the most trivial. Bureaucrats dictate how many fish can be caught in the open ocean and to whom fishers can sell them; whether art galleries can serve wine at openings; who can and can’t cut and style your hair; how and where you can build a home; what drugs, whether therapeutic or recreational,

you can consume; and who can provide you with health care. The Division of Family and Youth Services steals people's children, while police, like cops everywhere, routinely abuse peaceable people and invade their homes in their prosecution of the drug war, and are free to lock people up to coerce them into cooperating with the courts. In addition, people whose buildings are on land owned by the state risk being forced to vacate and burn their property at the whim of bureaucrats. Alaska is hardly a land where people can live and let live.

A RISING NEW CAUSE OF
SEVERE BRAIN DAMAGE:



Unfortunately, this situation does not trouble many individual alaskans, who, like others all over the united states, are more than willing to use the government as their private bully when they want to push other people around or protect their own privileges. Whether it is those who want to prevent others from living in their neighborhood by claiming bogus public health hazards from new construction, busybodies who wish to keep others from

purchasing sex or drugs, newly-arrived suburbanites who want to drive out a long-standing rural drug rehab center, or coastal property owners who want to maintain their monopoly over access to the Cook Inlet shoreline, residents of this state are just as likely to call on the government to back them up in disputes with their neighbors as people anywhere.

Naturally, all this intervention, supervision, and policing is paid for precisely by the people who are victimized by the rules, regulations, and laws enacted by various levels of government. While alaska has no income tax, there are local sales taxes and various other "tourist" taxes which state residents end up paying as well. There are also taxes on phone service and utilities such as water, sewer, gas, and electricity, as well as garbage collection. The state also taxes corporations, but these taxes are ultimately a tax on the people who work for these companies and the people who buy their products, since this is where these business' wealth comes from. And all these taxes are in addition to those levied by the federal government which alaskans, like all other americans, are compelled to pay.

Government is alive and well in alaska, where the state spends more money per capita than any other in the united states, and government is a major, and sometimes the biggest, employer in many communities. While there are a lot of wonderful things about living here, like the mountains, rivers, wildlife, and coastlines, government institutions do their best to ruin

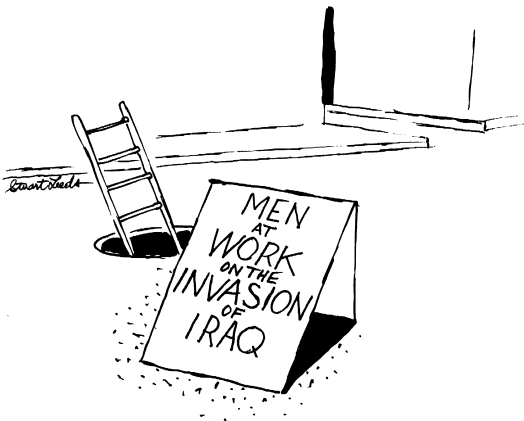
the experience. The authorities, from Anchorage, to Juneau, to Washington, all think they know better than us how we should lead our lives and arrange our affairs, and have made it their business to force us to conform to their vision of how the world should operate. Only when enough people come to oppose this state of affairs and refuse to obey and cooperate any longer, will we have any chance of living in a really great land, a land free of government and the social and economic servitude it breeds.



War and Rumors of War

As the united states government gears up to escalate the ongoing war they and the british rulers are waging against the people who live in iraq, the slaughter in afghanistan, which the military hypocritically calls Operation Enduring Freedom, continues apace. While the military authorities deny the true extent of their killing of non-combatants, aided in

this endeavor by the compliant american news media, some particularly egregious examples of their murderous actions occasionally manage to show up in the US press. When the american military is caught engaging in the slaughter of civilians, however, such actions are routinely described in the newspapers as errors, accidents where a “bomb goes astray,” even though military officials say they were attacking a “legitimate” target. When bombers attacked a wedding party in the town of Kakarak in July, killing 44 of those attending the celebration, a military spokesperson insisted that american forces had been attacked with anti-aircraft fire from the area, even though no traces of such weaponry could be found. Of course, when peaceful afghans are killed in explosions caused by the equally loathsome forces opposed to the allied invasion, such

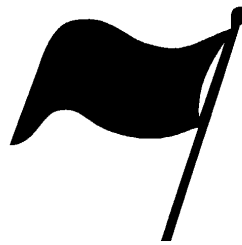


murders are considered the work of “terrorists.” Quite a double standard.

Besides committing both random and well-planned acts of murder against regular people in afghanistan, the US government and military routinely detain people using the “war on terror” as a pretext. In May, american forces raided an afghan village and captured 55 people, holding them for at least a week, and punishing them if they talked to each other while imprisoned. The united states-sponsored thugs who make up the current afghan government have incarcerated thousands and keep their prisoners in horrid conditions where many suffer from malnutrition. Prisoners held at Guantanamo by the american military, are kept in cages, hog-tied when they don’t obey their captors, and denied legal counsel. A number of these prisoners apparently were non-combatant charity workers from kuwait, but their attempts to use the american legal system to secure their release have been in vain. The federal government has given its stamp of approval to conditions at Guantanamo by maintaining its courts have no jurisdiction over these prisoners held outside the US, and has thereby given the military permission to treat these captives in whatever way they see fit.

The government has used the war and the attacks in this country last September as a pretext to further limit the already restricted freedoms of residents of the united states. Federal authorities investigating the September murders arrested around 1200 people and continue

to detain at least 147, refusing to even release their names. In June, 131 captives, none of whom were implicated in any terrorist activities, were secretly deported to pakistan after being held for months at INS detention centers. When a judge earlier this month ordered the “justice” department to hand over the names of 751 people detained on immigration charges and another 129 held on criminal charges since September 11, the feds opposed this decision, arguing it would endanger the country. The US has also encouraged other governments to deny their subjects due legal process, as in June, when sudan arrested and deported a “suspect” so that american agents could



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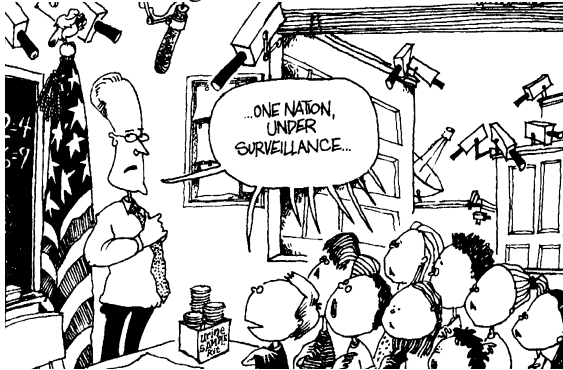
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interrogate him in a third country.

Increases in government surveillance and power have not been limited to the investigation and pursuit of people who have been implicated somehow in violent actions. Visitors to Ellis Island are now subjected to facial recognition camera systems; people from certain countries will be fingerprinted and required to tell the feds about their movements and activities when in the united states; the FBI has been authorized to monitor opposition rallies, internet chat rooms, and church services; one can be arrested for making a joke about bombs at an airport; and FBI agents are checking people's reading records at public libraries. Some politicians feel even these invasions of our liberties are not enough, like the senator who wants to repeal the *posse comitatus* act to enable soldiers to arrest american civilians. These authoritarian measures have set a precedent for other governments around the world, who have eagerly used the threat of terrorism to further whittle away at the liberties of their subjects, while avoiding criticism from the supposedly more freedom-loving states of america and



europa. The threat of terrorism is also being used to justify international power politics and intimidation, as seen when russia attempts to use the current situation to its advantage by labeling its neighbor georgia, with whom it has some disputes, a nest of terror second only to afghanistan. The lesson the governments of the world are learning—or seeing reinforced—by the US is that one can justify any behavior, no matter how odious, by declaring that it furthers the war against terror.



It is clear that the united states is going to take advantage of the current atmosphere to launch a full-scale attack on and/or invasion of iraq at some point in the future. Justifying this escalation of the ongoing war of terror already being waged on iraqis by claiming that the rulers of that country are developing weapons of mass destruction is the height of hypocrisy. The united states itself already possesses enormous stockpiles of such weapons and has shown itself more than willing to use them, but wishes to deny others the opportunity to have them as well. It has even criticized its sometime ally russia for selling nuclear technology to iran, another country the

american politicians have demonized for its refusal to follow their orders. Besides turning up the pressure on its enemies *du jour*, the US is also attempting to greatly increase the power of its naval forces, which can already board any sea-going vessels in international waters whenever they please, harassing their passengers with impunity, by seeking permission from a number of other countries to police their national waters, as well.



As could be expected, this war-making has increased the budget and size of government, especially the military, and has profited corporations that supply government agencies. The senate has authorized \$29,000,000,000 for the aptly named "terror fight" and approved a \$355,400,000,000 defense budget, \$34,400,000,000 higher than that for last year. The house of representatives has approved even more war money, \$383,000,000,000 for 2003. Weapons manufacturers have increased production, in at least one case to the highest level in 15 years, and the coast guard recently awarded a \$17,000,000,000 contract to two military suppliers.

While most of the foreign governments the united states dislikes and many of the

prisoners it holds are brutish and murderous, this can also be said of many of the governments and politicians with whom it has chosen to align itself. However bad the actions of these "enemy" institutions and people, however, killing peaceable residents of other countries and abusing prisoners can never be justified. The united states has claimed the moral high ground in its military and political actions after the September 11 murders, but has shown itself to be as terroristic and brutal as any of those it is waging its current war against. Ultimately, it is always regular working people, just trying to go about the business of living, whether they live in New York, Kabul, or Baghdad, who end up the victims of terrorist groups, including those that constitute themselves as governments.



Poor Like Me?

The positive reception given Barbara Ehrenreich's new book *Nicked and Dimed* by so many reviewers reminds me of nothing so much as the critical acclaim granted to *Black Like Me*. In both cases, comfortably middle class writers pretended to be something they were not and then wrote about their experiences living this other life, sharing "revelations" about people most of their intended readers presumably know little about, despite the fact that such people live everywhere around them. It is striking that so many american readers today apparently either don't know, or don't believe, the people who really do work at low wage jobs, and need to hear of their plight from someone more "reputable," just as, years ago, many white people were unable to appreciate the discrimination experienced by black

americans, until another white person had experienced it themselves.

Just as this country is, in some ways, still segregated by color, it would appear that many people who are better off financially are segregating themselves by economic status, as well. Many choose to live in suburban, or upscale urban, areas, where they interact only with other people who bring in a good income, and no longer have any meaningful contact with the poorer working people who produce so many of the products and services americans purchase and use. If better-off americans really want to know how poor working people get by in this country, perhaps they should just get out more and interact with these people themselves, instead of avoiding them.



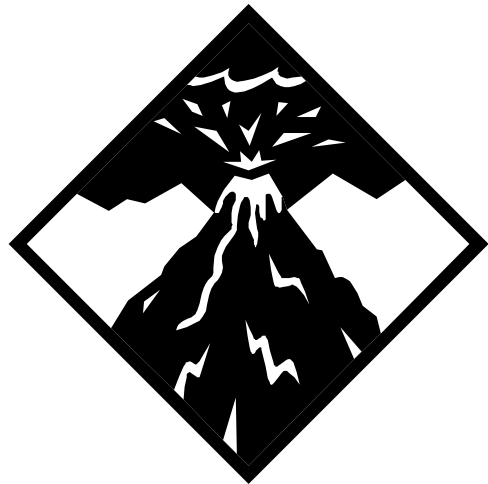
Martinique

2002 is the hundreth anniversary of the volcanic eruption which destroyed the city of St Pierre on martinique. In the following essay, published in the Leipziger Volkszeitung on May 15, 1902, Rosa Luxemburg took the imperialist governments of the world to task for their hypocritical rush to provide humanitarian aid to the victims, while slaughtering people elsewhere in their respective empires. Reading this piece today, one can clearly see how little state politics have evolved over the last 100 years. The governments of the world, today largely through international organizations like the united nations, still compete to show concern for and provide aid to the victims of natural disasters, while causing endless murder and mayhem themselves. As Luxemburg's article shows, when it comes to the actions of governments, the more things change, the more they stay the same.

Mountains of smoking ruins, heaps of mangled corpses, a steaming, smoking sea of fire wherever you turn, mud and ashes—that is all that remains of the flourishing little city which perched on the rocky slope of the volcano like a fluttering swallow. For some time the angry giant had been heard to rumble and rage against this human presumption, the blind self-conceit of the two-legged dwarfs. Great-hearted even in his wrath, a true giant, he warned the reckless creatures that crawled at his feet. He smoked, spewed out fiery clouds, in his bosom there was seething and boiling and explosions like rifle volleys and cannon thunder. But the lords of the earth, those who ordain human destiny, remained with faith unshaken—in their own wisdom.

On the 7th, the commission dispatched by the government announced to the

anxious people of St Pierre that all was in order in heaven and on earth. All is in order, no cause for alarm!—as they said on the eve of the Oath of the Tennis Court in the dance-intoxicated halls of Louis XVI, while in the crater of the revolutionary volcano fiery lava was gathering for the fearful eruption. All is in order, peace and quiet everywhere!—as they said in Vienna and Berlin on the eve of the March eruption 50 years ago. The old, long-suffering titan of Martinique paid no heed to the reports of the honorable commission: after the people had been reassured by the governor on the 7th, he erupted in the early hours of the 8th and buried in a few minutes the governor, the commission, the people, houses, streets and ships under the fiery exhalation of his indignant heart.



The work was radically thorough. Forty thousand human lives mowed down, a handful of trembling refugees rescued—the old giant can rumble and bubble in peace, he has shown his might, he has fearfully avenged the slight to his primordial power.



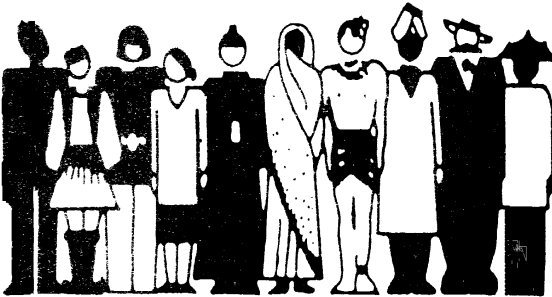
And now in the ruins of the annihilated city on Martinique a new guest arrives, unknown, never seen before—the human being. Not lords and bondsmen, not blacks and whites, not rich and poor, not plantation owners and wage slaves—human beings have appeared on the tiny shattered island, human beings who feel only the pain and see only the disaster, who only want to help and succor. Old Mt Pelee has worked a miracle! Forgotten are the days of Fashoda,

forgotten the conflict over Cuba, forgotten “la Revanche”—the French and the English, the tsar and the Senate of Washington, Germany and Holland donate money, send telegrams, extend the helping hand. A brotherhood of peoples against nature’s burning hatred, a resurrection of humanism on the ruins of human culture. The price of recalling their humanity was high, but thundering Mt Pelee had a voice to catch their ear.

France weeps over the tiny island’s 40,000 corpses, and the whole world hastens to dry the tears of the Mother Republic. But how was it then, centuries ago, when France spilled blood in torrents for the Lesser and Greater Antilles? In the sea off the east coast of Africa lies a volcanic island—Madagascar: 50 years ago there we saw the disconsolate Republic who weeps for her lost children today, how she bowed the obstinate native people to her yoke with chains and the sword. No volcano opened its crater there: the mouths of French cannons spewed out death and annihilation; French artillery fire swept thousands of flowering human lives from the face of the earth until a free people lay prostrate on the ground, until the brown queen of the “savages” was dragged off as a trophy to the “City of Light.”

On the Asiatic coast, washed by the waves of the ocean, lie the smiling Philippines. Six years ago we saw the benevolent Yankees, we saw the Washington Senate at work there. Not fire-spewing mountains—there, American rifles mowed down human lives in heaps; the

sugar cartel Senate which today sends golden dollars to Martinique, thousands upon thousands, to coax life back from the ruins, sent cannon upon cannon, warship upon warship, golden dollars millions upon millions to Cuba, to sow death and devastation.



Yesterday, today—far off in the African south, where only a few years ago a tranquil little people lived by their labor and in peace, there we saw how the English wreak havoc, these same Englishmen who in Martinique save the mother her children and the children their parents: there we saw them stamp on human bodies, on children's corpses with brutal soldiers' boots, wading in pools of blood, death and misery before them and behind.

Ah, and the Russians, the rescuing, helping, weeping Tsar of All the Russians—an old acquaintance! We have seen you on the ramparts of Praga, where warm Polish blood flowed in streams and turned the sky red with its steam. But those were the old days. No! Now, only a few weeks ago, we have seen you benevolent Russians on your dusty highways, in ruined Russian villages eye to eye with the ragged, wildly agitated, grumbling mob; gunfire

rattled, gasping muzhiks fell to the earth, red peasant blood mingled with the dust of the highway. They must die, they must fall because their bodies doubled up with hunger, because they cried out for bread, for bread!

And we have seen you too, oh Mother Republic, you tear-distiller. It was on May 23 of 1871: the glorious spring sun shone down on Paris; thousands of pale human beings in working clothes stood packed together in the streets, in prison courtyards, body to body and head to head; through loopholes in the walls, mitrailleuses thrust their bloodthirsty muzzles. No volcano erupted, no lava stream poured down. Your cannons, Mother Republic, were turned on the tight-packed crowd, screams of pain rent the air—over 20,000 corpses covered the pavements of Paris!

And all of you—whether French and English, Russians and Germans, Italians and Americans—we have seen you all together once before in brotherly accord, united in a great league of nations, helping and guiding each other: it was in China. There too you forgot all quarrels among yourselves, there too you made a peace of peoples—for mutual murder and the torch. Ha, how the pigtailed fell in rows before your bullets, like a ripe grainfield lashed by the hail! Ha, how the wailing women plunged into the water, their dead in their cold arms, fleeing the tortures of your ardent embraces!

And now they have all turned to Martinique, all one heart and one mind again; they help, rescue, dry the tears and

curse the havoc-wreaking volcano. Mt Pelee, great-hearted giant, you can laugh; you can look down in loathing at these benevolent murderers, at these weeping carnivores, at these beasts in Samaritan's clothing. But a day will come when another volcano lifts its voice of thunder: a volcano that is seething and boiling, whether you need it or not, and will sweep the whole sanctimonious, blood-splattered culture from the face of the earth. And only on its ruins will the nations come together in true humanity, which will know but one deadly foe—blind, dead nature.

**AROUND THE WORLD
EVERYWHERE YOU LOOK
FREEDOM IS
ALWAYS AGAINST
THE LAW**

Drug Prohibition Laws / Age-of-Consent Laws / Property Laws / Trespassing Laws / Anti-Sodomy Laws / Tax Laws / Draft Laws / Censorship Laws / White Privilege Laws / Anti-Pornography Laws / Sedition Laws / Vagrancy Laws / Hitchhiking Laws / Indecency Laws / Obscenity Laws / Licensing Laws / Truancy Laws / Building Code and Zoning Laws / Anti-Skateboarding Laws / Loitering Laws / Patriarchal Privilege Laws / Marriage Laws / Child Vaccination Laws / Parade Permit Laws / Voting Laws / F.C.C. Laws / National Security Laws / National Emergency Laws / Anti-Strike Laws / Anti-Privacy Laws / Search and Seizure Laws / Anti-Graffiti Laws / Anti-Posting Laws / Anti-Abortion Laws / Anti-Riot Laws / Conspiracy Laws / Criminal Syndicalism Laws / Trade Laws / Vandalism Laws / Divorce Laws / Vice Laws / Bicycle Laws / Jaywalking Laws / Gun Laws / Heresy Laws /

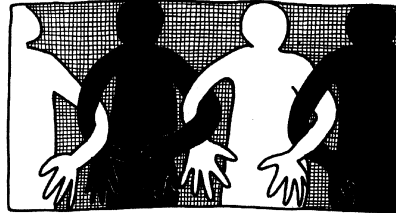
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