

YAWN is a sporadic communiqué which seeks to provide a critical look at our culture in all its manifestations. We welcome responses from readers, especially observations of a critical nature. Be forewarned that anything sent may be considered for inclusion in a future issue without specific prior notification. It is our policy not to attribute work, unless the content benefits from such attribution. **YAWN** is a collective, mostly anonymous, effort. Contributors receive a copy of the **YAWN** in which their work is used. Monetary donations are requested to help defray the costs of publication. Subscriptions are available for \$10 (cash or unused stamps) for 25 issues. Archive at <http://yawn.detritus.net/>.

Control

We find ourselves not so much horrified by our current state as we are numbed by it. But we must shake off this contrived deadness to find abject horror in the true predicament of daily life. The issue, simply put, is one of control. Commentators in **YAWN** and elsewhere have insisted that "art" is a buttressing force in the network of institutions that dominate western life. Proponents of this structure calmly insist that each of us is "free," an obvious lie in light of the cost exacted from each of us just to maintain the system which "guarantees" our "freedom."

Above all, we learn to trust the voice of authority and to mistrust what comes of our own experience. "Real" knowledge only comes from "experts." Our schools require us to regurgitate force-fed "answers" in exchange for legitimizing our "accomplishment" through the reward system of good grades. This is all with the aim of making us "better citizens;" that is, more compliant to hierarchical pressure.

Imitation, too, is a carefully presented form of control. Richard Nixon, while president of the United States, invited Richard and Karen Carpenter into the White House to honor them as fine examples of American youth. The carefully constructed image the Carpenters exhibited closely fit the image of youth that the establishment needed in order to maintain effective control and to efficiently curb freedom. Millions bought the fantasy, and still do, although its outer shape is frequently updated to forestall widespread perception of the dishonesty.

One could argue that the impulse to imitate others is a "natural" one and that this is often how we "learn" what is and is not appropriate behavior. But if it is a part of all of us, it can be used as a lever to pry us into action. So, hidden in this urge to imitate lies a danger: the danger that we will lose our very selves.

Karen's untimely demise from dietary self abuse only serves to

underscore how false her image was, and what pain lay beneath the surface. The agents of social control understand that it is not as important to control what you think as it is to control what you *do*. They have found images to be effective in exerting control over mass actions and identity. With images, they strive to define our identities for us. When you can tell someone who to be you can control what they do. Options are narrowed so that most of us choose very similar things to aspire to. Karen was entirely consumed by image—image was what she was; nothing more. We can take this as literally what "they" want of us.

The addiction of image is primary to the contemporary human condition. Image addiction, like substance addiction, may destroy minds and bodies, but it is sufficient for its goals simply to destroy *selves*. That way the body remains a "productive" member of society. It is a conceptual genocide, aimed at turning human beings into adjuncts of machinery, aided with mechanisms that automate our souls.

Each of us should control our own life. With that in mind, the Art Strike finds a place in the mechanisms of control where perhaps exists the widest disparity between *what it claims to be* and *what it actually is*. Art is that place, because of the self-manifested claim it holds on all significant "creativity", together with the severely restricted and thoroughly coded expressions that its control structures allow. This is a weak link in the chain of power that monopolizes modern attention, because in art, the common perception is that "anything goes." While this attitude most often manifests itself in impoverished emblems that touch all the "correct" symbolic bases, it can be used to wrest the means of content-bearing to our more honest purpose. Which is what, you might ask. Our more honest purpose is nothing less than the removal of the burden of large-scale social compliance from the backs of everyone.

The Superecession of the Art Strike

If "...one cannot create a revolutionary situation, complete with the required general 'desperation'," as Géza Pernecky says in **YAWN** #16, then *who* can? Certainly not the Art Strikers; their context for "desperation" lies within the parameters of an already elitist structure, namely that of the art gallery. Who really cares about art, much less mail art? Most people spend their entire lives as Art Strike participants; it's just that they don't notice it—they're too busy working, or trying to forget work.

Pernecky compares the Art Strikers to the Jews that conquered Jericho. A more realistic comparison would be with the flagellants, dragging their lacerated bodies through town, while constantly whipping themselves with their theoretical fetishes. The few among the populace who might even notice this motley group would only laugh at them, maybe even pausing to throw a few rocks down upon their heads.

If one performs the simple act of disengaging from the incredibly significant implications being generated internally by the Art Strike, and takes the whole controversy, critiques and all (including this one), and places it within the context of the world, i.e., life today in all of its totality, it soon becomes obvious that the Art Strike is little more than yet another device of mystified diversion, in this case, targeted for the consumer group of disaffected intellectuals, whose palate is oh-so discriminating. It is

another game being played by another schizophrenic sub-culture.

But really, at the heart of my complaint is that this game just isn't enough fun. There are intelligent things being said by intelligent people (I'm feeling generous), but the object of this discourse is so limited and idiotic that any possibility of sensual pleasure is unlikely, bound and repressed as it is in its elitist parameters.

But the fact that disaffected intellectuals are so willing to play any kind of game at all offers a little encouragement. This then is the practical achievement of the Art Strike; in its own pathetic little way, it has opened the door for adventure, albeit just a crack.

In the light of this crack, I would like to propose we throw this door wide open, throw it off its jambs even. Revolutionary situations saturate the planet currently. Only a fob with his head in the 19th century is unable to see this. Indeed, "desperation" is everywhere, but so generalized and commodified is it, and so hopeless does it all seem, that many healthy imaginations become oblivious to it. We have learned to put up with it far too well.



Knowing and not doing are equal to not knowing at all.

It's now time for all you Art Strikers to expand your horizons. Creativity is not being controlled by serious culture. Creativity is being controlled by a global economic system based on property. "Serious culture" is but a smokescreen for this system's force-relations, just as underground culture is its loyal opposition.

So if we're going to play a new game, a much more interesting and much more sensual kind of game, without the kinds of limitations of the Art Strike, it becomes clear that a big feature of the game, at least at the beginning, is the project of abolishing property. This is where the PERMANENT UNIVERSAL RENT STRIKE comes in. Once that's in effect, we can begin creation of the PRICELESS ECONOMIC SYSTEM, in which the abolition of profit is effected. At that point we can enter into the NEW AMOROUS WORLD we have hitherto only secretly dreamed about during orgasm.

Now is the time to begin discussion and theorizing about this new activity, this game of pleasure. I propose as grounds for speculation that sensual pleasures and their enjoyment are the only basis around which to recreate life, and that the most obvious and universal pleasures are sex and food, in all their infinite varieties.

The PERMANENT UNIVERSAL RENT STRIKE (PURS) is the only practical way to abolish property at this point in society. It cannot be abolished by some kind of "revolution," whether it's called communist or something else. It's quite simple. We all stop paying rent, mortgages, tithes and taxes. This in itself will have a dramatic effect on the structure of society, and will naturally lead to—

The PRICELESS ECONOMIC SYSTEM (PES), in which we all stop working for wages, and give our services and productions away for free. In return, we'll get everything for free. The profit motive will cease to exist as a result, and being as 90-95% of the work done in the world today is done to create profits, most work will also disappear.

Once we have argued, discussed and theorized about these two projects to a sufficient extent, the obvious thing to do is to set a date and then begin them both. It seems fitting that the PURS begin on Columbus Day, 1992, for many reasons. And what better way to wind up the Art Strike than beginning PES on January 1, 1993.

And from the actualization of these two projects we can begin the creation of the NEW AMOROUS WORLD, in which the accumulation of profit will be entirely overshadowed by the accumulation of sensual experience, which is, after all, much more enticing.

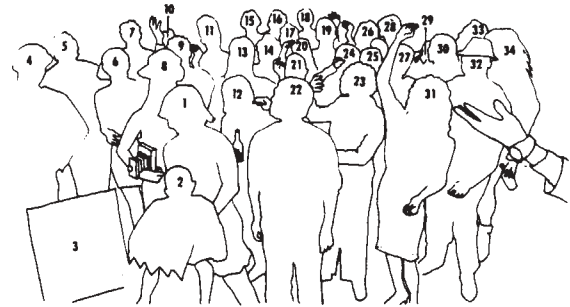
If this new game seems to be lacking in political and historical sense, that is because both politics and history have none. It is high time we do away with them altogether. What is the alternative, after all? A world poised on the brink of annihilation? An inevitable and eternal civilization? There have been at least three other social arrangements prior to this current arrangement known as civilization. Why is it so difficult to conceive that there will be other kinds of arrangements after civilization? Certainly they don't necessarily have to be separated by a nuclear holocaust. The possibilities for more imaginative punctuation marks do exist.

But having a revolution is not one of them.

Because the revolutionaries only seek to control society. The point, however, is to do away with it altogether.

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Glamour is the Pretext Privilege is the Subtext



IDEAL IDEALS & REAL DEALS

The Elite suck, that's the rage
So what's this stuff we see of late?
Those who rage on the Underground stage
Then strut-their-stuff on the Social Page—

*What's this Stuff that they Strut?
Who stops the Buck while they suck it up?*

It's fierce and rash to slam their cash
To condemn their stash then grab their flash—
It all depends on where they point their lenses—
Their Media Sucks till it sucks you up!

*Their Media sucks, until it lets you strut,
Until it sucks you up, then who stops the Buck?*

What's the point of giving it the Slam
If you turn around and play the Glam?
You become a model for the values you throttle,
Playing along with the Chic Mystique Boutique
Where's your rage when you're on their page?

*Social Values
Social Privilege
Social Status
Social Complicity*

**Social Page
Social Page
Social Page
Social Page**

Their Elite sucks—until who sucks who up?



The loss which is unknown
is no loss at all.

The Legend is CASH

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