



**“THERE COMES A POINT WHERE
A MAN MUST REFUSE TO ANSWER
TO HIS LEADER IF HE IS ALSO
TO ANSWER TO HIS CONSCIENCE.”**

— Sir Hartley Shawcross, Nuremberg 1946



That the **manufacture of consent** is capable of great refinements no one, I think, denies. The process by which public opinions arise is certainly no less intricate than it has appeared in these pages, and the opportunities for manipulation open to anyone who understands the process are plain enough. [...] [A]s a result of psychological research, coupled with the modern means of communication, the practice of democracy has turned a corner. A revolution is taking place, infinitely more significant than any shifting of economic power. [...] Under the impact of propaganda, not necessarily in the sinister meaning of the word alone, the old constants of our thinking have become variables. It is no longer possible, for example, to believe in the original dogma of democracy; that the knowledge needed for the management of human affairs

comes up spontaneously from the human heart.

Where we act on that theory we expose ourselves to self-deception, and to forms of persuasion that we cannot verify.

It has been demonstrated that we cannot rely upon intuition, conscience, or the accidents of casual opinion if we are to deal with the world beyond our reach.

– Walter Lippmann



THE JACK SPARELL CHRONICLES:

THE TIBET STORY... OR THE TIME I ALMOST DIED

The Chinese border has three kinds of days for it's entrance policy – everybody can get in, nobody can get in, or everybody can get in except someone with an American passport. The Chinese government seems to be operating under the assumption that I am a spy for the American government out to give away their secrets to America. I couldn't even begin to think of how I could explain how little sense that made...

So the night before I was supposed to leave, I went to pick up my passport from the back alley travel agency where I was informed that it was one of those days where Americans weren't being given visas. (Side note – other countries pull this kind of anti-American border stuff too. India, for instance, has one standard price for visas for any foreigner from any country other than Nepal or America. Nepalis get in free; Americans pay 150% mark up... On the flip side, we fingerprint and retinal scan all of our foreign tourists upon entry, so who are really the bad guys there?) I was disappointed to find out I was unable to go, but Angh, the Sherpa man's eyes told me there was more to this story. He asked if I wanted to go anyways.

“How?”

“It's very easy, we just walk around the border.”

Although making spontaneous decisions under the influence of marijuana has been a trademark of mine in the past, the following is a perfect example of why you shouldn't always expect that smoking and then making travel arrangements is going to lead to serendipitous happening.

I hardly hesitated. He told me we would leave the next morning; he'd meet me at Hotel Nana at six. To celebrate what I interpreted as

a successful visit to the travel agent, I went out to a bar I'd discovered the night before. I was essentially the only patron in there the night before, learned that they were going to sell the bar because it never made any money, and having just come down from a monastery I was very actively trying to fix the whole world person by person (Side note – I later found this to be very difficult. Do not attempt if you have little patience) I made it my goal to save the bar, or at the very least, give it a good farewell.

I pulled people off the streets, out of other bars, offering two-for-one, three-for-one, first drink free for girls, anything I'd ever heard barkers calling out stumbling around Tijuana. German backpackers and a Mexican couple with a bunch of local Nepali guys next to an old British dude rambling about his generation or the French girl with the dreads blended in with all sorts of other caricatures from every direction... and a band formed somewhere out of it all... long story slightly abridged, the bar did more business that night than it had in the last two months combined. Maybe it was a feeling of accomplishment, or maybe the drinks I'd been pouring myself, but I felt good when I went back to my hotel.

I got woken up a few hours later, around 4:45, by Angh, pounding mercilessly on my door. He was surprised I wasn't already up. We walk out into the pre-dawn city, which I already think is freezing, and catch a bus which breaks down twice and hits dead stopped traffic for an hour, none of which surprises me in the least. The bus came to a stop up in the middle of nowhere, one wood and mud and cow dung building visible down the road a kilometer or so up the road. Angh starts walking toward a footpath heading toward the mountains, motioning for me to follow.

The first day, we hiked way past sunset, Angh and myself, me asking a thousand times if we were in Tibet yet and Angh telling me a thousand times we weren't. We found an abandoned, semi-dilapidated stone house out in the middle of the mountains. There was a doorway, but no door. Wind cut into the house like a screaming mental patient. When I woke up, instead of rolling over, pulling the blanket over my head and staying in

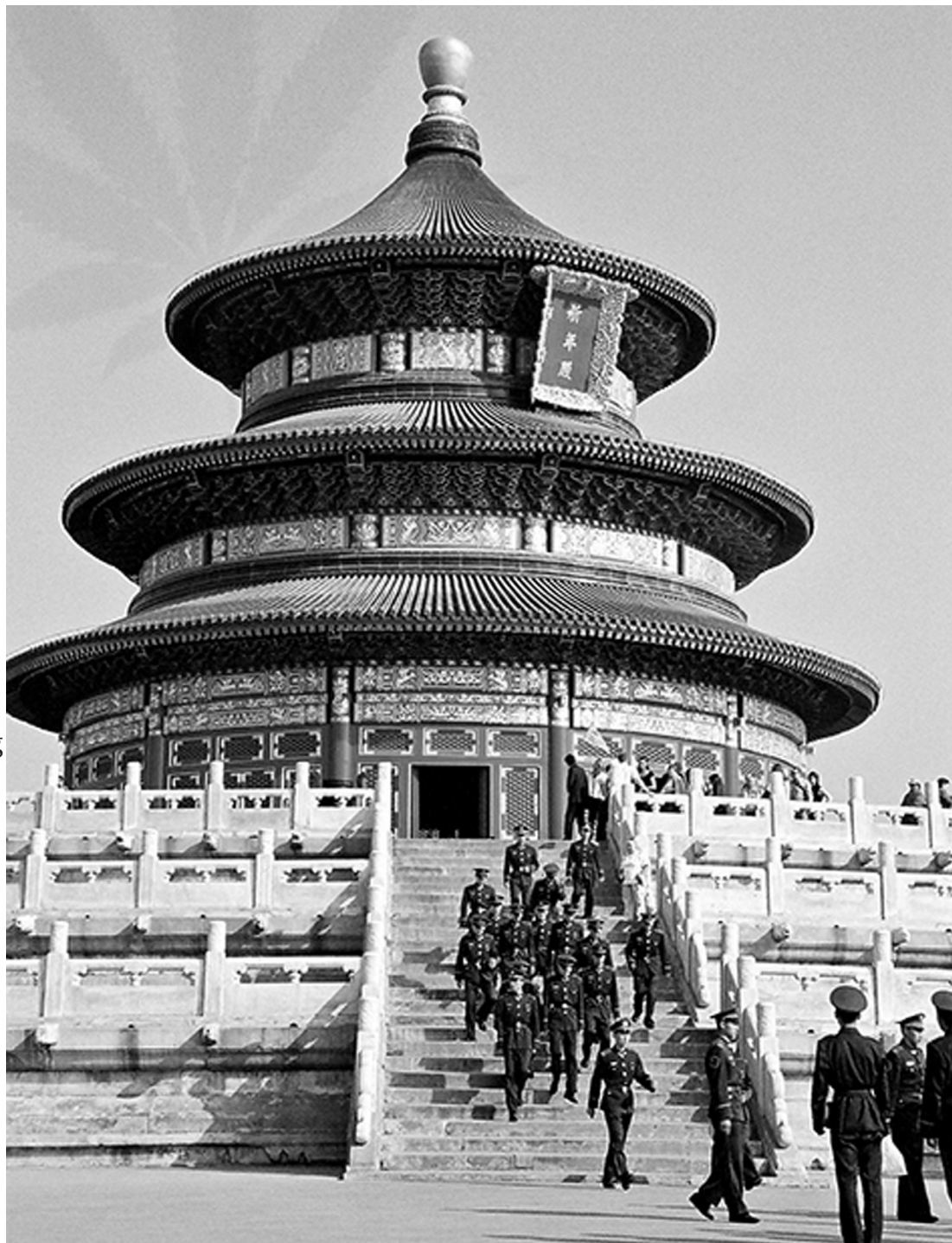
my warm cocoon for another few minutes, I was instantly fully awake. I was woken by the cold, really felt like it had slapped me across the face. All I could think of was to start moving so I'd be warm.

Over the next four days, we hiked 120 kilometers across the Tibetan plateau,

encountering villages of ten houses here and there who would offer us Sherpa tea, a tea so bad but so good at the same time. They put everything into it – sugar, yak butter, salt – it tastes like what I imagine the stuff they suck out of liposuction patients does. I could feel the warmth of the calories coating the insides of my arteries. I hadn't quit smoking while we were hiking, but the number of cigarettes I'd smoke in a day dropped off 80 percent (Side note – If you ever have to quit smoking cigarettes, I'd suggest a type of altitude therapy). And damn those other 20 percent too...

Among the Tibetan phrases I had picked up, I learned kotanga, konipa, kosumba, or "cold,"

"colder," "frostbitten." At night, it gets down to 30 degrees below 0. And that's Fahrenheit and Celsius, when it's that fucking cold they're the same. One night we slept in a barn (more of a lean-to, one entire wall completely exposed to the elements); one night, I think it was Christmas Eve, we slept completely exposed on the ground. Merry Christmas, Jack, you're not dead yet. We



followed dirt paths, cairns, rivers (often frozen), but on the fourth day, finally, we saw power lines. I wanted to cry when I saw them, but the tears would have frozen to my face.

We followed the power lines to a road and, eventually, a small town of forty or so buildings. We waited there for a few hours as Angh chatted with the locals as though he'd grown up

there. I sat smoking cigarettes and sipping Sherpa tea looking up at Sagarmatha above me, and all the mountains in front of me, stretching out like waves toward the horizon. From behind me, a blue pickup truck with a yak in tow kicked up dust

as it made its way into the town. I shuddered, thinking of the yak stampede we had to climb out of two days earlier. Angh made his way over to the pickup truck, I followed. Angh and the driver, a wiry old Tibetan farmer with a giant, tooth-deprived smile, spoke for a minute, then Angh told me to get in.

I opened the door to the front cab; the driver shook his head and motioned for me to ride in the back. Yes, with the yak. The truck started, Angh still standing outside of it. I jokingly asked if he was coming, waiting for him to get in the truck. He quite seriously informed me that he wasn't coming. He told me he'd follow us and come to Lhasa the next day, and that he would find me. He said other things too, none of which reached my ears. I'd paid him a quarter of his fee, which I still think was a bit much. That was the last time I saw Angh.

I made a deal with the yak. I wouldn't bother it, it wouldn't bother me. I pulled out my sleeping bag and watched the scenery whip around and turn as the pickup truck rounded switchbacks, drifting in and out of sleep all through the night and early the next morning. I awoke one time to a very Chineseified looking city with paved streets and neon signs and art installations. I got the farmer's attention and, using as much Tibetan as I could remember ten seconds after waking up, asked,

"Lhasa?"

"Lhasa," he nodded.

"...Lhasa?" I confirmed, pointing at the buildings and the ground.

"Lhasa," he again nodded.

I put my hands together, bowed to him, and watched him drive off. About an hour later, I learned that I was a few hundred kilometers from Lhasa in a place called Xigatze. Damn that farmer. Damn Angh. Damn Xiagtze.

I walk through the city, chain smoking furiously and damning anyone I can think of, when I come to the gates of a monastery. A real Tibetan monastery. I walked in, giant backpack and all,

and wandered though some of the buildings near the gate. A few monks approached me, pointing to my backpack out of curiosity. I bowed, and in Tibetan, was able to say "Peaceful greetings to all, I am the body of flourishing compassion... do you speak English?"

One of the monks did happen to speak English, and the others seemed entertained by my miming the various details of my current situation. I told them how I'd come up here from a monastery I stayed at in Nepal, and after a monk huddle they told me I could stay with them for the night if I desired. I graciously accepted, and spent most of the rest of the day exploring the grounds. That monastery was home to the largest golden Buddha statue in the world, and I wandered in there by accident.

As I walked through some of the halls, or the tower specifically, a tower of eight levels of hundreds of different rooms devoted to different Buddhas, there were Chinese military officials patrolling the monastery. I'm going to repeat that because I feel it bears repeating. Army men holding machine guns walking around next to monks in robes holding prayer beads. The Chinese government wants to be sure that monks aren't stirring up any anti-nationalistic gusto, and extort bribes from monks. I don't like to place judgment, but seriously? That's fucked up, China.

The fact that I didn't have a passport, there were military officials in the monastery compound, and I was the only white guy there past sunset probably should have been more distressing, but I felt very at peace, I meant no one any harm. I just wanted to stay off of the Chinese radar and soak up the Tibetan spirit.

The next day, shortly after I woke up, a bus load of tourists from all over came into the monastery on a tour. The first one of them I met was a British girl who told me they were heading to Lhasa. She mentioned that it was a chartered bus with extra seats and they never check who is on the bus (to the point where she was convinced they'd left someone behind earlier in their tour). We went through a military checkpoint, but the tour guide, who already had everyone else's passports, jumped

off and was the only one who spoke to the border guards. When we got into Lhasa, we got off the bus in the parking lot of a Ritzy looking hotel. The tour guide handed me a hotel room key, thinking I was with them. Sometimes life really is that easy.

I spent two days exploring Lhasa. It's got a bit of a bipolar feel to it for a city, with Chinese culture and paved roads meshing with H. H. The Dalai Lama's house, Potala Palace. He wasn't home though; China exiled him in the 1950s. So bittersweet, the green camo patrolling through halls of maroon and glowing light. I also ended up befriending a few of the tourists who were paying for my room, though I decided not to mention it to them. We were out at a bar one night, and on the way back to the hotel, I went off to go buy a pack of cigarettes. Sticking my head into poorly lit alleys looking for a tiny smoke shack that's still open, and.. that's when I get hit.

In the jaw.

With a gun.

I fell to the ground as one of them hit me in the stomach. I landed in a puddle of I'm probably happier never knowing what, and was staring up at three Chinese dudes, faces hiding behind puffy black hooded coats. They pointed a handgun at my face.

"Money." I really wanted to call him out on how great his English was, but the survival part of my brain kicked in and overrode the sarcasm part. I gave him the blue hemp wallet in my pocket, which I had just cleaned out of all my important information, having received another, nicer wallet as a gift before leaving Kathmandu. All I had in the wallet with me was a few Yuan in cash and an expired international student ID card (Side note – those cards are worthless. The only things they're good for are racking lines and getting stolen).

He pointed to the tape recorder in my pocket. I took it out. He put his hand out to take it from me. I opened it up and took the cassette out, giving him the tape recorder. Commitment to the craft right there. They ran out of the alley down the street, I lay there in the puddle for a minute, dumbfounded,

running my tongue over the hole where a filling had just been knocked out. Damn China. Fuck this, I just want to go home, and by home I mean Kathmandu, where I left my passport, the closest place to here where there's someone I've known for more than two days. I just-

A guy from across the street ran over to my side. Since he had just seen me get robbed, I assumed he was not going to try to rob me too, what with there being nothing left to rob. He put his hand out to help me up and introduced himself.

"Hello. I am Karma."

Of course you are. He was actually the third Tibetan I'd met in my travels named Karma; the first living in a Tibetan refugee camp in the foothills of the Himalayas near Pokhara, and the second being a monk who gave me a set of prayer beads I was (and still am) wearing. So at the time, given everything that had happened, sure, I'll let Karma give me a hand up. He tells me about how I should be careful, how there are a lot of dangerous people in the city. He asks if I want a beer, I reflexively reach for my pocket and realize my wallet is gone. He watches me do this and offers to buy me a beer. I've never turned down a free drink in my life, so why start then?

Karma starts to tell me about how he wants to get out of Tibet. I half jokingly, half seriously say that I completely understand. He tells me no, he really wants to get out. Him and a few other people were trying to raise money to pay for gas to the Nepal-China border. My jaw drops. He says he needs about \$50 more for a roughly 900-kilometer drive. I decide that the universe intended for me to find this ride, and jumped on the opportunity. Karma then told me we were leaving that day. I put up no argument.

I met Karma a few hours later at the now closed bar with my backpack. We walked through the city, coming to a Chinese Land-Crusher or Pathmaker or some giant SUV. Two other Tibetan men were traveling to the border with us, as well as the driver who was staying in Tibet. Karma was the only one who spoke English.

We drove for over a day. Nobody else in the car other than the driver knew how to drive, so he had Karma ask me if I would mind driving. Sleep deprived, running off fumes and adrenalin and spite and nicotine and rice whiskey and desperation and Chinese Red Bull, I drove for about ten hours. Through a blizzard. I grew up in New England, but had encountered nothing like this before.

Other than 25 kilometer stretches near towns (which we were avoiding anyways), there were no paved roads. There were seldom dirt roads. The one word of English the driver knew was "shortcut," which he would yell and point toward a tiny spot on the horizon, and I'd veer the jeep over toward it. Snow falling everywhere, my iPod hooked up to the stereo and blasting Free Bird, chain smoking cigarette after cigarette, and this is the first time I had driven anything more than a scooter in five months. Right as the song picks up, I hear the driver yell "Shortcut!" so I take a sharp turn to the right, which sends us on a ski-slope-esque drop down the side of one of the mountains into the valley. The car is moving entirely on momentum, facing straight down the mountain. We can see giant rocks five times the size of the car, but if I were to tilt the steering wheel more than a few degrees to either side our top-heavy truck would have flipped. Imagine downhill skiing on stilts. Everyone screaming, myself included, we make it down to the plateauing flatness of the valley, where I bring the car to a stop. I was done driving.

At the top of a very narrow valley carved out by a river down below, we got out of the jeep. All the Tibetans, who were planning on starting new lives in Nepal, carried bags a quarter the size of the bag I had packed for two weeks. They moved through the mountains with ease; I struggled to keep up. We made our way down the valley so that we were walking right next to the river, the sound of which conjured up all sorts of peaceful feelings of timeless sort. Then I heard automatic gunfire coming from overhead, which really just ruined all of that.

I can see bullets flying over my head coming from behind me. I run, keeping my giant bag on,

not because I'm so materialistic that I couldn't let it go, not because I was worried about leaving evidence in China that I was ever there, but simply because I was getting shot at, and thought that it might offer me a slight bit of bullet-proofing. Karma and the other two Tibetan guys were scrambling up the side of the mountain, I ran and climbed for a minute until I was cornered between a giant rock wall and the river. I turned around to another Chinese man pointing a gun at me, this time a machine gun held by a military officer.

He was screaming at me in Chinese very angrily, still pointing the gun at me, and the first words I could get out were, "Don't shoot! I'm a Canadian!...Student!...Of journalism! English!"

He calls into the radio on his shoulder, keeping me against the rock wall and never putting the gun down. If I made even a slight move, he would point the gun up toward me to tell me not to do that. I don't speak Chinese, but everyone speaks bullet. What felt like an eternity (but was probably a few minutes) later, a Chinese military Humvee-type thing rolls down the side of the mountain, three more military men get out. One of them, in English, asks who I am.

"I'm a student traveling and-" "Who were those other men?" "What other men?" "Why did you run?" "Why were you shooting at me?"

"What are you doing here?"

"I was hiking around, looking for Tato-Panni," (hot springs I knew where somewhere in Nepal close to the border)

"What are you doing here in China then?" "I'm not in China, this is Nepal." "You are in China" "No no no, look!" I unzip my hoodie and show them a t shirt a family in Nepal had given me, a generic touristy looking thing with a Buddha image and giant block letters saying NEPAL across the bottom (Their rationale? "Well, you like Buddha, right? You like Nepal, right? There you go then...") See? Nepal!"

The army men converse for a minute. The same officer then tells me to get in their car. I

find myself riding bitch between four men with machine guns pointed at the ceiling, and we drive up the side of a mountain, at first in silence. They all start speaking in Chinese, and while I couldn't understand the words, the tone of the officer who had originally found me, doing a mocking voice and putting his hands up defending his face, which was followed by laughter from the rest of the car, I could only assume they were getting a kick out of me pleading for my life.

We come to a road, which leads us to a giant suspension bridge across the valley. I later learned that this was the "friendship bridge" between Nepal and China, and the river I had been walking along for God only knows how long was the border. I had been 100 feet from safety for an hour, but no....

We pass over the Chinese customs side of the bridge, then past the Nepali customs side. "Get out."

I get out. One of the officers puts my bag on the ground. I stand there for a second, waiting for the English-speaking officer to get out of the car, but he never does. They turn around and plow through a crowd of people 500 feet to China. I ask someone, in Nepali, where the bus is. They understand me, and answer, and I understand them. For the first time in so long, I can speak the local language again! Coming back to Nepal felt like I'd made it back home; after five months I'd really begun to identify with it.

The bus was a few hours hike in the next town down the road. Somewhere along the road before the town, a pickup truck full of Maoists pulls over. The Nepali Maoists, unlike their Chinese counterparts, are more of a rag-tag bunch of anti-government hooligans (who, since I was there, have taken majority of control in the newly established government) who love to solicit donations at gunpoint, especially from foreigners. The difference between China and Nepal is that Nepal is much more dependent on other countries' economic support and even the anti-government parties recognize that shooting a tourist is bad press, so their tourist policy is reasonably safe.

Initially they asked me for a hundred dollars in English. I countered in Nepali by explaining that I agreed with what they were doing and supported them, but was working as a volunteer. I asked if I could give them a hundred rupees (less than \$2) for a ride down to the next city. They felt like they were getting something, so they accepted. Then they asked me all sorts of questions about what it was like to grow up in Canada along the ride, if I had a Canadian girlfriend, if I thought Nepali girls were more attractive than Canadian girls, basically I kept giving them answers I thought they wanted to hear (Side note – always a good strategy when dealing with figures of 'authority'... or people with guns). I laughed and smoked cigarettes and couldn't believe my luck when the truck stopped and one of them told me to get out there. Now I could believe it. But after being awake for almost 3 days, having guns pointed at me everywhere I go, thinking I was going to die easily half a dozen times, this didn't surprise me in the least.

I lit a cigarette, looking at a painted rock marker sign along the road. The middle of the word was scratched out, but I could make out "Du....khel – 3 KM" in the Nepali script. "Du... Du... Dulikhel?" Dulikhel was a city I had to pass through months earlier going to and from the monastery. I knew I'd be able to catch a bus straight to Kathmandu from there, jump off at Ratna Park, be back in something familiar that night, I practically sprinted down the road to Dulikhel. A bus for Kathmandu was leaving as I got there so I climbed up the ladder to the roof, riding in the luggage bin, smoking a cigarette, knowing I had made it back.

Upon returning to Hotel Nana, my usual cheap Kathmandu residence, I learned it was New Year's Eve that night. Hopping around bars in the touristy district, I ran into my British friend Joe whom I hadn't seen since before I left for Tibet. With only a few hours left in the year, Joe dosed me, ultimately proving to me that life can always throw you a curveball. In my experience, the best thing to do just seems to be to go with it, and somehow, through no fault of your own, everything will work out perfectly.

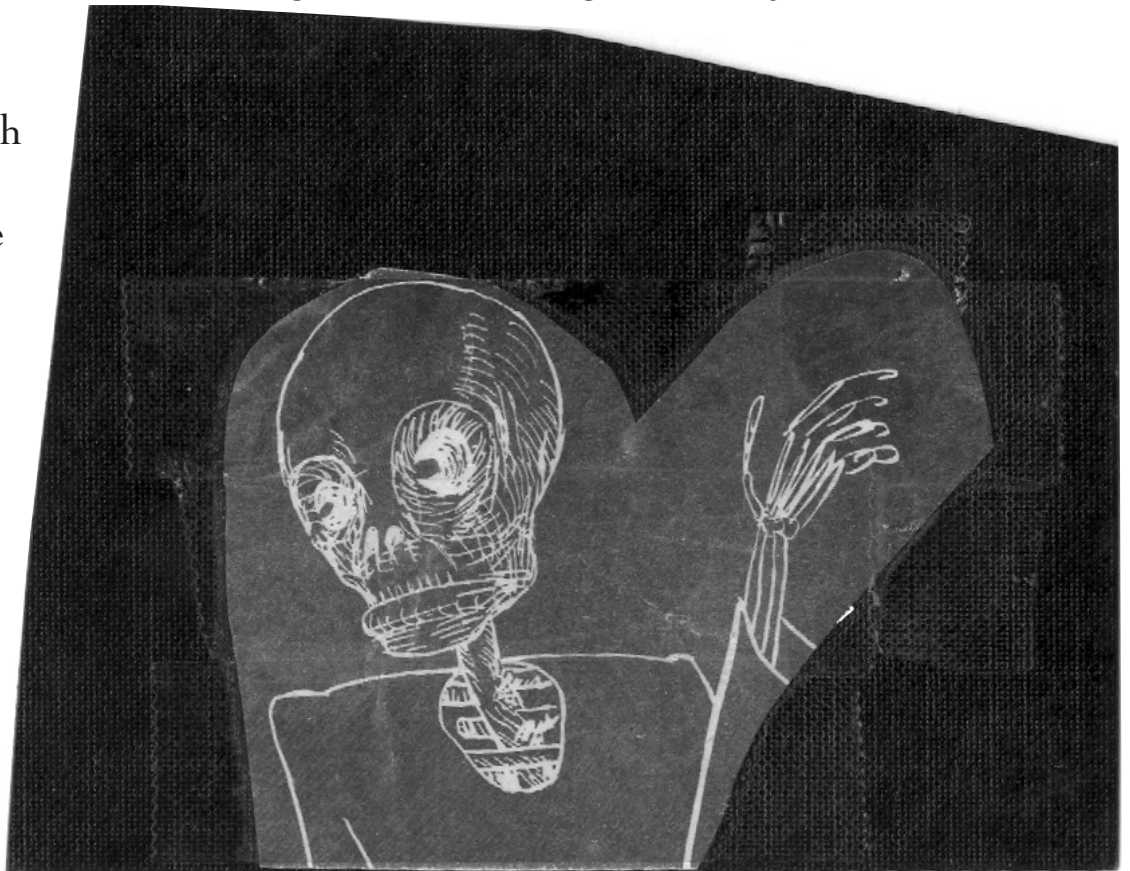
IN 1849 FEODOR DOSTOYEVSKY WROTE ON THE WALL OF HIS PRISON CELL THE FOLLOWING STORY OF:

THE PRIEST AND THE DEVIL

“Hello, you little fat father!’ the devil said to the priest. ‘What made you lie so to those poor, misled people? What tortures of hell did you depict? Don’t you know they are already suffering the tortures of hell in their earthly lives? Don’t you know that you and the authorities of the State are my representatives on earth? It is you that make them suffer the pains of hell with which you threaten them. Don’t you know this? Well, then, come with me!’

The devil grabbed the priest by the collar, lifted him high in the air, and carried him to a factory, to an iron foundry. He saw the workmen there running and hurrying to and fro, and toiling in the scorching heat. Very soon the thick, heavy air and the heat are too much for the priest. With tears in his eyes, he pleads with the devil: ‘Let me go! Let me leave this hell!’

‘Oh, my dear friend, I must show you many more places.’ The devil gets hold of him again and drags him off to a farm. There he sees workmen threshing the grain. The dust and heat are insufferable. The overseer carries a knout, and unmercifully beats anyone who falls to the ground overcome by hard toil or hunger.



Next the priest is taken to the huts where these same workers live with their

families--dirty, cold, smoky, ill-smelling holes. The devil grins. He points out the poverty and hardships which are at home here.

‘Well, isn’t this enough?’ he asks. And it seems as if even he, the devil, pities the people. The pious servant of God can hardly bear it. With uplifted hands he begs: ‘Let me go away from here. Yes, yes! This is hell on earth!’

‘Well, then, you see. And you still promise them another hell. You torment them, torture them to death mentally when they are already all but dead physically! Come on! I will show you one more hell--one more, the very worst.’

He took him to a prison and showed him a dungeon, with its foul air and the many human forms, robbed of all health and energy, lying on the floor, covered with vermin that were devouring their poor, naked, emaciated bodies.

‘Take off your silken clothes,’ said the devil to the priest, ‘put on your ankles heavy chains such as these unfortunates wear; lie down on the cold and filthy floor--and then talk to them about a hell that still awaits them!’

‘No, no!’ answered the priest, ‘I cannot think of anything more dreadful than this. I entreat you, let me go away from here!’

‘Yes, this is hell. There can be no worse hell than this. Did you not know it? Did you not know that these men and women whom you are frightening with the picture of a hell hereafter--did you not know that they are in hell right here, before they die?’”

THE POVERTY OF HYPOTHETICAL SITUATIONS, ANACHRONISM, AND DESCRIPTIVISM

There are three types of disputations in the varied political discussions I have had which have both agitated me and stirred my creativity. As a left-thinker I have usually heard these remarks, at least when directed at me, emanating from those who would either defend capitalism or attack socialism. I do not claim any sort of prescience or special ability on this subject or any other, but merely wish to share with you the experiences I have had, and my reaction to them.

The first polemical technique stems, and never strays far from a hypothetical what if. Example: In a given revolutionary society where profit is no longer a motive, what would induce anyone to retain an occupation considered undesirable? What confronts us immediately with such a statement are the assumptions embedded in this thought, such as that profit motive is to a great extent the natural mode of human production, and all people work under this very drive today. These hypothetical situations are sometimes very beneficial for elaborating any given vision, but the hypothetical question itself is an invitation to assume the same ideals as the questioner. Before proceeding, we would need to unpeel any implanted assumptions which present themselves.

The second technique usually takes the form of an appeal to universal historical truths or anachronisms. These involve projecting the masses' ideals, thought patterns, and desires of today's capitalist society onto the past. It is easy to make historical misstatements, but often those who advocate for capitalism seem to locate within history all aspects of capitalism. For example, locating free market

values in the Middle Ages where a peasant struggled for the economic freedom to sell at the highest prices the market could allow. Whether the 'free market,' or any of the systemic conditions allowing for capitalism existed has no place. In such an argument. Drawing from history is a most powerful tool, but trying to make all of history think like a contemporary investment capitalist is not only plain wrong, it again takes assumptions about human nature for granted.

The third rhetorical tool often used in political discussions is just as potentially useful, but which is easily used to confuse any more fundamental issue. This is the direct form of the above two, taking formulations and opinions of today's society and asserting mere existence as proof of correctness. We could call this argument Social Darwinism and be done with it, but that would be giving too much credit. The example, which I'm fairly certain every anti-capitalist has heard before, that sure, this system has its problems, but it is the best there is, just look at how pervasive it is. The one to one correspondence of the domination of a certain system over the world and moral/economic/societal excellence is so utterly fallacious it falls into the mythical. Nonetheless we must maintain caution not to be dragged into a discussion whereby we accept a correspondence of this type unwittingly.

Thus we have limited our political challenger to more material realms, grounding them in at least a world where everyone does not think like them; where the current economic, political, and social system is neither universal nor everlasting.

But what constitutes a sound premise for expounding our anti-capitalist views on how human society is flawed and how then, it should otherwise be? Of course, given the above critique, I stick to what the contention should not be. We should not make an appeal

to the real human nature, nostalgia for a golden age in human history, or a reference to a hypothetical utopia by which one compares the current reality. We with these arguments as tools could fall into the same pitfalls of our political challenger. Wholly accepting societal appearances without delving into the philosophic, historic or present-day details of the world is not a monopoly of the Right. We too can have arguments unravel because of assumption, presumption, and simple correspondence with unconnected realities.

These potential lanes available for making leftist contentions are dangerous because they are not only unconvincing for an audience who is not prior to the conversation in agreement with anti-capitalism, but can also dilute our own ideas. A debate where our opinion involves the above can degenerate quickly, endlessly circling our fundamental presumptions which, left unstated, essentially produce the situation of two children blindly swinging fists, hoping to score a lucky hit. Furthermore, the capitalist set of values is defended by advocates who claim that today's system is the natural and/or best conditions for humanity. It would be hard to fundamentally critique capitalism then by merely producing an opposite set of assumptions about human nature, and merely involve the argument in a necessary standoff.

To many people in today's world, including many leftists, bourgeois individualism, acceptance of the state social contract, wage-labor and the protestant work ethic seem a natural day-to-day reality. What is incumbent on us is to highlight not only how other historic societies have done things, but how flaws in the system today illuminate possible paths for the future.

On the other hand there cannot be an effective argument for a political outlook based only on fact, objectivity guaranteed to steer us towards the bright future. A fundamental

flaw of bourgeois economics as taught in the US today is the veil thrown over philosophical and historical presumptions. This produces descriptivist arguments without reference to the history of its subjects or its own creation.

I recognize the thin line I am painting at the same time I realize how potentially obvious my little attempt at advice is. Furthermore I am not in any way shape or form describing a correct course for convincing our audience of the validity of our claims.

What I definitely advocate, however, is staying away from the too abstract argument. The victor of the debate will have proved nothing except maybe a better grasp of logic. Importantly, the formless disagreements are enormously frustrating, and have a tendency to get personal, for when points revolve solely on points devoid of fact, the only thing left to attack is the other person. I realize this can happen with all arguments, but intangibles are very conducive to assailing the other individual. What could have been a discussion of material conditions, critiques of cultural evolution, philosophy, history, or science will have merely skirted around actual pivotal subjects, jousting over ground defined not by any fact or developed ideal, but creative verbosity. I am not giving us the tools to win a victory of debate, but am trying to stay away from subjects where we could not even recognize the cause of our defeat. Even at the point where the opposition seems more convincing in their argument, we can still, having evaded all the vulgar hypothetic, false anachronism, and simple descriptivism, gain insight into the weaknesses of our data, knowledge, or perception of our own philosophical concerns.



I want to travel the tans and blacks of your muscles
journey by touch through the tones of those
beautiful desert sands...
who are the men who see this as ugly?
these shades of burnt bronze
tinted tangerine smiles from pomegranate lips
toffee and chocolate cheeks
rounded by the struggle

the faith lies
in the line breaks,
the hope that the twisting torso that swims
into full viola hips
will be tuned to the key of orange dusk
mahogany in lamplight,
bow bent across stretching strings
to make the mouth sing

this is not a love poem,
this is a rebel yell shrouded in a love poem
because some men still see these women
and can't find the beauty flooding
from the inkwell of eyes of darkened marigold
because interracial couples still
can't walk the daylight in certain neighborhoods
without turning their eyes inward to deflect the wind
hisses and jeers spilling from the sidewalk scarring
their faces
into cheekbone erosion
coming closer to tearing the spirit
in half
because white is the absence of color
and therefore is not one
because my skin is a mosaic swirl of pink and tan
and olive
because race is a social construct
and because love is not
because my ancestors owned slaves
in the greenclad fields of Mississippi
and because my grandmother fought for years
so that rural Illinois Blacks could live where they
wanted,
I think she was fighting the scars of her delicate
Southern heritage,
her fingers used to pluck at the harp
with dream colored notes in the evening
until arthritis slowed them to silence

because I told my great uncle
I was reading *The Sound and the Fury* and he said

“Well...your ancestors wrote it.”
he an old Southern gentleman
who left the South because he preferred
the feeling of a man’s skin against his own,
my father’s favorite uncle
who designed window displays for F.A.O. Schwartz
and ran wild in the New York City streets
with Andy Warhol in the 50’s
his eyes always slightly rounded
with a hint of shame
because his ancestors loved women
his ancestors owned brothels
his ancestors owned slaves
and I know they pretended not to find black women
beautiful
because when the days get long, sometimes
I can still see the amber sky of Toomsoba,
Mississippi
on the backs of my eyelids

because all women
are beautiful

and when I see
the strong lashes, coffeecream complexion,
dark pink scars
running along slender brown fingers
and eyes that dare me to look away
I can’t believe that in those eyes
some men still find ugliness
so I raise my hands
to the Mississippi sky
hearing my grandmother’s fingers
plucking the harp strings of my spine
telling me to love
and love everyone
regardless of the memories that tint skin
or the secrets
that color the spirit,
because Langston Hughes called you
the Pride Of The Town
and I am proud...
proud to see you
proud to know you
proud to love you.







POLITICS AND THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

BY GEORGE ORWELL

Most people who bother with the matter at all would admit that the English language is in a bad way, but it is generally assumed that we cannot by conscious action do anything about it. Our civilization is decadent and our language -- so the argument runs -- must inevitably share in the general collapse. It follows that any struggle against the abuse of language is a sentimental archaism, like preferring candles to electric light or hansom cabs to aeroplanes. Underneath this lies the half-conscious belief that language is a natural growth and not an instrument which we shape for our own purposes.

Now, it is clear that the decline of a language must ultimately have political and economic causes: it is not due simply to the bad influence of this or that individual writer. But an effect can become a cause, reinforcing the original cause and producing the same effect in an intensified form, and so on indefinitely. A man may take to drink because he feels himself to be a failure, and then fail all the more completely because he drinks. It is rather the same thing that is happening to the English language. It becomes ugly and inaccurate because our thoughts are foolish, but the slovenliness of our language makes it easier for us to have foolish thoughts. The point is that the process is reversible. Modern English, especially written English, is full of bad habits which spread by imitation and which can be avoided if one is willing to take the necessary trouble. If one gets rid of these habits one can think more clearly, and to think clearly is a necessary first step toward political regeneration: so that the fight against bad English is not frivolous and is not the exclusive concern of professional writers. I will come back to this presently, and I hope that by that time the meaning of what I have said here will have become clearer. Meanwhile, here are five specimens of the English language as it is now habitually written.

These five passages have not been picked out because they are especially bad -- I could have quoted far worse if I had chosen -- but because they illustrate various of the mental vices from which we now suffer. They are a little below the average, but are fairly representative examples. I number them so that I can refer back to them when necessary:

1. I am not, indeed, sure whether it is not true to say that the Milton who once seemed not unlike a seventeenth-century Shelley had not become, out of an experience ever more bitter in each year, more alien [*sic*] to the founder of that Jesuit sect which nothing could induce him to tolerate.

Professor Harold Laski
(Essay in *Freedom of Expression*)

2. Above all, we cannot play ducks and drakes with a native battery of idioms which prescribes egregious collocations of vocables as the Basic *put up with* for *tolerate* , or *put at a loss* for *bewilder* .

Professor Lancelot Hogben (*Interglossia*)

3. On the one side we have the free personality: by definition it is not neurotic, for it has neither conflict nor dream. Its desires, such as they are, are transparent, for they are just what institutional approval keeps in the forefront of consciousness; another institutional pattern would alter their number and intensity; there is little in them that is natural, irreducible, or culturally dangerous. But *on the other side* , the social bond itself is nothing but the mutual reflection of these self-secure integrities. Recall the definition of love. Is not this the very picture of a small academic? Where is there a place in this hall of mirrors for either personality or fraternity?

4. All the “best people” from the gentlemen’s clubs, and all the frantic fascist captains, united in common hatred of Socialism and bestial horror at the rising tide of the mass revolutionary movement, have turned to acts of provocation, to foul incendiarism, to medieval legends of poisoned wells, to legalize their own destruction of proletarian organizations, and rouse the agitated petty-bourgeoisie to chauvinistic fervor on behalf of the fight against the revolutionary way out of the crisis.

Communist pamphlet

5. If a new spirit is to be infused into this old country, there is one thorny and contentious reform which must be tackled, and that is the humanization and galvanization of the B.B.C. Timidity here will bespeak canker and atrophy of the soul. The heart of Britain may be sound and of strong beat, for instance, but the British lion’s roar at present is like that of Bottom in Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* -- as gentle as any sucking dove. A virile new Britain cannot continue indefinitely to be traduced in the eyes or rather ears, of the world by the effete languors of Langham Place, brazenly masquerading as “standard English.” When the Voice of Britain is heard at nine o’clock, better far and infinitely less ludicrous to hear aitches honestly dropped than the present priggish, inflated, inhibited, school-ma’amish arch braying of blameless bashful mewing maidens!

Letter in *Tribune*

Each of these passages has faults of its own, but, quite apart from avoidable ugliness, two qualities are common to all of them. The first is staleness of imagery; the other is lack of precision. The writer either has a meaning and cannot express it, or he inadvertently says something else, or he is almost indifferent as to whether his words mean anything or not. This mixture of vagueness and sheer incompetence is the most marked characteristic of modern English prose, and especially of any kind of political writing. As soon as certain topics are raised, the concrete melts into the abstract and no one seems able to think of turns of speech that are not hackneyed: prose consists less and less of *words* chosen for the sake of their meaning, and more and more of *phrases* tacked together like the sections of a prefabricated henhouse. I list below, with notes and examples, various of the tricks by means of which the work of prose construction is habitually dodged:

Dying metaphors. A newly invented metaphor assists thought by evoking a visual image, while on the other hand a metaphor which is technically “dead” (e.g. *iron resolution*) has in effect reverted to being an ordinary word and can generally be used without loss of vividness. But in between these two classes there is a huge dump of worn-out metaphors which have lost all evocative power and are merely used because they save people the trouble of inventing phrases for themselves. Examples are: *Ring the changes on, take up the cudgel for, toe the line, ride roughshod over, stand shoulder to shoulder with, play into the hands of, no axe to grind, grist to the mill, fishing in troubled waters, on the order of the day, Achilles’ heel, swan song, hotbed* . Many of these are used without knowledge of their meaning (what is a “rift,” for instance?), and incompatible metaphors are frequently mixed, a sure sign that the writer is not interested in what he is saying. Some metaphors now current have been twisted out of their original meaning without those who use them even being aware of the fact. For example, *toe the line* is sometimes written as *tow the line*. Another example is *the hammer and the anvil*, now always used with the implication that the anvil gets the worst of it. In real life it is always the anvil that breaks the hammer, never the other way about: a writer who stopped to think what he was saying would avoid perverting the original phrase.

Operators or verbal false limbs. These save the trouble of picking out appropriate verbs and nouns, and at the same time pad each sentence with extra syllables which give it an appearance of symmetry. Characteristic phrases are *render inoperative, militate against, make contact with, be subjected to, give rise to, give grounds for, have the effect of, play a leading part (role) in, make itself felt, take effect, exhibit a tendency to, serve the purpose of, etc., etc.* The keynote is the elimination of simple verbs. Instead of being a single word, such as *break, stop, spoil, mend, kill*, a verb becomes a *phrase*, made up of a noun or adjective tacked on to some general-purpose verb such as *prove, serve, form, play, render*. In addition, the passive voice is wherever possible used in preference to the active, and noun constructions are used instead of gerunds (*by examination of* instead of *by examining*). The range of verbs is further cut down by means of the *-ize* and *de-* formations, and the banal statements are given an appearance of profundity by means of the *not un-* formation. Simple conjunctions and prepositions are replaced by such phrases as *with respect to, having regard to, the fact that, by dint of, in view of, in the interests of, on the hypothesis that*; and the ends of sentences are saved by anticlimax by such resounding commonplaces as *greatly to be desired, cannot be left out of account, a development to be expected in the near future, deserving of serious consideration, brought to a satisfactory conclusion*, and so on and so forth.

Pretentious diction. Words like *phenomenon, element, individual* (as noun), *objective, categorical, effective, virtual, basic, primary, promote, constitute, exhibit, exploit, utilize, eliminate, liquidate*, are used to dress up a simple statement and give an air of scientific impartiality to biased judgements. Adjectives like *epoch-making, epic, historic, unforgettable, triumphant, age-old, inevitable, inexorable, veritable*, are used to dignify the sordid process of international politics, while writing that aims at glorifying war usually takes on an archaic colour, its characteristic words being: *realm, throne, chariot, mailed fist, trident, sword, shield, buckler, banner, jackboot, clarion*. Foreign words and expressions such as *cul de sac, ancien regime, deus ex machina, mutatis mutandis, status quo, gleichschaltung, weltanschauung*, are used to give an air of culture and elegance. Except for the useful abbreviations *i.e., e.g.* and *etc.*, there is no real need for any of the hundreds of foreign phrases now current in the English language. Bad writers, and especially scientific, political, and sociological writers, are nearly always haunted by the notion that Latin or Greek words are grander than Saxon ones, and unnecessary words like *expedite, ameliorate, predict, extraneous, deracinated, clandestine, subaqueous*, and hundreds of others constantly gain ground from their Anglo-Saxon numbers. The jargon peculiar to Marxist writing (*hyena, hangman, cannibal, petty bourgeois, these gentry, lackey, flunkey, mad dog, White Guard*, etc.) consists largely of words translated from Russian, German, or French; but the normal way of coining a new word is to use Latin or Greek root with the appropriate affix and, where necessary, the size formation. It is often easier to make up words of this kind (*deregionalize, impermissible, extramarital, non-fragmentary* and so forth) than to think up the English words that will cover one's meaning. The result, in general, is an increase in slovenliness and vagueness.

Meaningless words. In certain kinds of writing, particularly in art criticism and literary criticism, it is normal to come across long passages which are almost completely lacking in meaning. Words like *romantic, plastic, values, human, dead, sentimental, natural, vitality*, as used in art criticism, are strictly meaningless, in the sense that they not only do not point to any discoverable object, but are hardly ever expected to do so by the reader. When one critic writes, "The outstanding feature of Mr. X's work is its living quality," while another writes, "The immediately striking thing about Mr. X's work is its peculiar deadness," the reader accepts this as a simple difference opinion. If words like *black* and *white* were involved, instead of the jargon words *dead* and *living*, he would see at

once that language was being used in an improper way. Many political words are similarly abused. The word *Fascism* has now no meaning except in so far as it signifies "something not desirable." The words *democracy, socialism, freedom, patriotic, realistic, justice* have each of them several different meanings which cannot be reconciled with one another. In the case of a word like *democracy*, not only is there no agreed definition, but the attempt to make one is resisted from all sides. It is almost universally felt that when we call a country democratic we are praising it: consequently the defenders of every kind of regime claim that it is a democracy, and fear that they might have to stop using that word if it were tied down to any one meaning. Words of this kind are often used in a consciously dishonest way. That is, the person who uses them has his own private definition, but allows his hearer to think he means something quite different. Statements like *Marshal Petain was a true patriot, The Soviet press is the freest in the world, The Catholic Church is opposed to persecution*, are almost always made with intent to deceive. Other words used in variable meanings, in most cases more or less dishonestly, are: *class, totalitarian, science, progressive, reactionary, bourgeois, equality*.

Now that I have made this catalogue of swindles and perversions, let me give another example of the kind of writing that they lead to. This time it must of its nature be an imaginary one. I am going to translate a passage of good English into modern English of the worst sort. Here is a well-known verse from *Ecclesiastes*:

I returned and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.

Here it is in modern English:

Objective considerations of contemporary phenomena compel the conclusion that success or failure in competitive activities exhibits no tendency to be commensurate with innate capacity, but that a considerable element of the unpredictable must invariably be taken into account.

This is a parody, but not a very gross one. Exhibit (3) above, for instance, contains several patches of the same kind of English. It will be seen that I have not made a full translation. The beginning and ending of the sentence follow the original meaning fairly closely, but in the middle the concrete illustrations -- race, battle, bread -- dissolve into the vague phrases "success or failure in competitive activities." This had to be so, because no modern writer of the kind I am discussing -- no one capable of using phrases like "objective considerations of contemporary phenomena" -- would ever tabulate his thoughts in that precise and detailed way. The whole tendency of modern prose is away from concreteness. Now analyze these two sentences a little more closely. The first contains forty-nine words but only sixty syllables, and all its words are those of everyday life. The second contains thirty-eight words of ninety syllables: eighteen of those words are from Latin roots, and one from Greek. The first sentence contains six vivid images, and only one phrase ("time and chance") that could be called vague. The second contains not a single fresh, arresting phrase, and in spite of its ninety syllables it gives only a shortened version of the meaning contained in the first. Yet without a doubt it is the second kind of sentence that is gaining ground in modern English. I do not want to exaggerate. This kind of writing is not yet universal, and outcrops of simplicity will occur here and there in the worst-written page. Still, if you or I were told to write a few lines on the uncertainty of human fortunes, we should probably come much nearer to my imaginary sentence than to the one from *Ecclesiastes*. As I have tried to show, modern writing at its worst does not consist in picking out words for the sake of their meaning and inventing images in order to make the meaning clearer. It consists in gumming together long strips of words which have already been set in order by someone else, and making the results presentable by sheer humbug. The attraction of this way of writing is that it is easy. It is easier -- even quicker, once you have the habit -- to say *In my opinion it is not an unjustifiable assumption that* than to say *I think*. If you use ready-made phrases, you not only don't have to hunt about for

the words; you also don't have to bother with the rhythms of your sentences since these phrases are generally so arranged as to be more or less euphonious. When you are composing in a hurry -- when you are dictating to a stenographer, for instance, or making a public speech -- it is natural to fall into a pretentious, Latinized style. Tags like *a consideration which we should do well to bear in mind* or *a conclusion to which all of us would readily assent* will save many a sentence from coming down with a bump. By using stale metaphors, similes, and idioms, you save much mental effort, at the cost of leaving your meaning vague, not only for your reader but for yourself. This is the significance of mixed metaphors. The sole aim of a metaphor is to call up a visual image. When these images clash -- as in *The Fascist octopus has sung its swan song, the jackboot is thrown into the melting pot* -- it can be taken as certain that the writer is not seeing a mental image of the objects he is naming; in other words he is not really thinking. Look again at the examples I gave at the beginning of this essay. Professor Laski (1) uses five negatives in fifty three words. One of these is superfluous, making nonsense of the whole passage, and in addition there is the slip -- *alien* for *akin* -- making further nonsense, and several avoidable pieces of clumsiness which increase the general vagueness. Professor Hogben (2) plays ducks and drakes with a battery which is able to write prescriptions, and, while disapproving of the everyday phrase *put up with*, is unwilling to look *egregious* up in the dictionary and see what it means; (3), if one takes an uncharitable attitude towards it, is simply meaningless: probably one could work out its intended meaning by reading the whole of the article in which it occurs. In (4), the writer knows more or less what he wants to say, but an accumulation of stale phrases chokes him like tea leaves blocking a sink. In (5), words and meaning have almost parted company. People who write in this manner usually have a general emotional meaning -- they dislike one thing and want to express solidarity with another -- but they are not interested in the detail of what they are saying. A scrupulous writer, in every sentence that he writes, will ask himself at least four questions, thus:

1. What am I trying to say?
2. What words will express it?
3. What image or idiom will make it clearer?
4. Is this image fresh enough to have an effect?

And he will probably ask himself two more:

1. Could I put it more shortly?
2. Have I said anything that is avoidably ugly?

But you are not obliged to go to all this trouble. You can shirk it by simply throwing your mind open and letting the ready-made phrases come crowding in. They will construct your sentences for you -- even think your thoughts for you, to a certain extent -- and at need they will perform the important service of partially concealing your meaning even from yourself. It is at this point that the special connection between politics and the debasement of language becomes clear.

In our time it is broadly true that political writing is bad writing. Where it is not true, it will generally be found that the writer is some kind of rebel, expressing his private opinions and not a "party line." Orthodoxy, of whatever colour, seems to demand a lifeless, imitative style. The political dialects to be found in pamphlets, leading articles, manifestos, White papers and the speeches of undersecretaries do, of course, vary from party to party, but they are all alike in that one almost never finds in them a fresh, vivid, homemade turn of speech. When one watches some tired hack on the platform mechanically repeating the familiar phrases -- *bestial, atrocities, iron heel, bloodstained tyranny, free peoples of the world, stand shoulder to shoulder* -- one often has a curious feeling that one is not

watching a live human being but some kind of dummy: a feeling which suddenly becomes stronger at moments when the light catches the speaker's spectacles and turns them into blank discs which seem to have no eyes behind them. And this is not altogether fanciful. A speaker who uses that kind of phraseology has gone some distance toward turning himself into a machine. The appropriate noises are coming out of his larynx, but his brain is not involved, as it would be if he were choosing his words for himself. If the speech he is making is one that he is accustomed to make over and over again, he may be almost unconscious of what he is saying, as one is when one utters the responses in church. And this reduced state of consciousness, if not indispensable, is at any rate favourable to political conformity.

In our time, political speech and writing are largely the defence of the indefensible. Things like the continuance of British rule in India, the Russian purges and deportations, the dropping of the atom bombs on Japan, can indeed be defended, but only by arguments which are too brutal for most people to face, and which do not square with the professed aims of the political parties. Thus political language has to consist largely of euphemism, question-begging and sheer cloudy vagueness. Defenceless villages are bombarded from the air, the inhabitants driven out into the countryside, the cattle machine-gunned, the huts set on fire with incendiary bullets: this is called *pacification*. Millions of peasants are robbed of their farms and sent trudging along the roads with no more than they can carry: this is called *transfer of population* or *rectification of frontiers*. People are imprisoned for years without trial, or shot in the back of the neck or sent to die of scurvy in Arctic lumber camps: this is called *elimination of unreliable elements*. Such phraseology is needed if one wants to name things without calling up mental pictures of them. Consider for instance some comfortable English professor defending Russian totalitarianism. He cannot say outright, "I believe in killing off your opponents when you can get good results by doing so." Probably, therefore, he will say something like this:

While freely conceding that the Soviet regime exhibits certain features which the humanitarian may be inclined to deplore, we must, I think, agree that a certain curtailment of the right to political opposition is an unavoidable concomitant of transitional periods, and that the rigors which the Russian people have been called upon to undergo have been amply justified in the sphere of concrete achievement.

The inflated style itself is a kind of euphemism. A mass of Latin words falls upon the facts like soft snow, blurring the outline and covering up all the details. The great enemy of clear language is insincerity. When there is a gap between one's real and one's declared aims, one turns as it were instinctively to long words and exhausted idioms, like a cuttlefish spurting out ink. In our age there is no such thing as "keeping out of politics." All issues are political issues, and politics itself is a mass of lies, evasions, folly, hatred, and schizophrenia. When the general atmosphere is bad, language must suffer. I should expect to find -- this is a guess which I have not sufficient knowledge to verify -- that the German, Russian and Italian languages have all deteriorated in the last ten or fifteen years, as a result of dictatorship.

But if thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought. A bad usage can spread by tradition and imitation even among people who should and do know better. The debased language that I have been discussing is in some ways very convenient. Phrases like *a not unjustifiable assumption*, *leaves much to be desired*, *would serve no good purpose*, *a consideration which we should do well to bear in mind*, are a continuous temptation, a packet of aspirins always at one's elbow. Look back through this essay, and for certain you will find that I have again and again committed the very faults I am protesting against. By this morning's post I have received a pamphlet dealing with conditions in Germany. The author tells me that he "felt impelled" to write it. I open it at random, and here is almost the first sentence I see: "[The Allies] have an opportunity not only of achieving a radical transformation of Germany's social and political structure in such a way as to avoid a nationalistic

reaction in Germany itself, but at the same time of laying the foundations of a co-operative and unified Europe.” You see, he “feels impelled” to write -- feels, presumably, that he has something new to say -- and yet his words, like cavalry horses answering the bugle, group themselves automatically into the familiar dreary pattern. This invasion of one’s mind by ready-made phrases (*lay the foundations, achieve a radical transformation*) can only be prevented if one is constantly on guard against them, and every such phrase anaesthetizes a portion of one’s brain.

I said earlier that the decadence of our language is probably curable. Those who deny this would argue, if they produced an argument at all, that language merely reflects existing social conditions, and that we cannot influence its development by any direct tinkering with words and constructions. So far as the general tone or spirit of a language goes, this may be true, but it is not true in detail. Silly words and expressions have often disappeared, not through any evolutionary process but owing to the conscious action of a minority. Two recent examples were *explore every avenue* and *leave no stone unturned*, which were killed by the jeers of a few journalists. There is a long list of flyblown metaphors which could similarly be got rid of if enough people would interest themselves in the job; and it should also be possible to laugh the *not un-*formation out of existence, to reduce the amount of Latin and Greek in the average sentence, to drive out foreign phrases and strayed scientific words, and, in general, to make pretentiousness unfashionable. But all these are minor points. The defence of the English language implies more than this, and perhaps it is best to start by saying what it does *not* imply.

To begin with it has nothing to do with archaism, with the salvaging of obsolete words and turns of speech, or with the setting up of a “standard English” which must never be departed from. On the contrary, it is especially concerned with the scrapping of every word or idiom which has outworn its usefulness. It has nothing to do with correct grammar and syntax, which are of no importance so long as one makes one’s meaning clear, or with the avoidance of Americanisms, or with having what is called a “good prose style.” On the other hand, it is not concerned with fake simplicity and the attempt to make written English colloquial. Nor does it even imply in every case preferring the Saxon word to the Latin one, though it does imply using the fewest and shortest words that will cover one’s meaning. What is above all needed is to let the meaning choose the word, and not the other way around. In prose, the worst thing one can do with words is surrender to them. When you think of a concrete object, you think wordlessly, and then, if you want to describe the thing you have been visualising you probably hunt about until you find the exact words that seem to fit it. When you think of something abstract you are more inclined to use words from the start, and unless you make a conscious effort to prevent it, the existing dialect will come rushing in and do the job for you, at the expense of blurring or even changing your meaning. Probably it is better to put off using words as long as possible and get one’s meaning as clear as one can through pictures and sensations. Afterward one can choose -- not simply *accept* -- the phrases that will best cover the meaning, and then switch round and decide what impressions one’s words are likely to make on another person. This last effort of the mind cuts out all stale or mixed images, all prefabricated phrases, needless repetitions, and humbug and vagueness generally. But one can often be in doubt about the effect of a word or a phrase, and one needs rules that one can rely on when instinct fails. I think the following rules will cover most cases:

1. Never use a metaphor, simile, or other figure of speech which you are used to seeing in print.
2. Never use a long word where a short one will do.
3. If it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out.
4. Never use the passive where you can use the active.
5. Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word, or a jargon word if you can think of an everyday

English equivalent.

6. Break any of these rules sooner than say anything outright barbarous.

These rules sound elementary, and so they are, but they demand a deep change of attitude in anyone who has grown used to writing in the style now fashionable. One could keep all of them and still write bad English, but one could not write the kind of stuff that I quoted in those five specimens at the beginning of this article.

I have not here been considering the literary use of language, but merely language as an instrument for expressing and not for concealing or preventing thought. Stuart Chase and others have come near to claiming that all abstract words are meaningless, and have used this as a pretext for advocating a kind of political quietism. Since you don't know what Fascism is, how can you struggle against Fascism? One need not swallow such absurdities as this, but one ought to recognise that the present political chaos is connected with the decay of language, and that one can probably bring about some improvement by starting at the verbal end. If you simplify your English, you are freed from the worst follies of orthodoxy. You cannot speak any of the necessary dialects, and when you make a stupid remark its stupidity will be obvious, even to yourself. Political language -- and with variations this is true of all political parties, from Conservatives to Anarchists -- is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind. One cannot change this all in a moment, but one can at least change one's own habits, and from time to time one can even, if one jeers loudly enough, send some worn-out and useless phrase -- some *jackboot*, *Achilles' heel*, *hotbed*, *melting pot*, *acid test*, *veritable inferno*, or other lump of verbal refuse -- into the dustbin, where it belongs.

1946

1) An interesting illustration of this is the way in which the English flower names which were in use till very recently are being ousted by Greek ones, snapdragon becoming *antirrhinum*, forget-me-not becoming *myosotis*, etc. It is hard to see any practical reason for this change of fashion: it is probably due to an instinctive turning-away from the more homely word and a vague feeling that the Greek word is scientific. [back]

2) Example: 'Comfort's catholicity of perception and image, strangely Whitmanesque in range, almost the exact opposite in aesthetic compulsion, continues to evoke that trembling atmospheric accumulative ginting at a cruel, an inexorably selene timelessness... Wrey Gardiner scores by aiming at simple bull's-eyes with precision. Only they are not so simple, and through this contented sadness runs more than the surface bitter-sweet of resignation'. (Poetry Quarterly.) [back]

3) One can cure oneself of the not un-formation by memorizing this sentence: A not unblack dog was chasing a not unsmall rabbit across a not ungreen field. [back]

THE END

I BELIEVE IN CHANGE

I believe in change.

Not slogans or doctored pictures, but in myself and fellow (wo)men; in the continuous victory of a natural order over its temporary rebels, acting swiftly as gravity upon magma.

I am scared.

Of us and them. Mice and men. Good fences making good neighbors. Being a slave to slavery and puppeteers lacking control and understanding of themselves. Killing my brother, widowing wives, taking away mothers and fathers. Ignorance and bombs and police with guns and fines oh my. I feed my rebellion with “conspiracy” theories, youtube videos of cops beating up skaters, late night bicycle races from imaginary special forces trying to catch me for my thoughtcrime; I always get away, but zombies, tidal waves, the military, aliens, and hill-billys chase me in dreams. I fear I will push back too hard when any minute opportunity arises, and that with the eyes of the NSA squinting through a cop, I’ll get fucked in the slammer with gang-rape AIDS, as is the popular conception of prison.

Our vision of the future is no doubt magnified by our emergence into adulthood during the Bush administration. Entering adolescence on 9/11.

What if there were a massive movement to succeed from “the Union”? If our cunning wit and action trumped the authoritarian militias, if our numbers made prisons a fire hazard, if our hands could provide for us in nature, and our “arms” were muscular, flexible extensions of our minds.

I talked to a McPaliner today and loved her. Her life her own, mine my own. We believe in the Godliness of the Universe and one another. With her and her extended family, there is peace, and so too is the case for me with those I love. When our communities unite, however, to govern and control “the other” with unyielding law and lack of consensus, there spawns hatred, there breeds violence. We can visit one another and make love, art, music, lofty idea, invention, but not law.

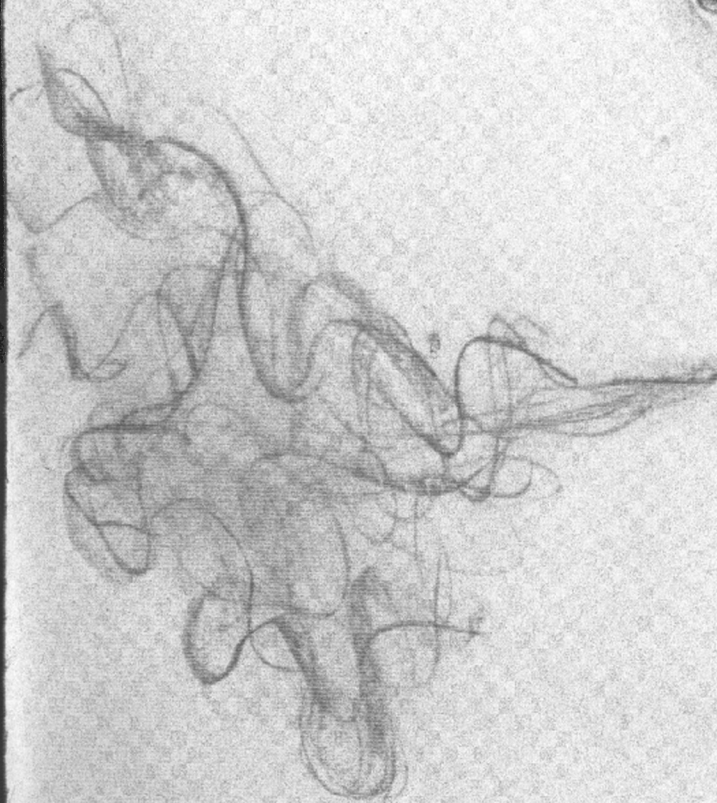
Do not try to force me to enforce your will against my own. Do not tie my arms to have them act against my will.


Where is the need but with headless mobs? Why is it so popular to think that one has the right to govern another? Personal justice... karma... “take what you want, but pay”. How about that? “But then there would anarchy!” Yes... and?

I talked to a man and his wife over a cigarette about the state of the Union and the election. He said he would not vote and that “organized violence” was the only way for revolution. I wished he did not say that and knew that this was his route to “freedom”. I have not bought a gun... yet. I oscillate between two projections into the future: of direct action in the streets with the rest of the youth or Yoga in the mountains with the wisdom of land and loving community.

I speak to my friends, and from our ivory tower, we make up for our reduced visibility with keen perspective. “On all scales Love is big” we say.

My friend, the means are the ends.





And I would travel with you
to the places of our shame

The hills stripped of trees, the marshes grasses
oil-slicked, steeped in sewage;

The blackened shoreline, the chemical-poisoned water;

I would stand with you in the desolate places, the
charred places,
soil where nothing will ever grow, pitted desert;

fields that burn slowly for months; roots of cholla &
chaparrala
writhing with underground explosions

I would put my hand
there with yours, I would take your hand, I would walk
with you

through carefully planted fields, rows of leafy vegetables
drifting with radioactive dust; through the dark
of uranium mines hidden in the sacred gold-red
mountains;

I would listen with you in drafty hospital corridors
as the miner cried out in the first language

of pain; as he cried out
the forgotten names of his mother I would stand
next to you in the forest's

final hour, in the wind
of helicopter blades, police

sirens shrieking, the delicate
tremor of light between

leaves for the last
time Oh I would touch with this love each

wounded place

Anita Barrows

WHAT IS THERE TO DO?

We've marched, we've protested, we've volunteered, and we've been arrested. We've supported civil rights, women's rights, abortion rights, gay rights, immigrants' rights, and the rights of oppressed peoples everywhere. We've recycled, cut down on our carbon footprint, and supported environmental causes. We've protested wars from Vietnam to Iraq, protested government intrusion into our lives and secret surveillance, protested the use of torture, and worked for the revolution that we hoped would change our country and the world. We grew up watching the Army-McCarthy hearings; started protesting in Washington in the 1960s; voted for Kennedy, thinking that a politician could make a difference (how wrong could you be); voted for Dick Gregory in protest; and then not again until Gore vs Bush. Now we will vote against McCain & Palin, instead of for Obama, still trying to live by our ideals. Did we accomplish anything? Did we make a difference? According to Chomsky:

The movement against the war in Vietnam had long lasting, I hope permanent, effects in raising the general level of insight and understanding among the general public....Despite the intense efforts undertaken in the 1970s to reverse this general cultural progress and enlightenment, much of it remains....The accomplishments, which were very real, can be credited largely to young people, most of them nameless and forgotten, who devoted themselves to organizing, education, civil disobedience and resistance.

Just like Dr. King, we had a dream. We believed that these bloodsuckers could be stopped, that the military industrial complex could be stopped, that the rights of all ordinary people could take precedence over the rights of the wealthy. And we still have this dream. Maybe it won't happen in our lifetime, or in our kids' lifetimes, but, for the earth to continue, we must keep the dream alive. It's like pushing a giant rock wheel up a mountain. It takes lots of hands over lots of time. So, join us in doing what you know is right. It's now your time to lead the way.

Illegitimi non carborundum

Submitted by two of the nameless dreamers

HUNGRY?

Who says not everyone can fall asleep on a full stomach every night? Having food should be, and has to be, a guarantee for all living humans. It is our right and a basic necessity. At least that's what the folks at *One World Everyone Eats*, a small restaurant in Salt Lake City, Utah, have to say about it. It is a restaurant dedicated to "eliminating world hunger, serving organic unprocessed food, feeding and including all members of our community, and eliminating waste in the food industry."

As we walked the streets of Salt Lake City we had very little hope of finding anything but what we had been accustomed to seeing throughout the day: tourist shops, fast food joints, mormon statues, and a few homeless people. We didn't have much money, but we were looking for a decent meal. We got lucky. Out of the corner of her eye she spotted a sanctuary; a restaurant serving organic-local-delicious food, and the catch: you eat what you need, you pay what you can.

This is a foreign concept, a restaurant that is only concerned with feeding people. Money is used to keep the restaurant above water, and at the same time, pay the employees a living wage. There is not even a cash register, just a treasure chest for customer donations. No prices, no menus. It looks like your own kitchen. One World Everyone Eats depends on the guests paying what they feel is fair. This restaurant will only stay open so long as guests are honest, and pay.

So what happens if you are unable to pay what your meal is worth? As I said before, it's not about the money. People are encouraged to volunteer to wash dishes, clean, or work in the garden if they don't have enough money to pay for their meal. And if someone is unable to do this, the kitchen encourages you to wait until closing time to receive the leftovers from the night, for a free meal.

Trying to accommodate all guests, food is served in serving lines, and the kitchen is literally in front of the line, in the same room. One equally radical change in the kitchen is the issue of portion sizes. It is the guest, not the chef, who decides the portions. If you're not so hungry or you're low on money, you can order less, or, if you're especially hungry or not too concerned with you wallet, you can order more; although they might say you should never order an excess of food just because you can.

The employees are given full freedom to cook as they like: there is literally no menu in the entire restaurant. This allows them to use their own creativity to make a variety of soups, salads, entrees, and desserts.

For me, this illustrates a tangible form of anarchy in American capitalism. So the next time you look for a way to implement your theory, look no further than the kitchen. It's a lifestyle.

“Destruction and violence! How is the ordinary man to know that the most violent element in society is ignorance; that its power of destruction is the very thing Anarchism is combating?”

- Emma Goldman: Anarchism and Other Essays, page 11

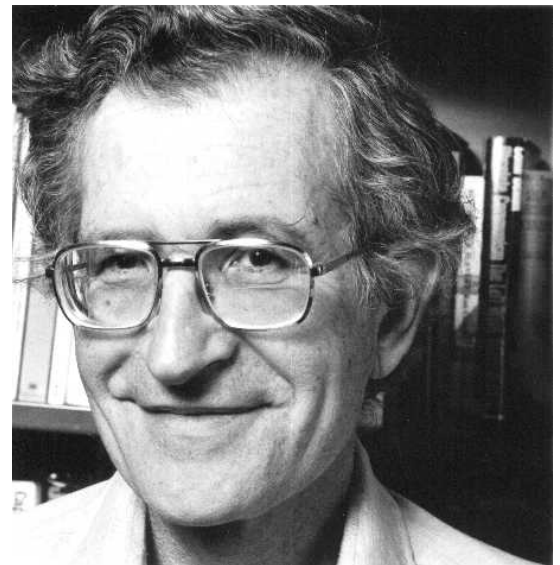


“Humanity is nature becoming self-conscious.”

-Elisee Reclus: L'Homme et la Terre, page i.

“For those who stubbornly seek freedom, there can be no more urgent task than to come to understand the mechanisms and practices of indoctrination. These are easy to perceive in the totalitarian societies, much less so in the system of ‘brainwashing under freedom’ to which we are subjected and which all too often we serve as willing or unwitting instruments.”

-Noam Chomsky: Chomsky on Democracy and Education, page 212.

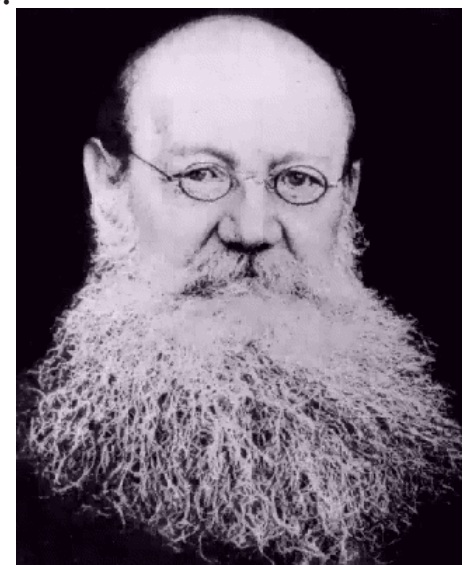


“The men of the future will yet fight their way to many a liberty that we do not even miss.”

-Max Stirner: The Ego and His Own, page 167.

“America is just the country that shows how all the written guarantees in the world for freedom are no protection against tyranny and oppression of the worst kind.”

-Peter Kropotkin: speech given the 26th of September, 1891.



RAINBOW DESTROYER

No. It is not a gay bashing group. It is pretty much the opposite of that. Rainbowdestroyer.com is an art and music collective started by a group of local. We release **music** and distribute **art** online for **FREE!!!** We put on concerts and art shows, and sometimes we even make **compilation CD's** and send them out to radio stations across the country. We make no money and support our artistic endeavors through donations only. So far we have released **16 Albums** that you can download at Rainbowdestroyer.com. We are not a record label or anything businesslike. We are a collective dedicated to building a musical and artistic **community** completely detached from the corporate and mainstream image of what art and music should look and sound like. Sometimes **rainbow destroyer** just sounds like terrible **noise**, and that makes us really happy. Go download music at rainbowdestroyer.com! Find out about new music and events on our blog rainbowdestroyerblog.com

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