



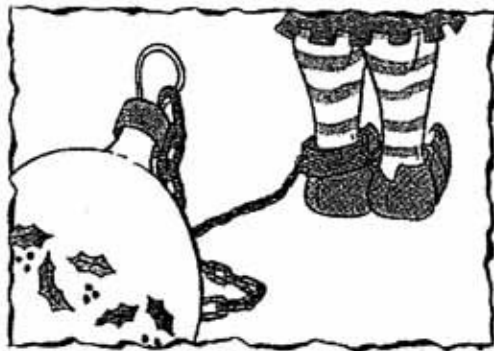
## 'Twas a strike before Christmas...

by Aaron Kuller



It was a dramatic decision which shocked us all: Taking advantage of the North American Free Trade Agreement, Santa Claus and his committee of corporate affiliates have moved large segments of his state-sanctioned toy making business to Mexico, leaving behind literally thousands of the loyal elves in the north pole. The remaining employed elves, fearing for their job security, have responded with a strike. "This is ridiculous", commented a striking elf, "All this 'Jolly Saint Nick' nonsense is so frivolous. I have been selflessly making toys for little children every day of my life for forty years, and he repays me by leaving me without a means to support my family?"

Santa Claus' Public Relations Firm justifies their decision by insisting that expanding to Mexico was necessary in order to keep up with the highly competitive nature of the globalized economy. Santa himself commented today, "elves are out of style. Child Labor is the hip new wave of the modernized economy. Besides, my corporate advisory board did a cost-benefit analysis, and



amazingly enough, we discovered that it is much more profitable to overwork some six year old little girl in Mexico who is willing to work for pennies an hour than to retain an elf employee. Elves are too demanding. When you hire an elf, you have to worry about job safety, breaks, health benefits, reasonable pay... All they do is complain, complain, complain. What will they want next? Paid Vacation?"

The elves' decision to strike was unanimous. "We're in it for the long hall. There was once a time when Holidays were about spending time with your love ones and bonding together as a community. Now, as every facet of people's lives become increasingly commodified, Christmas has become synonymous with mandatory consumption. The

consequence is that people are so worried about doing their holiday shopping that they become quiescent when it comes to social issues", a Union Organizer wrote in a communiqué.

**It's high time that elves won their rights. However, they can't do it without your much needed help! Make a conscious effort to boycott sweatshop products!**

**\*The Department of Labor (DOL) cited the following information:**

-At least half of all maquiladora (Mexican sweatshop) workers are children under twelve.

-At least seventy percent of maquiladora workers are women.

-80 percent of Maquiladora employees work 50-55 hours a week.

-The average pay for maquiladora workers in Mexico per three month period is 170 dollars.

-Over half of all Maquiladoras do not allow their employees to quit.

### Eugene Media Sensation, continued from page 2

This extreme, in turn, manifests itself in the tactics of "breaking windows and starting fires." Add a little media exposure to the mix, and the end result is a mass overshadowing of anarchism's traditional and far more constructive elements.

This entire affair runs curiously analogous to the events of a hundred years ago, 1901, when a self-proclaimed anarchist named Leon Czolgosz assassinated U.S. president William McKinley. Cries of an "anarchist conspiracy" swept through the press, contributing to the loss of a significant fact to the crevices of historical record: four months before he shot McKinley, the anarchist journal Free Society had issued a warning concerning Czolgosz, fearing he was a spy, "pretending to be greatly interested in the cause, asking for names, or soliciting aid for contemplated violence."

As was the case at the turn of the last century, the uncaring and unthinking words and actions of a few miscreants can be enlarged into a venerable spectacle, furthering the misunderstanding and perversion of true anarchist ideals. "Alas," laments Murray Bookchin, "we are witnessing the appalling desiccation of a great tradition..."

Bookchin's recommended solutions, and tactics, are a sober contrast to the prattle of the Eugene outfit. Through such organizations as community gardens, producer and consumer cooperatives, and study groups, Bookchin asserts, "we can become more socially responsible and more skilled at democratically discussing and deciding important social questions."

Unfortunately, even if such ventures as the above prove enormously successful, the chances are slim that they will ever overcome the public assumption that anarchism is simply a Lover's boutique of chaos, turmoil, and little else. That is, until media enters the business of objective, critical entertaining of ideas, and not simply the business of selling product and entertaining people. A pattern now more than a hundred years strong, it remains unlikely that it will ever be broken without a concentrated effort.