

issue # 5

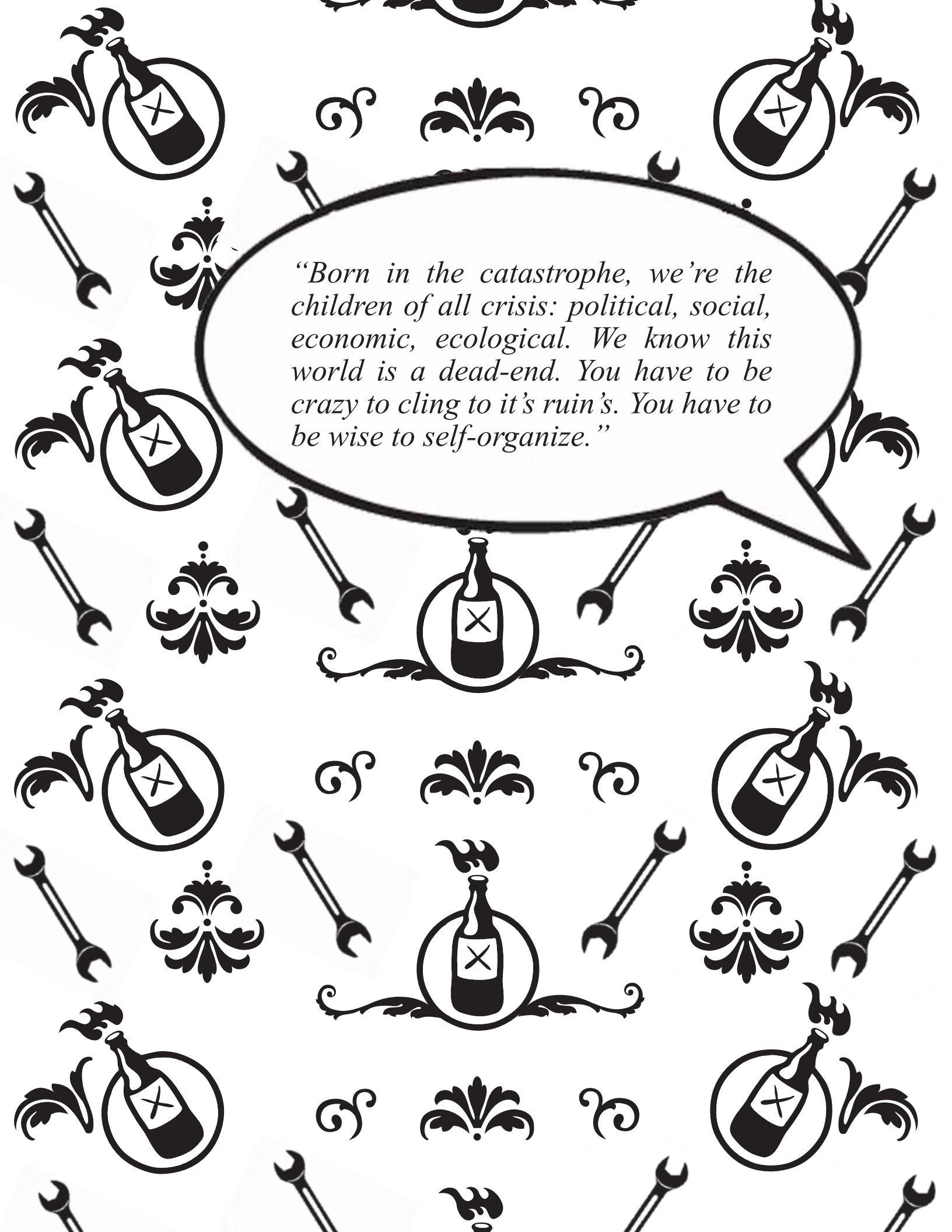
autonomy

An anarchist publication of news, theory, and action from Tacoma.

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- And Much
Much More!**



“Born in the catastrophe, we’re the children of all crisis: political, social, economic, ecological. We know this world is a dead-end. You have to be crazy to cling to it’s ruin’s. You have to be wise to self-organize.”

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HOW WE SEE IT

When my time is not mine I am not me. To be myself is a constant struggle because my time is not determined by my own needs and desires but by the capitalist mode of production; through work, through the courts, through the police, and schooling. The whole of social life is used to manage and contain us through its spectacular array of culture and media fed to us from specialists in seduction, replacing our desires with their own.

Capitalism is an economic system built upon the conversion of the living into the dead. Forests are turned into resources, time turned into wages, life into money. The world is turned into property and sold back to us. We must pay in order to live. And when we live under capitalism, we are buying the things they sell, obeying the laws they create, and watching the images and sounds they pump into our eyes and our ears. When we live under capitalism, we become the walking dead: already-bought, already-sold.

Autonomy is the sovereignty of ones own body and mind. It is the power we all have to shape our individual and collective lives. Autonomy is incompatible with any system that we do not choose, but that is imposed upon us. My freedom is confined by the parameters they define. Autonomy is impossible in a world of capitalism and police. The only way toward autonomy is to fight against capitalism and its commodification of life. The only way to be myself is to assert my will against any order imposed upon me from above. To be myself is a constant struggle.

Anarchy strives against coercive hierarchy and all authority. Anarchy fosters relationships that are based on mutual respect, freedom, and autonomy rather than competition, exploitation, and dominance. The purpose of this magazine is to engage in and report on struggles throughout Tacoma and the Puget Sound area. Our goal is to help foster critical thought and encourage the questioning of authority.

This magazine is a labor of love, an attempt to take back pieces of our lives that they've stolen from us.

-A//253 collective



ANARCHY WORKS

excerpt from
CH 5
crime



¹ This analysis is well documented by Kristian Williams in *Our Enemies in Blue*. Brooklyn: Soft Skull Press, 2004.

² In 2005, 5,734 workers were killed by traumatic injury on the job, and an estimated 50,000 to 60,000 died from occupational diseases, according to the AFL-CIO "Facts About Worker Safety and Health 2007." http://www.aflcio.org/issues/safety/memorial/upload/wmd_safety-facts.pdf Of all the killings of workers by employer negligence between 1982 and 2002, fewer than 2000 were investigated by the government, and of these only 81 resulted in convictions and only

Prison is the institution that most concretely symbolizes domination. Anarchists wish to create a society that can protect itself and resolve internal problems without police, judges, or prisons; a society that does not view its problems in terms of good and evil, permitted and prohibited, law-abiders and criminals.

Who will protect us without the police?

In our society, police benefit from a tremendous amount of hype, whether it's biased and fear-mongering media coverage of crime or the flood of movies and television shows featuring cops as heroes and protectors. Yet many people's experiences with police contrast starkly with this heavy-handed propaganda. In a hierarchical society, whom do police protect? Who has more to fear from crime, and who has more to fear from police? In some communities, the police are like an occupying force; police and crime form the interlocking jaws of a trap that prevents people from escaping oppressive situations or rescuing their communities from violence, poverty, and fragmentation. Historically, police did not develop out of a social necessity to protect people from rising crime.

In the United States, modern police forces arose at a time when crime was already diminishing. Rather, the institution of police emerged as a means to give the ruling class greater control over the population and expand the state's monopoly on the resolution of social conflict. This was not a response to crime or an attempt to solve it; on the contrary, it coincided with the creation of new forms of crime. At the same time police forces were being expanded and modernized, the ruling class began to criminalize predominantly lower class behaviors that had previously been acceptable such as vagrancy, gambling, and public drunkenness.¹ Those in authority define "criminal activity" according to their own needs, then present their definitions as neutral and timeless. For example, many more people may be killed by pollution and work-related accidents than by drugs, but drug dealers are branded a threat to society, not factory owners. And even when factory owners break the law in a way that kills people, they are not sent to prison.² Today, over two-thirds of prisoners in the US are locked up for nonviolent offenses. It is no surprise that the majority of prisoners are poor people and people of color, given the criminalization of drugs and immigration, the disproportionately harsh penalties for the drugs typically used by poor people, and the greater chance people of color have of being convicted or sentenced more harshly for the same

crimes.³ Likewise, the intense presence of militarized police in ghettos and poor neighborhoods is connected to the fact that crime stays high in those neighborhoods while rates of incarceration increase.

The police and prisons are systems of control that preserve social inequalities, spread fear and resentment, exclude and alienate whole communities, and exercise extreme violence against the most oppressed sectors of society. Those who can organize their own lives within their communities are better equipped to protect themselves. Some societies and communities that have won autonomy from the state organize volunteer patrols to help people in need and discourage aggressions. Unlike the police, these groups generally do not have coercive authority or a closed, bureaucratic structure, and are more likely to be made up of volunteers from within the neighborhood. They focus on protecting people rather than property or privilege, and in the absence of a legal code they respond to people's needs rather than inflexible protocol. Other societies organize against social harm without setting up specific institutions. Instead they utilize diffuse sanctions—responses and attitudes spread throughout the society and propagated in the culture—to promote a safe environment.

Anarchists take an entirely different view of the problems that authoritarian societies place within the framework of crime and punishment. A crime is the violation of a written law, and laws are imposed by elite bodies. In the final instance, the question is not whether someone is hurting others but whether she is disobeying the orders of the elite. As a response to crime, punishment creates hierarchies of morality and power between the criminal and the dispensers of justice. It denies the criminal the resources he may need to reintegrate into the community and to stop hurting others. In an empowered society, people do not need written laws; they have the power to determine whether someone is preventing them from fulfilling their needs, and can call on their peers for help resolving conflicts. In this view, the problem is not crime, but social harm—actions such as assault and drunk driving that actually hurt other people.

This paradigm does away with the category of victimless crime, and reveals the absurdity of protecting the property rights of privileged people over the survival needs of others. The outrages typical of capitalist justice, such as arresting the hungry for stealing from the wealthy, would not be possible in a needs-based paradigm. During the February 1919 general strike in

Seattle, workers took over the city. Commercially, Seattle was shut down, but the workers did not allow it to fall into disarray. On the contrary, they kept all vital services running, but organized by the workers without the management of the bosses. The workers were the ones running the city every other day of the year, anyway, and during the strike they proved that they knew how to conduct their work without managerial interference. They coordinated city-wide organization through the General Strike Committee, made up of rank and file workers from every local union; the structure was similar to, and perhaps inspired by, the Paris Commune. Union locals and specific groups of workers retained autonomy over their jobs without management or interference from the Committee or any other body. Workers were free to take initiative at the local level. Milk wagon drivers, for example, set up a neighborhood milk distribution system the bosses, restricted by profit motives, would never have allowed.

The striking workers collected the garbage, set up public cafeterias, distributed free food, and maintained fire department services. They also provided protection against anti-social behavior—robberies, assaults, murders, rapes: the crime wave authoritarianism always forecast. A city guard comprised of unarmed military veterans walked the streets to keep watch and respond to calls for help, though they were authorized to use warnings and persuasion only. Aided by the feelings of solidarity that created a stronger social fabric during the strike, the volunteer guard were able to maintain a peaceful environment, accomplishing what the state itself could not.

This context of solidarity, free food, and empowerment of the common person played a role in drying up crime at its source. Marginalized people gained opportunities for community involvement, decision-making, and social inclusion that were denied to them by the capitalist regime. The absence of the police, whose presence emphasizes class tensions and creates a hostile environment, may have actually decreased lower-class crime. Even the authorities remarked on how organized the city was: Major General John F. Morrison, stationed in Seattle, claimed that he had never seen "a city so quiet and so orderly." The strike was ultimately shut down by the invasion of thousands of troops and police deputies, coupled with pressure from the union leadership.⁴

Full text of Ch. 5 Crime from Anarchy Works is available at

Text Also available at the M-11



**RISE
LIKE
LIONS**
<http://riselikelions.info>

¹6 resulted in jailtime, though the maximum allowed sentence was six months, according to David Barstow, "U.S. Rarely Seeks Charges for Deaths in Workplace," *New York Times*, December 22, 2003.

³ These are widely available statistics from US Census bureau, Justice Department, independent researchers, Human Rights Watch, and other organizations. They can be found, for example, on drugwarfacts.org [viewed 30 December, 2009].

⁴ Wikipedia "Seattle General Strike of 1919," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seattle_general_strike_of_1919 [viewed 21 June 2007]. Print sources cited in this article include Jeremy Brecher, *Strike!* Revised Edition. South End Press, 1997; and Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States*, Perennial Classics Edition, 1999.

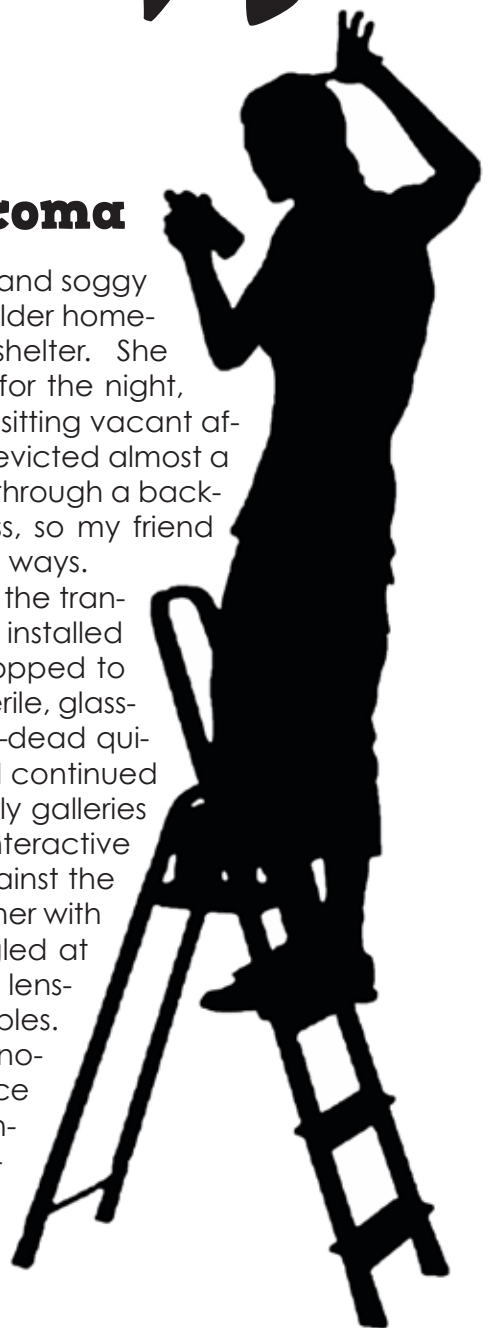
The Bureau of Taking Back Public Space presents...

STATE OF THE ARTS

The Creative Cities Conspiracy & Gentrification in Tacoma

Trudging up 11th street from the bus stop one cold and soggy fall evening, my friend and I were stopped by an older homeless woman who had just been denied a bed in a shelter. She asked us if we knew of another place she could go for the night, and my friend remembered that his old house was still sitting vacant after his former roommates had been unceremoniously evicted almost a year before. We knew that the house was accessible through a backdoor and had been previously squatted with success, so my friend gave the woman the house's address, and we parted ways.

A few days later, shuffling back down the hill to the transit center, I noticed that some new artwork had been installed in the Woolworths building's Broadway windows. I stopped to look at the warmly lit pieces hanging silently in their sterile, glass-fronted display case. It was very quiet on the street—dead quiet—just me and the artwork. Generally unimpressed, I continued on my way, only to encounter another of these ghostly galleries at the corner of 11th and Commerce. Here was an interactive video-installation piece. Two small tables were set against the windows, one piled with fake fruit and glass orbs, another with doll heads, wig forms, and masks. Two cameras angled at the viewer from behind each still-life composition, the lens-views obscured and warped by the objects on the tables. Screens displayed what the cameras recorded. I had noticed these peculiar storefront displays in the past, once gawking through painted windows at the mysterious interior of the "Jesus-4-Less!" shop across from the Broadway Center for the Performing Arts. It couldn't be a real shop, I thought at the time—could it? Then I noticed a logo on the glass—"SpaceWorks Tacoma"—and realized that it must have been some sort of art project.

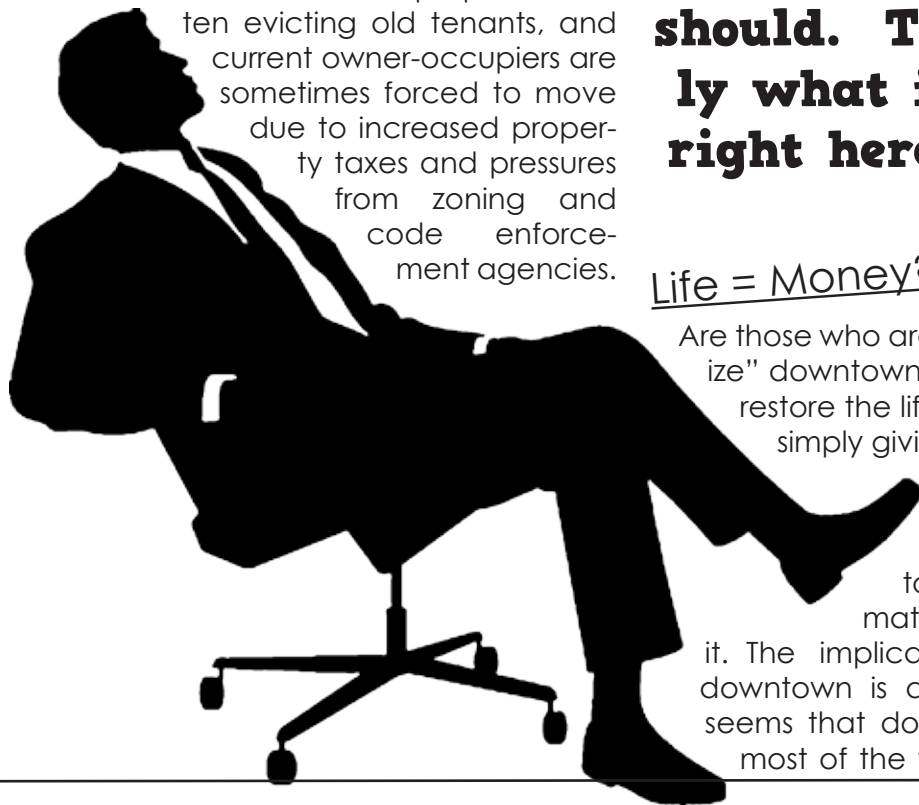


Looking around at other signs of what yuppies call “urban revitalization”, I had a feeling I knew exactly what was going on. Here were new sidewalks and a busy Tully’s Coffee. I’d been hearing a lot about the changes happening in downtown Tacoma from friends who had grown up here or who had lived in Tacoma for a while. This “SpaceWorks” thing reeked of the art-fueled gentrification that I knew was happening in cities all over the world, from the newly muralled slums of 2016 Olympics host city Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, all the way to Hamburg, Germany.

Out with the Old— in with the **Nouveau Riche!**

Gentrification describes the process in which waves of wealthier people move into a neighborhood, usually displacing the poorer current residents. Race is an important factor in many gentrification processes, with the newcomers being mostly white, and the current residents, people of color. In all instances, the gentrifiers’ relative wealth allows them to buy and rent their way into poor neighborhoods which have suddenly become desirable due to their proximity to urban business and cultural centers. Landlords are eager to raise

rents or sell their properties, often evicting old tenants, and current owner-occupiers are sometimes forced to move due to increased property taxes and pressures from zoning and code enforcement agencies.



Gentrifiers sometimes come on the coattails of young bohemian populations—mostly artists, musicians, and students, but sometimes even punks squatting vacant buildings. They seek to escape from humdrum suburbia into the authentic urban “village” they’ve seen in so many romantic comedies. And so, once a base of hip culture is laid and a neighborhood seems relatively secure, wealthier and wealthier people move in, spurred on by newly developed housing complexes and businesses designed to appeal to their quirky, cosmopolitan tastes. Sometimes the newcomers even receive tax breaks and other incentives, as in Philadelphia, PA, where developers and purchasers of new properties are exempt from paying property taxes for a full ten years. Parks and sidewalks get a serious facelift, the city having decided to put money into gentrifying areas under the assumption that the gentrifiers’ disposable income and tax dollars will bolster the local economy in turn. Meanwhile, police presence in the area increases noticeably, and “undesirable” people like homeless folks and teenagers are more frequently harassed, ticketed, and arrested for petty “quality of life” crimes that were previously ignored.

Sound familiar? It should. This is exactly what is happening right here in Tacoma.

Life = Money?

Are those who are attempting to “revitalize” downtown Tacoma attempting to restore the life of the city or are they simply giving a boost to business

interests? After all, this is what it means to “revitalize” something: to resuscitate it, to animate, arouse, and awaken it. The implication, of course, is that downtown is dead. True enough, it seems that downtown is pretty dead most of the time, bustling alive only

when people are going to and from work and school, or when special public events like First Night are held. Otherwise, cars move through the lonely streets, and the few pedestrians rarely stop to do much more than wait for a bus. Of course, the area around UW-Tacoma and the museums teem with commerce, exactly as intended. Meanwhile, homeless folks and people waiting for court congregate in front of the County-City Building, and School of the Arts students buzz down Commerce. Still, it would be a stretch to call downtown Tacoma a generally lively place.

According to Amy McBride, the City of Tacoma's Arts Administrator and brainchild of SpaceWorks Tacoma, empty storefronts are a big part of what's killing Tacoma. "Having dead, empty storefronts is the opposite of revitalization," she told me during an interview this past December. "The saying we've been using and that I've heard a lot is that empty storefronts are like 'lost teeth in a beautiful smile.'" Through SpaceWorks, property owners have allowed artists to use their vacant properties to jumpstart their careers. Artists, it seems, are acting as the front-line dentists for downtown Tacoma's smile, putting shiny gold teeth where there was nothing before. They need only pay the utilities, and they get a clean, dry, centralized space in which to display their



It's easy to ignore the negative consequences of gentrification when you're not the one getting the boot.

work. Some artists have even been granted entire storefront retail spaces in which to start their fledgling businesses.

But is it really all for the love of art and artists? McBride goes on, "If you think about it, if you were wanting to invest in

downtown or to open a business here, and you come downtown to some street and the tumbleweeds are blowing through, are you going to be excited about locating there? No. So the idea of activating these storefronts was to revitalize downtown, almost to stage it to look like what a community that has all the storefronts filled could look like... To start to model what an active life might look like." Evidently, life means money and commerce to people like Amy McBride. It's easy to ignore the negative consequences of gentrification when you're not the one getting the boot.

Florida in Tacoma

In a 1989 article about New York City called "The Occupation of Art and Gentrification" that was originally published in *No Reservations: Housing, Space and Class Struggle*, the author writes, "...the role of artists hasn't been organic/spontaneous but they have been utilised by an alliance of State, real estate and big business elites to act as the thin end of a wedge that will destabilise and ultimately displace working-class communities." For decades, art has been a tool commonly used by city governments and developers to gentrify urban areas. Because art seems to symbolize energy, innovation, and human potential, it is the perfect wrapping for any capitalist settler project. Many recent development initiatives, like the one chugging along here in Tacoma, have been inspired by pop-economist Richard Florida's "Creative Class" ideas, which are very popular

amongst urban planners and proponents of gentrification.

The “Creative Class” describes the demographic segment made up of knowledge workers, professionals, intellectuals, and various types of artists, most of whom are college-educated and white. Put very simply, Florida sells the idea that

“Fuel up for the day and meet some of the colleagues who you will be working with as you begin transforming Tacoma Pierce County for the Creative Economy.”

- Creative Class Institute Community Playbook

if a region can attract enough members of the Creative Class, the region will experience economic growth and will benefit from the skills these people bring with them.

In September, 2006, the Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber of Commerce Foundation paid Richard Florida and his team of consultants to meet with 30 of Tacoma's yuppie leaders for a two-day Creative Cities Leadership Seminar (CCLS). Apparently, says Amy McBride, “it was expensive.” According to the website of Creative Tacoma, a group that emerged from this workshop, Tacoma was the first city in the world to invite Richard Florida to town for a personal consultation. In attendance were various non-profit directors, city bureaucrats, representatives from local educational institutions, corporate suits, business owners, and other members of the Tacoma-Pierce County elite, including none other than much-reviled County Prosecutor Mark Lindquist. Current mayor Marilyn Strickland also attended.

The Leadership Seminar involved an analysis of Tacoma-Pierce County's demographic statistics, case study reviews, and brainstorming and networking sessions. During one presentation, seminar participants were encouraged to evaluate all kinds of human characteristics for their potential economic worth, including Tacoma's “Gay

Index”, “Boho Index”, and “Melting Pot Index”. They were even taught to put the number of interracial couples on the scales for proper valuation. Ultimately, based on the available data, Florida's consultants revealed that Tacoma was in a fair position to push forward a Creative Cities agenda, and participants spent a lot of time cooking up projects they thought would help bring forth their desired Tacoma. Some of these, like Love Tacoma and Team Green, continue to operate in some form today.

Love Tacoma is currently on hiatus, but until recently organizers put together regular gatherings at local businesses where, judging from the pictures on their website, members of the Creative Class rubbed shoulders over cocktails. One such event was the “Hipster Boutique Tour.” The idea was to create a proud, ever-expanding yuppie scene that would work to cement and spread gentrification. This, I suppose, is what “Love” means. They even have t-shirts.

“Sustainability isn't a trend anymore. It's basic business. It's the next great phase of economic evolution.”

- BE Green South Sound

Team Green has had a significantly busier run—it's current incarnation is called Tacoma ACTS (Alliance for Clean Energy and Technology) and is part of the Chamber of Commerce. A year after the CCLS, Team Green member and Port of Tacoma community relations manager Evette Ma-

son was quoted in a Creative Tacoma publication, saying "If we became known as a hub for green products and services—and the community at large supported greenness—it would attract more business and people." The focus was not on healing the environment by fundamentally revolutionizing everyday life, but instead on using sustainability rhetoric to make more money for business owners. Team Green sowed the poison seeds of the green capitalism now sprouting in the form of the recent BE Green South Sound and Tacoma Shift Happens event, "a celebration of local, inde

pendent businesses, and all that they contribute to life in Tacoma." Here we see capitalism taking the genuine desire to live in harmony with the earth and turning this into a slightly modified version of itself. As ecological devastation becomes a more and more apparent threat to human survival, "sustainability," along with "creativity," has been mobilized to re-brand an economic system that feeds on environmental exploitation and the oppression of workers. It seems that some people will cling to capitalism's rotting corpse as long as there's still a little fat left to suck on.



SECRET YUPPIE MEMOS... **REVEALED!**

A series of memos were circulated amongst attendees in the months following the seminar, usually consisting of report-backs from networking events and dinner parties where participants questioned fellow members of the Creative Class about Tacoma's Creative City potential. Reading through the memos, concern about Tacoma's gritty, violent reputation surfaces again and again. One participant concludes that in order to attract gentrifying elements to Tacoma, the city would need an "overhaul of external image."

Here's an excerpt from CCLS Memo #4: "In a recent issue of The News Tribune, two freshmen at the University of Puget Sound wrote columns about their first impressions of our community. In these articles, I found the stereotypes they heard from friends and family prior to moving here to be very telling: Tacoma was referred to as 'Tacompton' and as a dangerous and gang-infested city by members of these students' communities. The image of Tacoma that exists regionally and nationally is that it is vio-

lent, stinky, industrial, and dangerous." Recall again that County Prosecutor Mark Lindquist attended the CCLS. Is it possible that he took this image overhaul thing so seriously that he decided he needed to take down 36 Hilltop men in order to clean up Tacoma's bad reputation? [See "Endnotes on The Hilltop Boys"]

Think this is just some crackpot conspiracy theory? Consider that CCLS participants have continued to reconvene and communicate to this day. Not only do their paths cross in their everyday management of Tacoma's economy and population, but they "reunite" every once in a while to assess Tacoma's progress and to bounce around new ideas. In a report-back on one such reunion, Amy McBride wrote in the January, 2009, Creative Tacoma Newsletter, "This investment [in the arts] was not an accident but a purposeful directive by city leaders who recognized that the arts were the ticket to turning around Tacoma's reputation. And it is working."

"Being a pioneer is exciting Tacoma is almost like pre-Belltown in Seattle" [sic] - CCLS Memo #2

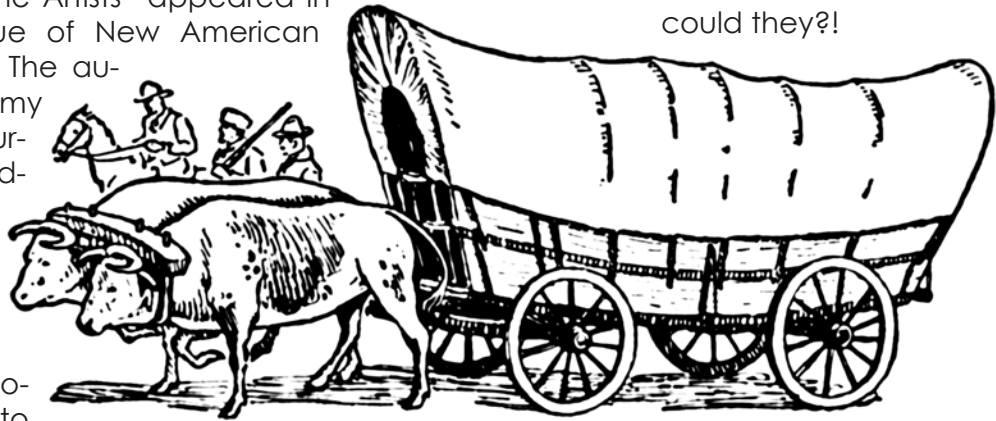
Urban Pioneers™

It would be fallacious to suggest that the arty gentrification of Tacoma began with the visit from Richard Florida. The city bosses were already scrambling headlong down this path in 2005, when an article about Tacoma called "Creative Class: Yes, It is About the Artists" appeared in the January issue of *New American City* magazine. The author interviews Amy McBride, the current City Arts Administrator, and Benjii Bittle, City employee and developer lapdog, who explain how Tacoma's plan was to initially cater specifically to artists themselves, choosing to set aside the larger "Creative Class" and all of its web developers, advertising agents, and investment bankers, at least for the time being.

When questioned on the issue of gentrification, McBride responds, "We recognize that the way we're using the arts as an economic development tool encourages gentrification—and that's part of the idea." More recently, in an interview with my very own self, McBride admitted, "I always want to be attracting the Creative Class—innovative people. I think the beauty of Tacoma is that it's the type of city that attracts pioneers...." McBride's reference to "pioneers" is particularly telling. Gentrifiers often use frontier language to portray themselves as brave, intrepid explorers on the frontlines of economic and social transformation. But just as early US pioneers wrought disaster on native communities, so do today's urban pioneers leave a trail of destruction behind them.

Despite this, new gentrification projects are being planned all the time here in Tacoma. The January 2011 issue of *CityArts* magazine highlights Mike McMenantmin's plans to turn the old Elks Temple on Broadway into an "entertainment emporium". Developers Grace Pleasants and Rick Moses want to construct a mixed-use highrise right next door, which will include both

retail and loft space. The article states that, "If completed, the cooperative project will certainly transform the complexion of business in downtown Tacoma. Less obvious, but no less significant, is how it will change the city's cultural landscape." "Complexion"—really? Did they just let that slip? Certainly they couldn't mean the project will further white-wash downtown Tacoma... could they?!



Thinking Outside of the Buck\$!

I must admit that I appreciate pretty things. In fact, if I was better-behaved and actually thought a condo and a career would bring me everlasting happiness, I'd be a perfect addition to Tacoma's Creative Class. I like to sew and paint, and sometimes I write poetry. I work on a local magazine. Perhaps you are similar to me—maybe you're a musical artist; maybe you take yoga classes. Maybe you don't do any of these things, but wish you could. Maybe you're happy to simply observe and appreciate a piece of theater or a dance performance. In theory then, we should be happy that the

“Human creativity is the ultimate economic resource.”

- Richard Florida

City government is attempting to stimulate creative enterprise and bring more art to Tacoma. But I'm not. I will not accept any ridiculous "revitalization" scheme that relies on reproducing and expanding capitalist relations, no matter how good it might look under coats of paint and varnish. Capitalism is necrophiliac—death-loving. It does not bring life but greedily consumes it.

Projects like SpaceWorks do nothing to fundamentally challenge the way things are. Capitalism does not work to benefit the grand majority of the world's population, including most people right here in Tacoma. A tiny proportion of people are extremely rich, a few more comprise the comfortable, shrinking middle class, and the rest of us sell our lives to survive, slog-

The average Tacoman has little to gain from an idealized “Creative Tacoma.”

ging off to work every day just to earn the money we need to meet our most immediate needs. Others take on an illegal means of subsistence and are thus in constant danger of ending up either dead or in jail. Some rely on state subsidies. No one is free because nothing is free. Our lives are chained to the system that is killing the earth and is, in so many very real ways, killing us as well.

When someone sells their art, they are turning their art into a commodity. A can of beans and a pair of jeans are both commodities. You can buy them with money. When things become commodities they enter into system of circulation in which all things are measured in terms of their monetary worth, a relative value. As the author of “The Occupation of Art and Gentrification” writes, “The ideology of art defines itself as a purely creative activity furthest removed from the dirty dealings of the market place but in reality art embodies the crazy logic of capitalism in its clearest form - the total domination of exchange value over use value.” This is why many collectors attempt to amass a fortune of valuable and rare works—because “good” art is money!

On paper, SpaceWorks and the litany of similar projects may sound pretty innocuous, even positive. The problem isn't necessarily with the art or the artists—it's with what the art and artists are being used to do. Put into practice, arts-fueled gentrification has destroyed communities and displaced poor and working class people in cities all over the US and the world. When

viewed through a wider lens, it is not difficult to see connections between projects like SpaceWorks and police operations like the recent Hilltop Crips “Conspiracy” case.

Social Control wears many faces: there's smiling Amy McBride at the Arts Commission and grim County Prosecutor Mark Lindquist in the courthouse. Together with other City and County bureaucrats, the police department, the Downtown Tacoma Business Improvement Area, the Chamber of Commerce, and a handful of local artists, they form a network of agents working to transform Tacoma into a yuppie playground.

Their common aim is to cleanse and beautify Tacoma in order to entice more and more investment. They hope that by removing signs of poverty and a very real, pervasive hopelessness, Tacoma will suddenly burst forth with economic “life”. But is investment really what Tacoma needs? Does this city need more of the same boutiques, cafes, bars, galleries, corporate headquarters, and tourist spots? That, of course, depends on who you ask.

Those who stand to substantially benefit financially from gentrification do, in a sense, “need” gentrification. The wealthy can only maintain their wealth by constantly creating and exploiting new sources of wealth. Gentrification has been extremely lucrative for some people, even as it has wrought disaster and loss for many more. The average Tacoman has little to gain from an idealized “Creative Tacoma.”

When I asked Amy McBride who she wanted to attract to Tacoma, she replied, “People who can employ people.” Am I supposed to be happy if I have the “opportunity” to work a low-wage barista job at a trendy new cafe? Should I jump for joy if there is an influx of wealthy parents who could hire me on as their private help? Certainly a few local artists, performers, and craftspeople could get their big break—but what about the rest of us?

The push for developing an economy based on “creative enterprise” is an old trick, as most of the City's professional bureaucrats are acutely aware. The cover of the February 2010 CityArts magazine says

it all: "BROOKLYN / OAKLAND / TACOMA? The next warehouse scene begins here." In Oakland, CA, overflow from San Francisco has caused drastic changes in living costs and, therefore, in the race/class composition of many Oakland's black and Latino neighborhoods. Meanwhile, in Brooklyn, NY, thousands of poor and working class people have been priced out of neighborhoods like Williamsburg, the epicenter of vacuous hipster culture. Evidently the City of Tacoma and the business elite are after similar results. Perhaps that is the true meaning of Tacoma's own "Art at Work" program—putting creativity to work in the service of gentrification is a mainstay of urban economic warfare.

When the Tacoma Mall was built in 1965, the lion's share of Tacoma's retail commerce shifted south and downtown became a ghost town. Then, a rapidly changing global economy sapped jobs from the area. Soon crack cocaine infiltrated the Hilltop. Since the late 1980's, local politicians and business and property owners have attempted to bring back downtown's golden years, beginning with the UW-Tacoma Campus, the Tacoma Art Museum, and the Museum of Glass. Though some new businesses have

trickled in, and a targeted policing strategy has created a "business-friendly" level of security, downtown Tacoma's boom years have likely passed.. Though hopeful bureaucrats may hide their eyes and plug up their ears, all signs suggest that Tacoma's money problems are intrinsically connected to the deepening capitalist crisis.

Everywhere people scrape by on credit and food-stamps. Two branches of the Tacoma Public Library recently shut down. Save Our Buses's Proposition 1 failed and Pierce County Transit will cut 35% of its current service. The state of Washington is facing a \$4.6 billion budget shortfall, and the legislature has cut all kinds of public assistance programs. The economy is in a tail-spin. Still, the elites scheme. Still, an alliance of government, business, and non-profit leaders attempt to make Tacoma more hospitable to the wealthy. One should expect no more or less of them. This is what they do.

Members of the Creative Class certainly are an innovative bunch. They claim to have all kinds of solutions to Tacoma's pesky public image problems. But most of us have nothing to gain from their plans but another crappy job. We could buy what they're selling and bow to the same old drudgery and tarted-up tyranny...



Or we could destroy it.

Are you an anti-authoritarian artist?

Autonomy//253 is always looking for comics, graphics, photos, and "alienated ads" (see next page) to use in this magazine. If you're sick of the "art world" and want to help illustrate anti-authoritarian articles and analysis, email us at autonomy253@gmail.com

STOP SMITCHING



Alienated
Ad council

POSTSCRIPT TO THE HILLTOP BOYS

MICHAEL WHITE

AND THE PURPOSE OF THIS EXTENSIVE ORGANIZATION, GENTLEMEN? IT CONSISTS OF ARRESTING INNOCENT PEOPLE AND INTRODUCING SENSELESS PROCEEDINGS AGAINST THEM, WHICH FOR THE MOST PART, AS IN MY CASE, GO NOWHERE. GIVEN THE SENSELESSNESS OF THE WHOLE AFFAIR, HOW COULD THE BUREAUCRACY AVOID BECOMING ENTIRELY CORRUPT?

-Franz Kafka, THE TRIAL

BY WAY OF AN APOLOGY

ONE MORNING, WITHOUT HAVING DONE ANYTHING TRULY WRONG, HE WAS ARRESTED.

-Franz Kafka, THE TRIAL

I wrote the article "The Hilltop Boys" in the summer of 2010. Since then, most of the thirty-six young men who were arrested in the Crips conspiracy case have been sent to prison. Some of them will be inside for thirty years. Others, the ones who betrayed their friends, will be inside for only a few years.

The police threw a group of friends in cages, waited for some of them to talk, and then used the conspiracy case to systematically incarcerate them. Friendship is a powerful force that makes people stronger, bolder, and secure. Friendship is informal, diffuse, and chaotic. And it is friendship that the police feared the most in some of these young men. By making them betray each other, the police were able to finally lock them up.

In "The Hilltop Boys," I was only able to tell the stories of three of the thirty-six who were arrested. Now, writing this, I am only going to tell you the story of two. If I'd had the resources, time, or ability, I would have done more. As it is, I am only able to tell you these two stories. I stayed in contact with some of the loved ones of Michael White and Steven Lovelace and was able to keep updated on their cases. What follows is a recounting of what has happened since the summer. There is nothing unique about what is described in these pages. It is simply what happens every day in the County-City building.

When I heard the news of the offer, I couldn't speak. More importantly, I didn't want to speak. They were offering Michael White nine years instead of the initial life sentence. On the one hand, I was happy that he wouldn't be gone forever. And clearly, if the prosecutors were offering nine years, it meant they didn't have a lot of evidence against him. On the other hand, I wasn't the person who would be gambling my life away if I tried to fight for my total freedom. When asked what I thought Michael should do, I lowered my head and waited for something that would never come.

Michael had been locked up since February of 2010, knowing he faced a life sentence. He maintained his innocence as he was dragged through endless court appearances, cuffed, shackled, and in his prison outfit. There were people standing in front of him in court, accusing him of crimes, attacking his character, and trying their hardest to put him away for life. After every court appearance he would be led back into his cell at the Pierce County Jail. He would wait there, locked up at the foot of the Hilltop, until the guards took him back to the courtroom. His life was regulated and controlled by the machine that had captured him. Occasionally, people on the outside would make noise for people in the prison to hear, banging on the gates, blasting music, and screaming through a megaphone. Perhaps he heard the noise.

His daughters and mother would visit him. Sometimes he would receive mail. The court appearances continued. One by one, the other thirty-six with whom he had been arrested were sentenced and sent off to prison. The days wore on, repetitive and empty. Various figures in the Hilltop community attempted to intervene on Michael's behalf. His lawyer ran through the legal maze with him, main

taining that his client was innocent and that the state did not have any evidence.

Michael had been separated from the thirty-six into a group of four, consisting of himself, Steven Lovelace, Bryant Morgan, and Andre Parker. Each of their bail amounts were one million dollars. Morgan and Parker had already been sentenced to twenty-nine and thirty-one years respectively. Michael and Steven had not yet been found guilty for any crime. While in court, the four of them would sit in chains, unable to speak back to the people accusing them of crimes.

And then, once the defense had held firm for long enough, the state offered Michael nine years in exchange for a guilty plea. In other words, the state knew it didn't have any evidence but still wanted a conviction. Convictions look good for the media. A conviction, even if the person is innocent, makes the police appear strong, infallible, and unbeatable. It also helps the county prosecutor, Mark Lindquist, build a resume for any future political career. Michael White, faced with life in prison, had become a pawn in the game board of powerful white people. Despite knowing he could beat it, despite the fact that the prosecution was merely out for blood, Michael gave up nine years of his life away from his daughters, friends, and family. The only reason he did this was because the all-powerful judicial system had the power to hold him in a cage for the rest of his life.

I did not know how to feel, sitting in court, while Michael accepted the plea deal. Some people wanted to cheer, something I couldn't do. People were happy they would see him free again, even if it was nine years away. In court that day, I saw the normality of horror. "It wasn't a life sentence." "It's not as bad as it could have been." "At least he'll only be forty when he gets out." I looked up at the sheriffs surrounding us in the courtroom, all with guns, all gazing at us with suspicion as we filed out into the hallway. In the other courtrooms, other people were being sentenced. As I left the courthouse, I watched people walk inside with defeated, tired, and weary faces. This was normal. This was peace. This was order.

STEVEN LOVELACE

LOGIC MAY INDEED BE UNSHAKEABLE, BUT IT CANNOT WITHSTAND A MAN WHO IS DETERMINED TO LIVE.

-Franz Kafka, THE TRIAL

We waited as the judge was silent. The defense had argued that Steven's bail should be reduced from one million dollars to one hundred and fifty thousand. No one knew what was going to happen. I didn't think he would budge. And then he agreed. Later that day, Steven was free.

Steven immediately went to his loved ones, free for the first time since February of 2010. He had been charged with attempted murder in 2009, had the charges dismissed, spent several months free, and then was charged again for the same crime in 2010, only now he was part of a conspiracy. For the second time, Steven was released after his friends posted a non-refundable, fifteen thousand dollar bond. He spent the next few days at liberty, the only one of the thirty-six to have his bail reduced.

One morning I got a call from someone crying, telling me that Steven had been arrested again. In court that day, behind a glass barrier, Steven sat before a judge. The prosecutor told the judge that a shell casing test had magically come in, linking Steven to a separate crime. He also told the defense lawyer that if Steven posted bail again, he would be arrested again. There was no way they were going to let him be free, even for a moment. The judge listened, nodded, and gave Steven an additional million dollar bail without a moment of hesitation. Steven was led out of the court in chains and taken back to a cage.

His loved ones could not get back the fifteen thousand dollars they spent on his bond. Everyone supporting Steven felt crushed by this new blow. That money was all that could be raised, and even if the second million dollar bail was reduced, no one would risk losing another fifteen thousand just to see him arrested again. And so people waited for the trial to begin, knowing their only hope now rested in the hands of the defense lawyer, the judge, and the jury.

When the trial began, the prosecuting attorney spoke to the jury about a grand conspiracy to murder a person at McCabe's. While he spoke, Detective Ringer and a posse of his goons sat in the court to intimidate his supporters and remind the prosecuting

attorney who he was working for. Detective Ringer, along with County Prosecutor Mark Lindquist, is the mastermind behind the cases against the thirty-six. The prosecuting attorney told that jury that even though Steven is seen on a surveillance camera flirting with women, drinking alcohol, and talking with his friends, every move he made and every word he said was all part of a plan to murder a man that night. But the defense lawyer told the jury something different. He told them that people are friends, plain and simple. "You can't argue everyone is in a conspiracy because they're friends," he said. People know each other, and friendship is not a conspiracy.

Conspiracy exists in places like the TPD Headquarters and the County-City Building.

This is how the trial began. The first witness was called, the man who was shot that night at McCabe's. He had since recovered from his wounds and was now being asked by the prosecution to relate his gang history to the jury. He told them was a member of the Young Gangster Crips and had been since he was twelve. After this, he was asked if he had ever seen Steven Lovelace with a gun. The man replied that he had, once, but not the night he was shot. The defense lawyer argued to the judge that this was irrelevant information for the jury, but the judge allowed it, smiling an arrogant smile as he overruled the objection. The trial continued.

Detective Ringer sat in court some days of the trial, constantly looking over his shoulder, looking more and more like a paranoid old man. A long time had passed since September of 2009. During that September, he had his goons arrest Curtis Hudson. They raided his house, threw him in a cruiser, and then took him down to the Headquarters where they showed him video footage that incriminated him in various crimes. And then they offered him a deal. In exchange for incriminating all of his friends, he would receive a lighter sentence. They released him into the city and waited until they worked out the logistics of what they were going to do to the Hilltop. He was picked up later in January of 2010 and formalized his plea agreement with Detective Ringer and prosecuting attorney Greg

Greer. The conspiracy had been finalized.

A month later, the police rounded up the thirty-six young men. The cases against Steven Lovelace and Michael White were entirely built on the words Curtis Hudson spoke against his friends. Now that the trial had begun, Detective Ringer was finally watching his conspiracy come to fruition. This sick, vindictive man wanted to be present for the destruction of everyone he had targeted. And here he was, anxious, paranoid, and cracked.

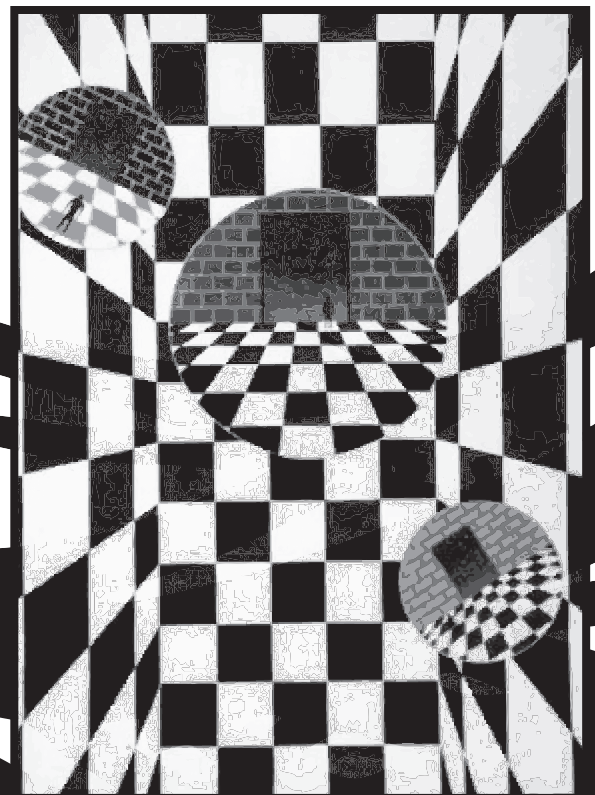
When he was called in as a witness, Hudson told the jury he was part of the Young Boxers, a clique of the Hilltop Crips. He joined the Crips when he was 13 and had known Steven Lovelace his whole life. He said there was no one physically making him remain a Crip, but that it wasn't easy "to leave the Hilltop Crips if you've grown up [in the Hilltop] your whole life." He told the jury that he is familiar with the code on never snitching and that he knows full well that he is hated for what he has done. He betrayed people he has known his whole life just to get a lighter sentence. Hudson also admitted that he had no personal knowledge of anyone committing any crim

When the prosecuting attorney asked Hudson questions about the Hilltop Crips, he always asked questions regarding policy. To him, a man himself enmeshed in a bloated bureaucracy, everything in the gang must be about policy, rules, and laws. Hudson admitted that it could be considered "policy" to join your friend in a fight if he was getting beat up. But when the defense questioned Hudson, he told the jury that there is no formal rule regarding defending your friends in a fight. Most friends have each others backs. There is no policy behind it. The prosecution then asked if members of the Hilltop Crips were required to retaliate against people who had offended or threatened their friends. Hudson said that they were not. There is no policy requiring Crips to kill someone their friend does not like, nor would he ever have done that himself. The defense asked Hudson to reiterate this for the jury, spelling out that being part of gang was about personal choice, friendship, and camaraderie. While in court, the prosecuting attorney kept looking at Detective Ringer like a little dog, hoping not to displease his master. Whenever the defense attorney spoke, Ringer looked displeased.

The prosecution's case revolved around the issues of policy, rules, and law. To them, the Hilltop Crips are similar to the police and act according to guidelines and policies. In reality, the Hilltop Crips are diverse, chaotic, and irregular. There is a difference between policy and friendship, a difference that the prosecution cannot admit if they hope to convict this young man. The police and the Prosecutor's Office function like a machine, and thus they imagine that everyone else does, too. Power cannot tolerate a counter-power. Power becomes paranoid when there are free people acting outside of their laws, their rules, and their policies. For all of their mistakes, foolishness, and anger, the Hilltop Crips at least did what they wanted in defiance of the powers that rule Tacoma.

In the midst of Curtis Hudson's examination by the prosecutor, the defense raised an objection regarding the discovery laws, saying that the prosecution had not given them information regarding an earlier interview they had conducted with Hudson. The judge listened to the defense, thought for a few moments, smiled his arrogant smile, and then declared a mistrial. The jury went home, Detective Ringer was furious, and Steven was taken back to his cage. Now he has to wait until February 14 for a new jury to be selected and the trial to start again. Freedom is a long way off for him.

Steven Lovelace merely went to a bar one night, and on that night someone was shot. There is no direct evidence against him. The bulk of the case is built on the words of Curtis Hudson, a friend who provided the police with a map of who was friends with who. Using this map, the police have destroyed a group of free people who they could not keep down. Steven Lovelace is the last of the thirty-six who is still technically innocent. The rest of the cases have come and gone. Over thirty young men are now absent from their communities, locked up and forgotten by the majority of people in Tacoma. Steven is still downtown, in the Pierce County Jail, and he is still fighting for his freedom. He is locked up with hundreds of other people. All of them have gone through



ARTWORK BY JAMES P. ANDERSON
WRONGFULLY CONVICTED,
ON DEATH ROW IN SAN QUENTIN,
CALIFORNIA
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SAN QUENTIN, CA 94974
JAMES.IS.INNOCENT@GMAIL.COM

a process as illogical, vengeful, and inhuman as the one Steven is still going through.

At the time of printing, Steven Lovelace has been sentenced to seven years in prison. When asked to say any final words, Steven defiantly told the judge that he only took the deal to end the lengthy court hearings and spare his family the grief. The angry judge then gave Steven the maximum sentence.

The demise of the Hilltop Boys is now nearly forgotten. If this ever happens again, if a group of friends is ever targeted by the authorities and labeled a conspiracy, what will you do? It is up to us all to protect each other. There are thirteen-hundred bed spaces in the Pierce County Jail and they want all of those beds filled. Our fight is with the jailers, not our own neighbors.

LOVE TO THE HILLTOP BOYS,
A CURSE TO THE SNITCHES,
AND HATRED TO THE POLICE

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE NORTHWEST DETENTION CENTER

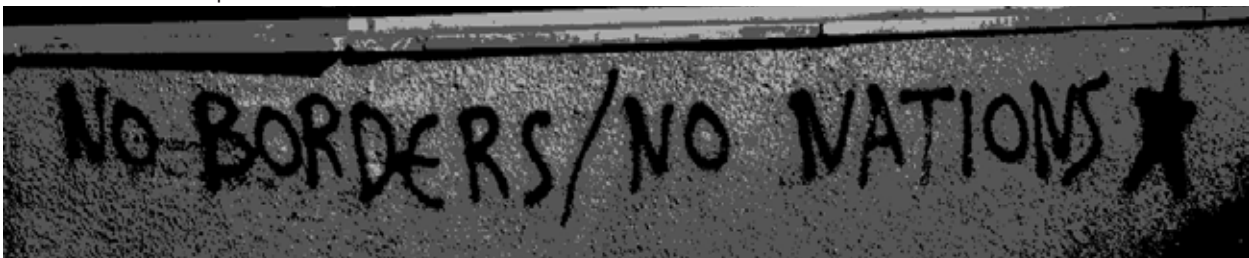
The Northwest Detention Center (NWDC) is an immigration prison that began construction in 2003 on East J Street of Tacoma, officially opening in 2004 under the management of Correctional Services Corporation (CSC) and contracted by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), an arm of the Department of Homeland Security. It has now changed hands to the private prison corporation GEO Group. Since September 2009, GEO Group has expanded the NWDC from a population capacity of 1,000 to 1,525 inmates. A prisoner is held anywhere from three to six months. GEO Group receives anywhere from 120 dollars or more per prisoner depending on the length of stay. If it is longer, the prices are much higher. GEO Group was formally known as Wackenhut Corporation. Originally started by three former FBI agents, Wackenhut has since merged with the G4Securicore. G4S is also a worldwide provider in personal security for an array of institutions and organizations, including prisons.

This institution is called a detention center, but if you look at the inside and outside with its cells, gates, guards, surveillance cameras, and disciplinary measures, it is essentially a prison. Calling it a detention center hides the reality of how it functions. To make this institution of imprisonment seem less harsh,

GEO Group wants us to see detention centers as wholly separate institutions. GEO Group does this to obscure the process of imprisonment from those on the outside.

GEO Group maintains the NWDC immigration prison and 13 others within the United States. The U.S. is a worldwide provider of private prison construction, owning and operating facilities in South Africa, the UK, and Australia. GEO Group has a long history of abuse and violence against prisoners. At the immigration prison in Tacoma, detainees interviewed commented that officers have inappropriately grabbed detainees by the arm and have also pushed or shoved detainees. One man was pushed into a wall for refusing to get in line for his ADHD medicine.

ICE catches the people who become prisoners through raids on homes and businesses. Some of these raids are investigations by ICE agents. Other people are captured by the police departments. Many of the people put in immigration prisons are considered criminals because they have crossed the border illegally and do not have the correct form of papers or a green card. These people are classified by ICE as being non-citizens. Society uses the model of a perfect citizen to demonize people who its



views as undesirable.

Operation Endgame is a strategic plan by ICE that sets in motion a cohesive enforcement program to “remove all removable aliens,” and eliminate the backlog of unexecuted final order removal cases by the year 2012. How could it be possible to remove all removable aliens? The entire economy of the United States is based on precarious work by undocumented people, without whom the economy would greatly suffer. The economic crisis exacerbated by this could be easily used by the government as a pretext for more surveillance, infiltration, and management of our lives, always under the guise of security. Not to say that those who are in precarious conditions should stay where they are, but their removal would send the United States into a further economic crisis.

“ Society uses the model of a perfect citizen to demonize people who it views as undesirable. ”

During the middle of 2010, Obama passed a new 600 million dollar border security bill which added 1,000 Border Patrol agents to the southwestern border, along with 250 agents of US Immigration and Customs Enforcement and 250 US Customs officers at US ports of entry. It also purchased two additional unmanned aerial vehicles to patrol the US southern border and to support the arresting, detaining, and processing of illegal immigrants for deportation. The security bill was preceded by smaller measures along the border and newer types of technology that have a focused role within the expanding forms of domination over immigrants lives.

One example is the Secure Border Initiative (SBI)*. SBI is a comprehensive multi-year plan established by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to secure America's borders and reduce illegal cross-border activity. It focuses on effective integration of border security programs and aims to gain effective control of the borders through the optimal mix of technology, infrastructure, and enforcement personnel. One of the main projects of this program is SBInet, originally termed Project 28. SBInet was started by Boeing in November 2005. It involves towers that will be set up along the border, with varying surveillance and communications equipment depending on the climate, terrain, population density, and other factors.

The towers are slated to include radar, long-range cameras, broadband wireless access points, thermal imaging capabilities, and motion detectors. SBInet will also include some ground sensors for seismic detection as well. All of the information received by sensors will go to command centers. Border Patrol agents will carry PDAs(what are these) with GPS capabilities to allow the command center to track the location of agents interdicting illegal entries and watch the encounter in real time on the common operating picture. In addition, Border Patrol agents will be given laptops in the patrol car that will provide them the information necessary to effectively and safely approach a given threat. Airborne sensors on unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) will fill in the gaps in the “virtual fence” in remote areas where building and maintaining towers is impractical. At completion, Boeing estimates that it will use approximately 1,800 towers to create its “virtual fence” along the borders. In addition to towers and technology systems, SBInet will include the construction of fences, vehicle barriers, and border roads.

Another one of the projects implemented along the border are the Predator B drone



planes. These Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) were designed to monitor and attack people in the war in Iraq and Afghanistan. General Atomics, the developer of these UAVs, has shifted the design of some of their products from attacking to surveillance. They function through a central command station and have a pilot and camera operator and a satellite detection device attached to the UAV, in which all

the feed and control signals are fed from the ground via a satellite in space. The UAV program costs \$14 million.

To critically look at the construction of this immigration prison in Tacoma means to critically examine the relationship it has locally and globally with all borders. It also means to critically examine the relationship between the ideas of the nation, capital, and the state in order to see the overall connection between prison and its subtler manifestations in our everyday lives. This prison world is imposed on us by viewing humans as obedient citizens subject to control by technologies of surveillance on street corners, in super markets, in banks, and on the borders. We are kept in place through the use of biometric identification that monitor our bodily movements and gestures, extending the scope of surveillance and discipline over our entire body (such as IDENT/US-Visit). Similarly, the border patrol scans the horizon for "undesirables" that are crossing illegally.

```

Skipping already loaded module agpgart.
Skipping already loaded module pcnet32.
Skipping already loaded module mptscsih.
Skipping unavailable/built-in ide_scsi module.
Cleaning /var/run...done.
Cleaning /var/lock...done.
Running 0dns-down to make sure resolv.conf is ok
Cleaning: /etc/network/ifstate.
Setting hostname to 'vivek.nixcraft.com'...done.
Setting up IP spoofing protection: rpfilter.
Configuring network interfaces...done.
Starting portmap daemon: portmap.
Loading the saved-state of the serial devices...
/dev/ttyS0 at 0x03f8 (irq = 4) is a 16550A
/dev/ttyS1 at 0x02f8 (irq = 3) is a 16550A

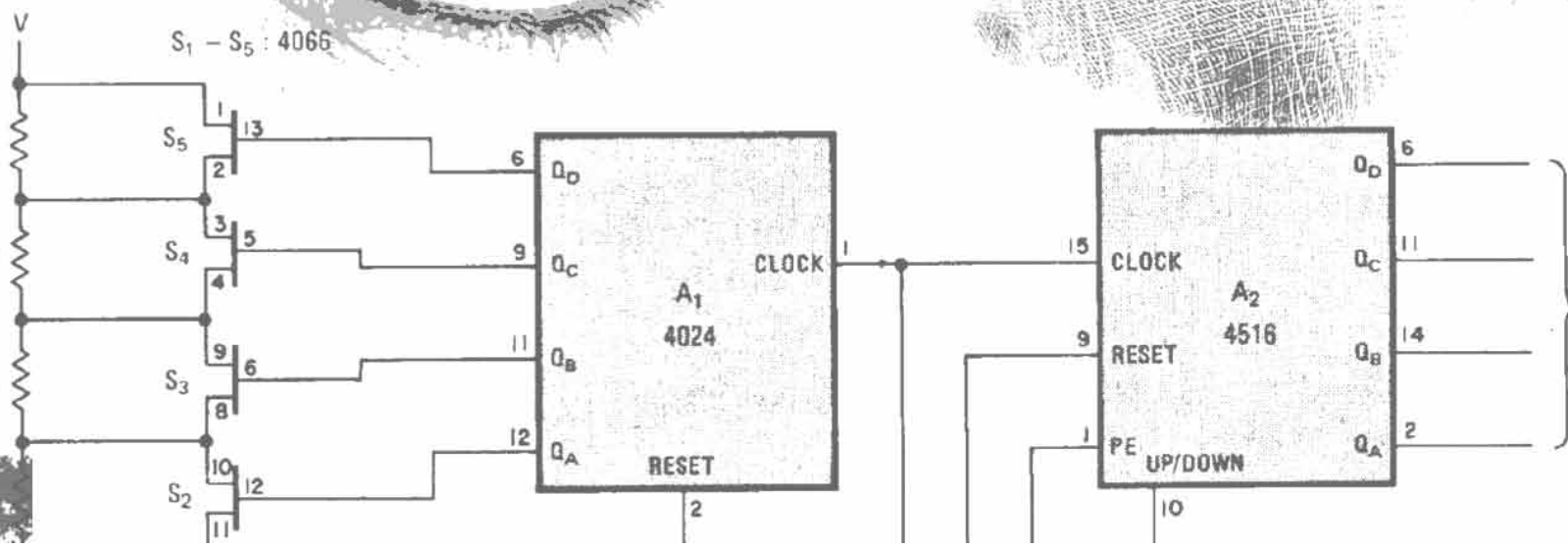
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Setting the System Clock using the Hardware Clock as reference...
System Clock set. Local time: Wed Apr 19 09:23:11
Initializing random number generator...done.
Recovering nvi editor sessions... done.
Setting up X server socket directory /tmp/.X11-unix...done.
Setting up ICE socket directory /tmp/.ICE-unix...done.
Give root password for maintenance
(or type Control-D to continue): _

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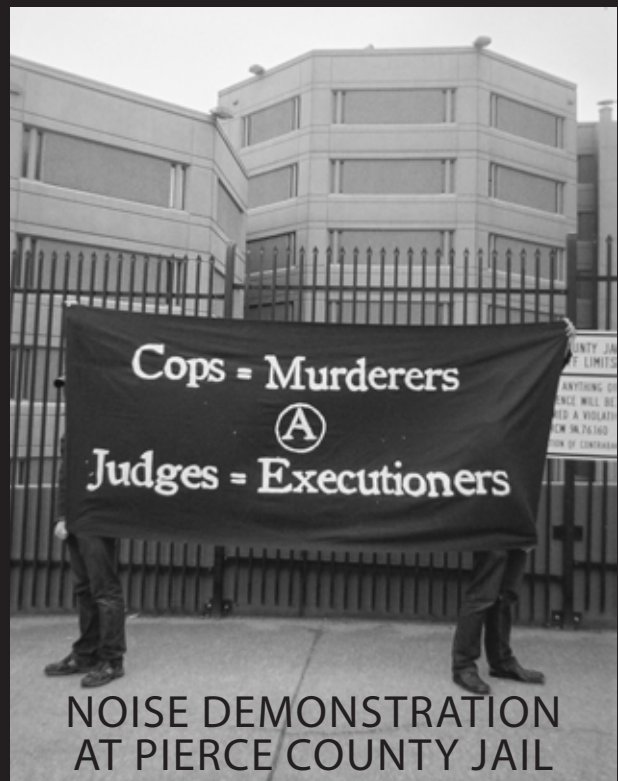
These relationships of domination and exploitation reign over our lives. This is why anarchists are against prisons: we desire the destruction of not only prisons as institutions, but the social impositions of prison on our everyday lives through the prison society.



Noise Demonstrations and the anarchist tradition

The purpose of a noise demonstration is to let people locked up inside a jail know that, regardless of what the police or the prison guards say, there are people who support them on the outside. Outside the jail, people make noise with megaphones, sirens, horns, yelling, banging, and music. Leaflets are also passed around to people walking around on the streets, letting them know what the purpose of the demo is. Noise demonstrations are a common tactic used by anarchists to build power against the prison world and the people stuck within it.

In Tacoma, several noise demonstrations have taken place outside the Pierce County Jail from July of 2010 to January of 2011. Usually a sound system blasts music into the courtyard of the jail and speeches are delivered through megaphones. People bang on the bars of the black gate surrounding the jails and make a hell of a racket. The best noise is made by banging a stick against the light poles outside of the prison. Some passersby nervously have approached the noise demonstrations, unsure of what was happening. On more than one occasion, these passersby have teared up upon realizing that all of the racket is for the people inside. Nearly everyone in the Hilltop has been inside or had someone they have known locked up. Sometimes people in the jail have started banging on their cell windows and howled along with the

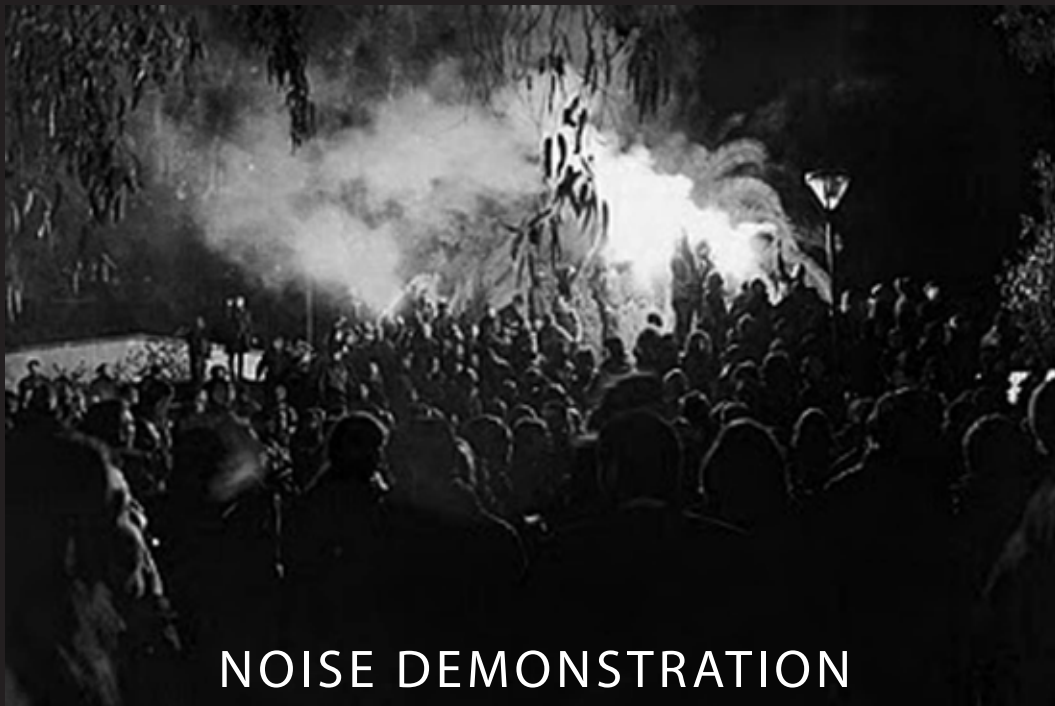


people outside.

On New Years Eve, 2011, a noise demonstration took place outside the Pierce County Jail. In cities across the country such as New York City, Richmond, VA, and Santa Cruz, CA, noise demonstrations took place on New Year's Eve. In Athens, Greece, on New Year's Eve, another noise demonstration took place outside the Korydallos Prison. For the past six years, hundreds of people have gathered outside the jail to show solidarity to the people inside. Many anarchists have been locked up in this prison over the years, along with hundreds of other people.

However, regardless of whether the prisoners are anarchists or not, they all appreciate the support. Over the years, prisons in Greece have become radicalized, with prisoners sabotaging their cells, rioting, and going on hunger strike. Because of these actions, the Greek prison population was reduced by half in 2009, with all non-violent offenders being released. The noise demonstrations and prisoner support undertaken by anarchists have played a large role in this radi-

calization of the prison population. Showing support for people locked up is an important, valuable activity. Rather than let your loved ones languish inside a cage, gather your friends together, grab some noise makers, and make a racket outside of the jail. Never let the fear prevent you from causing a scene outside the jails. Remember that we are stronger than the police if we band together. There are thousands of us out there, all ready to cause trouble.



NOISE DEMONSTRATION
OUTSIDE KORYDALLOS PRISON, GREECE,
NEW YEAR'S EVE, 2011

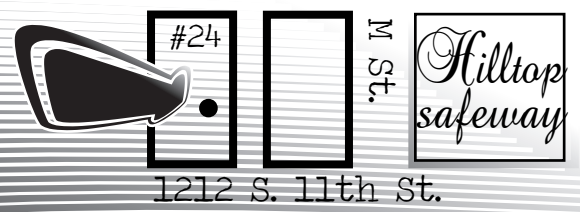
FIRE TO

THE PRISONS

M-11

TAN, AnarchyPlanet.org
M11space@riseup.net

Anarchist event
space located in the
Hilltop neighborhood of
Tacoma, WA.



To further struggles
and dialoge against
domination and
exploitation

To promote freedom and
self-determination

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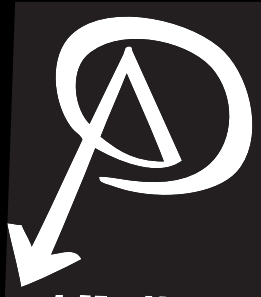
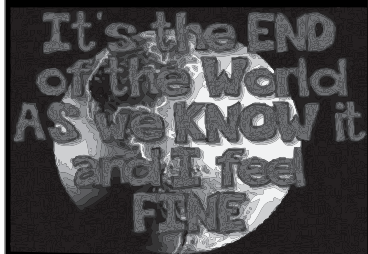
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society into one that is stateless and class-
less, a society of mutual aid, voluntary co-
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GI VOICE

COFFEE STRONG

Coffee Strong is a veteran-owned,
veteran-operated GI coffeehouse.
Veterans provide a safe place for
soldiers to share the effects of disas-
trous wars, within 300 meters of the
gates at Ft Lewis.



Rage on the Streets of Seattle

Against Police Violence and Murder



pugetsoundanarchists.org

What follows is an incomplete recap of the most recent events in Seattle, taken from pugetsoundanarchists.org. It concerns mostly the anarchists, not the events organized by the family of the deceased John T Williams. You can find many more actions as well as more thorough reports and analysis on that webpage.

Reportback & Statements Regarding the February 12th Anti-Police Demo in Seattle

The October 22nd Coalition (O22), well known to be an RCP (Revolutionary Communist Party) front group, has controlled anti-police discourse in Seattle through their many rallies and demonstrations over the past months. While there has been an anarchist presence in this discourse, it has been largely dominated by the O22. With this in mind anarchists in the Puget Sound decided that it was long overdue to exhibit our own collective force at the most recent O22 rally on February 12th.

The demonstration began with a rally at Westlake Center in downtown Seattle, a busy pedestrian shopping district. About 100 people were present while members of the RCP, O22, and unaffiliated organizations spoke. As the rally was wrapping up more and more anarchists in black began to appear leafleting* and holding a dozen black flags and two banners reading, "Cops=Murderers, Judges=Executioners" and "Police Violence is Not an Accident, All Cops Are Bastards".

O22 called for a march on the sidewalk after the rally but as they waited for the crosswalk to turn green anarchists formed a black bloc and pushed the march into the streets. The black bloc was composed of about 40 people, flanked by the two banners mentioned above. The march headed toward Pike Place Market. The black bloc drowned out the O22's chants and whining, despite the O22's two bullhorns, with "ACAB-All Cops Are Bastards", "Cops, Pigs, Murderers", "Seattle to Oakland-We Ain't Jokin'-Cairo to Greece-Fuck the Police".

Upon arriving in Pike Place Market hundreds of anti-police fliers were thrown into the air landing among crowds of curious onlookers and angry yuppies. Cries of out-

rage were heard from the latter who were more concerned with littering than the recent police violence. Moving away from the Market the march had grown to about 200 people. The O22 stopped to wait for a green light, while the anarchists moved forward into the intersection and up toward Niketown.

Going up the hill anarchists began to pull newspaper boxes, metal fencing, and other objects from alleyways and sidewalks into the street. These acted as small barricades against the police cars that were tailing the march. Onlookers joined the march, some of whom asked to carry black flags and shouted "Fuck the Pigs!", vocalizing and demonstrating their rage against the police.

By the time the march headed toward the East Precinct the march had decreased to about 75 people. Bike cops began to flank the march at this point. Just before the Precinct an unoccupied police car's front window was smashed out with a hammer. The police, evidently shocked by this act, responded two seconds too late, while people in the vicinity blocked them from grabbing the window smasher who was then able to escape. Two people were beaten and arrested in the mayhem. Their charges are unrelated to the window smashing. They were both released on bail that night, charged with misdemeanor obstruction.

Regarding the O22's call for justice:
The O22 and other reformists called for jus



tice in the face of police violence on February 12th. As anarchists we know we cannot find justice under the State and Capitalism. Instead, we seek vengeance. Vengeance for those whose lives can never be given back and vengeance for our own lives constrained by the tentacles of social control. We do not want a better system because, in fact, better only means more efficient for those who wish to kill and imprison us. We do not strive to reform those who love to see us on our knees. Instead we seek the total destruction of this system of domination, with our feet planted firmly on the ground

Regarding the arrests:

While it is unfortunate for comrades to have to endure the isolation and degradation brought down upon them by the police in such incidents, it is critical for us to remember that we are currently engaged in an everyday war. The lines are drawn, we have chosen sides, and the larger, better equipped, and more powerful side (the police) will take hostages.

If we let the threat of going to prison determine our actions then we enter a kind of mental prison in which our own fear becomes just as useful to the state as four concrete walls and a door made of iron bars. If we instead realize the position we have placed ourselves in, as enemies of the State and Capitalism, then we realize our trajectory as always leaning toward the possibility of arrest and imprisonment.

It is important to demystify the prison experience. This can come in many forms, from continuing the struggle in prison to sharing experiences of imprisonment with those who have not been jailed. First and foremost though, it must come with the acknowledgment that an arrest or a prison sentence does not imply failure or defeat in our struggle against domination.

If we are going to take ourselves seriously as anarchists, then we must take our position in society seriously and realistically as well. We are not activists who willfully march into the hands of the state for a chance at martyrdom while neither are we anti-social vanguards only acting at night, leading a double life. We are anarchists who wish to communicate socially but also realize that the State and Capitalism will never just disappear and that the time to act is now.

Repression is the natural response of the State. They will not simply slap the wrist of those who stand in their way. We do not wish to appeal to the courts nor to their police dogs. We express full solidarity with those who acted on their individual rage against the police on February 12th. As anarchists, we are neither innocent nor guilty, simply their enemies.



February 16th

On the night of Tuesday, February 15, the media began reporting that the City Prosecutor had decided not to prosecute police officer Ian Birk for the murder of John T. Williams. Soon after, an event appeared on Facebook, calling for people to meet at 6pm on Wednesday, February 16, for a night of protest at Westlake Plaza, a busy shopping district in the heart of Downtown Seattle. The next day, anarchists leafletted for the demonstration throughout Capitol Hill and into downtown. The first protest brought 600-700 people into the street, all marching without a permit. The crowd marched up to Capitol Hill and met a line of riot police guarding the East Precinct. The crowd was angry and volatile but there were no major incidents that evening, and the march was unable/unwilling to break the police line.

February 18th

Another Facebook event appeared that night, urging further action despite Ian Birk's resignation from the police force. The second protest, on Friday, February 18th, brought a fluctuating group of about 150 people out onto the streets, most of whom marched behind anarchist banners and some of whom held black flags.

Once again, the march took off without a permit. Thousands (literally) of anarchist leaflets were thrown into the air. Chants such as "An eye for an eye, the pigs gotta die" and "Cops and judges, we don't

need 'em, all we want is TOTAL FREEDOM!" were yelled at the police.

Meanwhile, it was overheard on the police scanner that at around 6 PM, the West Precinct's outside gas line was disconnected and the entire building had to be evacuated. It is unknown whether this was related, or if it is true.

The anarchist block numbered about 50. There were perhaps 15 RCP acolytes, but they remained marginal throughout the protest (at one point, the chant "boring leader" was directed at them by the crowd). Most of the crowd was supportive and gravitated towards the anarchist block. The dozens of flags on wooden poles that were passed out by the anarchists were gladly accepted, as were stacks of leaflets to be thrown into the air.

The anarchist block pushed out the media when they tried to get inside their space during the beginning of the march. Road flares illuminated the march as it wound through the Belltown district. At one point, a Bank Of America had one of its windows smashed out. When the march reached Downtown again, the crowd had grown to just over 200. After the march took a turn into oncoming traffic, the rear window of a police cruiser was smashed out. The pig inside got out of the car but forgot to put it in park. The cruiser then smashed into the police van ahead of it, making the crowd go wild in applause and jubilation. In a panic, the police flooded the area and began to pepper spray people and back them up with their horses. Multiple cops were observed getting hit by objects and fists from the crowd. In one notable instance, undercover cops were outed by the crowd and then one was hit in the skull with the



butt of a flag pole. A smoke bomb was thrown at the horse cops, causing even more confusion. At this point, the crowd in the area left and resumed the march.

Later, as the march continued, one person was arrested for (according to mainstream media reports) allegedly breaking the cruiser window. The march went to the jail and about 70 people held a noise demo for the people inside. After that, the marchers proceeded to Pioneer Square where they broke through a police line, fought with the police, and then marched up to Capitol Hill. There, it circled the streets and drew people out of the bars with chants of "Out of the bars, into the streets!". The march again went to the East Precinct, the place where a police cruiser had been smashed a week earlier in a smaller march. The precinct had been under siege and guarded by 60 riot police for the entire evening from 6 until at least midnight. When the march arrived, they yelled and threw objects at the police. After this, they left and continued onward. It is unclear when it ended, exactly.

The composition of the crowd that began the demo at 6 PM differed considerably from the crowd that confronted the police at the precinct at 10:30 PM, meaning that many hundreds of people participated in the march. The only things that remained consistent were the black flags, the anger, and the determination. The march functioned autonomously for 6 hours, drawing in members of the population who, at this point, do not hesitate to chant "What do we want? DEAD PIGS! When do we want them? NOW!"

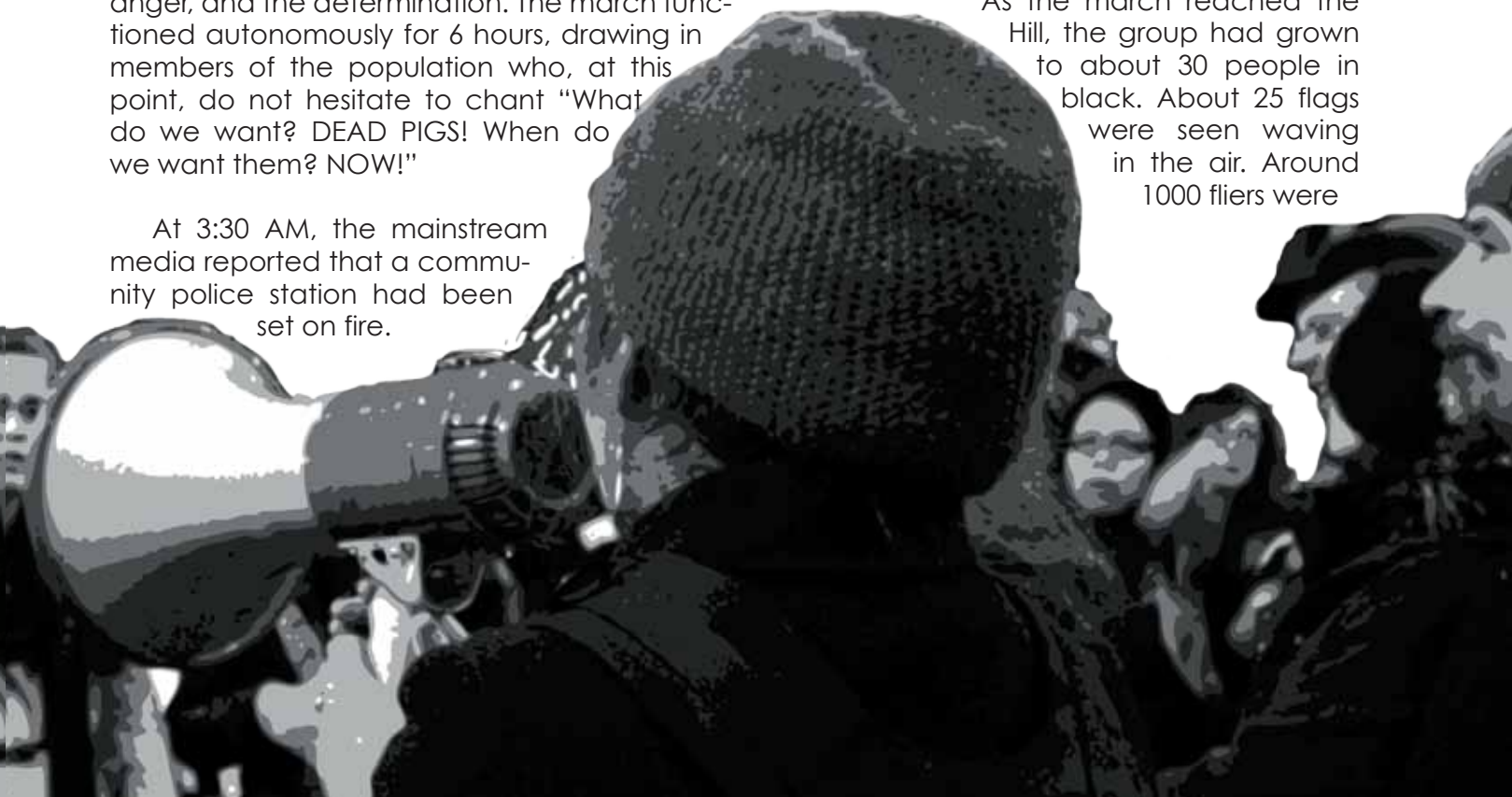
At 3:30 AM, the mainstream media reported that a community police station had been set on fire.

February 26th

On the night of February 26th, 20 anarchists dressed in black with masks covering their faces met at the intersection of Boren and Howell (where John T Williams was killed) in Seattle. A banner was seen reading "Cops Murder Everywhere, Bite Back!" (in reference to <http://pugetsoundanarchists.org/node/229>). People began to paint around the intersection on walls and on the ground, a roller piece was seen in the street reading in big white letters "Fuck the Pigs". Fences were cut down and thrown into the street. Caution tape was wound around the four poles of the intersection.

A cop pulled up within minutes but was sprayed down with a fire extinguisher into his window, causing him to leave immediately. Minutes later more cops came from the other direction demanding that people take down the caution tape, their demands were met with "Fuck you"'s as people decided to continue out of the intersection and up the street toward Capitol Hill. Bunches of tire puncturing nails were thrown steadily behind the group to push back the cops.

As the march reached the Hill, the group had grown to about 30 people in black. About 25 flags were seen waving in the air. Around 1000 fliers were



thrown into the air throughout the hour. Along the way numerous newspaper boxes, trashcans, etc. were thrown into the street. Flares were lit, some were thrown back at the police cars tailing the crowd but went out before doing any damage. Anti-police slogans were sprayed on walls and buildings as the march progressed, like "cops = pigs = murderers", "all cops are bastards", "fuck pigs", "fuck cops (A)". At least one luxury car was damaged while others were attempted.

Upon reaching Broadway & John, paint bombs were thrown at an American Apparel, Subway, US Bank, Chase Bank, and a now defunct Bank of America. Several windows were banged on with sticks and other objects but failed to break. Shortly after, the group decided to disperse splitting off in different directions. Three people were arrested and released several hours later. Their charges are, as of now, rioting,

obstruction, and pedestrian interference (but have been stayed-to be charged potentially at a later date-or not at all). This action was prompted as a continuance to the anti-police climate that has intensified over the last two weeks. Our intention as anarchists, is purely conflictual in nature, in so, we intended to create the space for agitation and attack. There was no public call outs made, in order to use the element of surprise on our enemy, the police. Seemingly this worked successfully, but also, it should be noted that it wasn't just the surprise but also our presence of no compromise in the streets that kept the cops at bay. What we lacked in numbers we made up for in our ability to be flexible and act quickly.

**Our dreams are in the streets!
Against the police and the prison
world they maintain!**



March 4-5

On March 4th at 7pm in downtown Seattle, a small demonstration was held against the police. Since their embarrassment at demos in the last few weeks, the SPD have changed their strategy of reacting to demonstrators and are now taking preventative measures to try to stamp out the collective rage that has been on the streets of Seattle in relation to police violence.

The police had mobilized in expectation of another physically aggressive march with a black bloc (see 2/12, 2/18, 2/26), but this demonstration had been organized at the last minute by Seattle Cop Watch and the general approach was to spread ideas, have a continued presence in the streets, and not initiate physical confrontation.

The police mobilized about seventy uniformed officers on horse, bike, and foot, as well as an unknown level of plainclothes deployment. The officers immediately began ticketing demonstrators for minor offenses such as littering (throwing fliers or dropping cigarette butts) and not having bike lights. They pushed the march onto the sidewalk almost immediately and kept it corralled, while riding horses into the march to trample, push and separate people.

After about twenty minutes of marching and handing out fliers on the sidewalk surrounded by a sea of pigs, the cops decided to arrest someone for no apparent reason. The protesters reacted by yelling, demanding his release and moving in closer. Two more arrests were immediately made; one individual was repeatedly punched in the face, head, and back during the arrest behind police lines. The demonstration dispersed.

In recent weeks there has been lots of media attention put on Seattle anarchists; it comes as no surprise that last night the media parroted the police reports.

The following day 14 people went to the jail to post bail for those arrested last night and wait for their release. While people were waiting in the lobby, jail guards called police, although nobody knew this. The cops did not arrive until the arrested person was released and everyone was walking away. Four cars of cops detained the whole group and more cops arrived for a total of fifteen donut-loving cowards. People were told that they were being detained for trespassing at the jail and were asked for identification. Recognizing that this was an attempt by the police to identify people involved in the recent anti-police activities, everyone refused to identify themselves. Six individuals were arrested, presumably based on photographs and information that the police were checking. One of the detained had an anxiety attack and was taken by ambulance to the hospital accompanied by a friend. The remaining six detained were told they would be released if they provided identification, which they did. They are not "permitted" to be on jail property.

The six arrested were charged with either trespassing or criminal trespassing.

This is an attempt by the police to counteract anti-police activity through identification, harassment, and intimidation.

In this effort we must ensure their epic failure.

We saw the power of solidarity in the days of action in west coast cities at the end of February. West coast and everywhere else, now is the time to act.

Note; Lots of things happened in the northwest during those days of action again check pugetsoundanarchists.org

In the 253 on the morning of February 28th, a Tacoma Police Department building had all its windows smashed out and some paint thrown on the facade.

Solidarity is our weapon.

**EMERGENCY
ALERT**



**"METROPARKS
IS PEOPLE!"**

A friend of a friend of a friend found a copy of this mysterious "Metro" day when his car was parked beside Wright Park. He hasn't looked



Go to a Tacoma park and look around at the leafless, freshly mowed grass and the well-tended shrubs. Take in the modern Kompan play equipment City workers just installed and all that freshly-laid cement and blacktop. Sidewalks roll over gentle hills soft enough for toddlers to happily tumble down. Isn't it nice? If suddenly the world was fractured and pointillized into a million colored dots, why, you'd find yourself in some Victorian impressionist painting, enjoying a pleasant promenade. If only it was all so simple and pretty. But what seems at first like a sign that things are finally improving in Tacoma is actually something much more ugly and violent. The City of Tacoma has a dirty little secret it doesn't want to get out. Too bad. Here it is, folks...

METROPARKS IS PEOPLE!

Well, sort of at least. Over the past 5 years, a proportion of MetroParks's budget—\$260,537.87 to be exact—has been funded through property taxes paid by a privately-run immigrant detention facility

here in town. That means that your favorite park is being paid for by a for-profit prison tucked away in the Port of Tacoma. Actually, to say that it is "tucked away" is a bit misleading; in fact, it's hidden in plain sight. Though obscured by buildings from some angles, the banal, box-like Northwest Detention Center (NWDC), at 1623 East J Street, is clearly visible from certain parts of downtown. The best views of it are from the newly-built condo complexes by the water, but that detail probably isn't highlighted in their sales brochures.

Have you seen that 1973 Charlton Heston film *Soylent Green*? If you haven't, don't worry, it's nothing much. Here's a brief synopsis:

In the year 2022, the population has grown to forty million people in New York City alone. Most housing is dilapidated and overcrowded, and the homeless fill the streets. Food as we know it is a rare and expensive commodity. Most of the world's population survives on processed rations produced by the massive Soylent Corporation, including Soylent Red and Soylent Yellow, which are advertised as "high-energy vegetable concentrates". The newest product is Soylent Green—a small green wafer purportedly produced from "high

energy vegetable concentrates." It is much more nutritious and palatable than the red and yellow varieties, but it is—like most other food—in short supply.

To make a long story short, at the end of the film, the main character discovers that Soylent Green's secret ingredient is human flesh. "Soylent Green is people!" he cries. "We have to stop

papers, lack of contact visits, language barriers riers for detainees. Though ostensibly used to detain immigrant "criminals"—a term which is dubious in itself given the inherently oppressive character of law—many detainees have been held for months or years without ever being

"Parks Tacoma" pamphlet tucked beneath his windshield wiper one at playgrounds the same way since. We republish it here, for you.

– somehow!"

Things are a bit different in the real world, of course. Instead of little green wafers, we have green fields and playgrounds. But the ugly truth remains the same—the tiny pleasures we enjoy are, at least in part, directly derived from the suffering of human beings.

A 2008 report released by the Seattle University School of Law and the human rights group OneAmerica concluded that immigrants at the Northwest Detention Facility, including refugees and asylum seekers, are being held in "an atmosphere of intimidation" which includes verbal abuse, sexual harassment, strip searches, poor to non-existent mental and physical health care, insufficient quantities of food, incidents of food poisoning, poor living conditions due to severe overcrowding, forced signing of

them

charged with a crime. And even when they are brought before a judge, detainees have no right to a jury trial, and 80-90% receive no legal representation.

In 2003 the federal government implemented Operation Endgame, a plan to detain and deport "all removable aliens" by 2012. The policy made it a government priority for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to enter into people's homes and workplaces in order to arrest, detain, and deport them. Many of ICE's targets had come to the United States because of the economic stress put on them by US-backed business and trade policy that favored wealthy corporate interests over those of working

people. These folks, many of them parents, were looking for better wages in the United States because they had no better economic opportunities in their home countries.

The NWDC opened in 2004 under a contract with the US Department of Homeland Security. Though its owners have



Seriously, what the fuck?

UK, South Africa, and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. As of February, 2010, the NWDC can house over 1,500 people, making it one of the three largest detention facilities in the United States. According to 2007-2008 data (the most recent data available at this writing), 10,132 detainees were "processed" at the Detention Center between April 2007 and March 2008. Of these, 6,133 (67%) were deported, and 1,307 (14%) left the country (and, thus, ICE detention) "voluntarily". Due to the expansion, one can only assume that these numbers have increased dramatically in the past 2 years.

What does it mean when a prison is run for profit? It means that GEO Group and similar private prison corporations gain financially from increased incarceration. They use their money and power to lobby for public policy that results in more arrests. There are people who are very literally getting rich off of taking parents away from their children, parents whose only "crime" was being an undocumented immigrant in an era of anti-immigrant hysteria.

Tacoma benefits from this hysteria in a similar way. Even while passing a nearly meaningless resolution against Arizona's flagrantly racist and anti-immigrant Senate Bill 1070, City Council remains a stakeholder in the continued existence of the Northwest Detention Center. To use City Council's very own language, taken straight from Resolution 38035: "WHEREAS the Tacoma City Council recognizes that the immigration system is broken and



supports comprehensive federal immigration reform..." it continues to rake in hundreds of thousands of dollars every year from this very same immigration system.

The City of Tacoma receives approximately 80% of property taxes paid by the NWDC, or about \$681,528.38 in 2010. This money later turns up in the budget revenue columns of the City, the Port of Tacoma, MetroParks, Emergency Medical Services, and Tacoma Public Schools.

As the current economic crisis deepens and the local government's budget gap widens every year, the City of Tacoma will become more and more reliant on sources of funding like the Northwest Detention Center. Though the NWDC contributes a relatively small amount to the City budget, this money lays bare the connection between the NWDC detainees and Tacoma residents—one of cost and relative benefit. Of course, these connections run much deeper within Tacoma's immigrant communities, where ICE has kidnapped

friends and family members.

To top it all off, the City also has the benefit of including NWDC detainees on the Census and receives federal funds accordingly. It seems unlikely, therefore, that City Council will ever take any meaningful steps towards closing the NWDC. Not that this should be surprising—government and authority are reliant on oppression and the threat of violence. Jails, prisons, detention centers, and their attendant cops, guards, and ICE agents are necessary to government power. After all, who would obey a government that didn't have the power to lock them up?

It is also important to note that the threat of detainment and deportation of undocumented workers functions to keep wages low—something which effects citizen workers as well. If undocumented workers are too afraid to organize for better wages and working conditions, their labor remains cheap and easily replaceable. Bosses usually seek the cheapest labor possible in order to maximize profit. This is why immigrant workers make up such a huge part of the agricultural, restaurant, manufacturing, and construction workforce. Because bosses know that there is a giant pool of very vulnerable workers available for superexploitation, they are able to keep wages low for everyone in industries where undocumented labor is common. Immigrants are not stealing anybody's jobs. Truly, the bosses are to blame. Immigrant-bashing is just another trick they use to divide and conquer workers.

The City likes to pretend the NWDC is out of its control, that the NWDC is a federal thing, and that it has washed its hands of the dirty dealings happening down in the Tideflats. But in reality, the City benefits from the racist internment of people the federal government has labeled "illegal" and "alien".

Where does MetroParks get the rest of the money it needs to provide its allegedly superior "legal citizens" with fancy slides, doorless bathrooms, and bowling lawns? Actually, the City squeezes over half of it out of us, too. The largest proportion of MetroParks's budget revenue comes from property and sales taxes (54.2% combined



**WE HAVE TO
STOP THEM-
SOMEHOW!**

in 2009-2010). These taxes, especially sales tax, disproportionately effect poor and working class people, who end up paying a greater proportion of their incomes in taxes.

This whole thing might seem like a fair bargain—after all, who doesn't enjoy a stroll in the park? But what is a park, really? A sterilized, policed recreation zone that's off limits after dark. One could even be fined for playing music too loudly. Parks are the little places set aside by those in power so that we can enjoy at least a few trees in a world covered in concrete. These are places for us to enjoy on our days off, when we finally get a few measly hours to relax.

In essence, the NWDC has paid the City of Tacoma for its complicity in a project of class warfare. In turn, the City provides its citizens with amusements and services funded, in part, through the violent oppression of undocumented people. As long as those courageously confronting this reality remain marginalized and isolated in their resistance, nothing will change. The Detention Center's recent 500-bed expansion should be more than enough proof of this.

Charlton Heston's Soylent Green character isn't satisfied to passively munch on waferized human flesh. In the real world, there is a history of resistance to the NWDC in Tacoma, including educational events, militant street demonstrations, public outreach campaigns, and direct action. Heston struggles to bring the truth about Soylent Green to light, certain that other people won't be able to stomach the nasty secrets underlying everyday life.

ARE YOU?



libcom.org



Seattle Solidarity Network

Who are you?

I'm Matt, currently unemployed and living in Seattle, having moved here from England six years ago. I've been a member of Seattle Solidarity Network since it started. Before that I was in the IWW in Seattle and various anarchist groups, such as the Anarchist Federation in the UK.

Briefly, what is the group?

Seattle Solidarity Network (SeaSol) is a small workers' and tenants' mutual aid group that focuses on winning small fights against bosses and landlords, over issues such as unpaid wages and stolen deposits, through the use of collective action in the form of pickets and demonstrations.

How big is it and what dates was it active from?

It's hard to say exactly how big SeaSol is. If we quantify it by official membership, which has only recently been introduced, around sixty. Ten to forty people turn up to the average action, and we

Seattle Solidarity Network is a direct action group that is dedicated to winning small fights against bosses and landlords over issues such as unpaid wages and stolen deposits.



Solidarity Network

SeaSol started from a mixture of options such as trying to create a flying picket squad or a direct action network group in the vein of the IWW. Some members had a minor experience with wage reclaiming, in an individual case where a friend had been hired for one day at a restaurant and then told she was no longer needed and would not be paid as it was a "training day" - by turning up at the restaurant as a large group, they forced the owner to pay her. Another member already had a website and email list for strike support news in Seattle, so we put it to a new use as well as taking its name.

We have a contact list of around four hundred people - I'm guessing that at least half have participated in one or more actions or events. The 'organising team' - the people who have agreed to a slightly higher level of commitment, who do most of the day to day work such as manning the phone tree, answering calls and meeting with new people - is made up of around a dozen members. SeaSol started in the last months of 2007 and is still going strong.

How did it get started?

It got started because a small group of us, mostly IWW members and anarchists in Seattle, were frustrated with our current lack of activity. The Seattle IWW general membership branch was too small and lacking in resources to attempt to organise any workplaces - the best we could do would be offer training and support to any workers who approached us interested in unionising their workplace, something that happens only occasionally and hasn't yet progressed to an organising drive. My own perspective originated from frustration with symbolic and ineffectual anti-war and anti-globalisation protests and anarchist propaganda groups that had limited relevance to most people's lives, including my own.

At the beginning we did not have a clear idea of exactly what we would do but decided to focus on supporting workers and tenants in struggles, in ways where we could win immediate gains rather than getting bogged down in everlasting campaigns. Also in ways that would benefit ourselves if we ever got into a conflict with our own bosses or landlords. For that purpose we designed two posters: "Problems with your boss?" and "Problems with your landlord? Contact us." We put these posters up around Seattle, got a few phone calls, and that's how it started!

Why were other more traditional organisations (e.g. trade unions) not appropriate?

We wanted to do it ourselves, not through some other organisation. Persuading some other group to take up this relatively unknown approach would have been a waste of time. It made sense to create SeaSol as a separate organisation from the IWW for various reasons - we would not be subject to secondary picketing laws, not all the initial people involved were IWW members, and

it would allow us to be more flexible. The various bureaucratic NGOs and unions were too slow moving to take or even follow initiative in the area of small housing and work-related fights, anyway.

What problems did you come up against at first? How did you overcome them?

As I've mentioned above, we didn't initially have a very clear idea of what we were going to do - that became clearer as we went on. At first I was skeptical about the idea that posters would actually generate valid campaigns we could involve ourselves in - but it worked. One of the first few calls we received was from a shipyard worker who was pissed off about the bad conditions and the complacency of his union in his workplace - so we got together with him and made some flyers that he would distribute in his workplace. Unfortunately this approach didn't work, there was little interest from his co-workers and all we received was an angry phone call from one of the union officials for that workplace. We didn't really have a coherent plan for how to approach this campaign. Over time we would develop a set of tactics and ways of doing things. As we went along and won a series of fights, we gained allies and recognition from other groups, something we were lacking at the beginning.

Which remained problems the whole time?

Retaining the involvement of people who approached us for help has often been a problem. We always state that Seattle Solidarity Network isn't a charity or social work, it's a mutual support network, which means we expect that if we help you in your fight, you will help others in other fights. Often, people will stay involved and participate in a few actions other than their own for a month or two but then not be heard from again. However, some people who initially contacted us for support in their struggle have taken a more active role and joined the organising team, and many that don't do that keep participating for months after their fight has been won. With the introduction of membership, and a greater clarity about what being a part of SeaSol is, it looks like we're starting to keep people involved more. I expect that some people will always leave after their own fight is won - that shouldn't dishearten us.

Another issue that was pointed out by a former organiser is that there is a 'demograph-

ic disparity' between the organising team and the people who often approach us for help in their fights. That is to say, the core activists are mostly white, and the people with the issues are more often from ethnic minorities. This may be an obstacle for some people to get more involved in the group. There isn't much we can do, except keep fighting and as we grow, our organisation will attract people from a wider range of backgrounds. This seems to be happening as we gradually pick up people from the fights we've been involved in.

One problem we've noticed in workplace-related fights is that some employees, if for example they are faced with a picket outside the restaurant they work in, buy into the management's side of the story and resent our presence which results in reduced business and therefore lost tips for them. We've successfully started countering this by making a collection amongst the demonstrators to make up for the lost tips, and clearly explaining to workers that we are not against them, we are against their boss. We need to keep doing this, and start communicating more with workers before beginning a campaign.

When did things start to gain momentum/take off?

It took over four months since we first started putting posters up. Our first real fight was when we were contacted by some people living in the Greenlake Motel. This "motel" was really a pay by the week long term residence for people who couldn't pass the checks necessary to get higher quality, lower cost housing - because they had a criminal record or bad credit or housing history, or couldn't afford the usual first and last month's plus a damage deposit of rented housing. They had seen our poster and complained of terrible living conditions - mould, leaks, broken heating, etc. After some door knocking to gauge the situation some SeaSol members and tenants drew up a demand letter listing the repairs that needed to be made. We gathered a couple of dozen people and with one of the tenants (unfortunately the other tenants were too nervous about being evicted) we went to the landlords' more respectable hotel and delivered the demand letter to the perplexed receptionist.

A few days later the landlords went round each flat and made the necessary repairs,

while warning the tenants not to talk to "those communists". This was our first significant success. This wasn't the end of the Greenlake Motel story though - a few months later, we were contacted again - the motel had been condemned by the Health Department. The tenants, since they were technically short term motel residents and therefore not entitled to the same legal protections as regular tenants, were facing immediate eviction. They were more willing to fight as a group this time, and won relocation assistance (three months' worth of rent each) to move to better places.

What struggles were you involved in?

Since the beginning of 2008, we've started at least 21 fights and won 17 of them. The issues being fought range from unpaid wages to unfair evictions. For a comprehensive list, our website lists almost every fight we've been involved in - apart from a handful that never got off the ground or were resolved before we had to take action.

What types of action did you take?

Every fight starts with a 'demand delivery' like the one linked here. We turn up as a large group at the boss or landlord's office or business. The person with the issue hands a demand letter stating what needs to be done to the boss by a certain deadline of one or two weeks. This is basically a show of strength - the worker or tenant is supported by a large group of people - and a warning. The boss or landlord can give in now, or there will be trouble later.

If we're lucky, the boss or landlord will give in before the deadline. If not, we start an escalating campaign. We start fairly small, then increase the pressure by adding more types of actions, more often, of increasing size. Our mainstay is a picket of a dozen or so people outside the enemy's place of business. If it's a restaurant or shop, this often proves economically devastating, reducing sales by half or more during the times we are there. Other techniques we use are poster campaigns to turn away prospective tenants, public embarrassment by leafleting the boss's church or neighbourhood, interfering with suppliers or business partners, phone and internet actions, and anything else we can think of. We try to be pretty imaginative.

What links do you have with other groups

of workers? (Other sectors, other countries, political groups, etc.)

We occasionally cooperate with the comite de defensa trabajadora of Casa Latina, the more direct action oriented section of a local NGO. We support each others campaigns and sometimes do joint actions. We've also done strike support, such as turning up to the picket lines at the recent Coca Cola strike. We were planning to support a campaign around reducing mortgage rates by a militant section of the plumbers' union, but that never materialised. We work closely with the IWW where applicable, most recently by doing a solidarity action for the newly formed Jimmy Johns Workers Union.

The newest joint project is with IWSJ, a student and worker group at the University of Washington centered around a rank and file group of janitors. They are interested in doing SeaSol-type actions within the low-paid immigrant communities they have good links with, and we are interested in learning about workplace groups from them. We'll see how that develops.

We are trying to support and encourage the formation of solidarity networks around the world, such as the Olympia, Tacoma, and Glasgow Solidarity Networks. We are offering support and training to new groups whenever we can. We have also been in contact with workers' centres, which have some similarities to SeaSol, such as the Lansing Workers Center, and are interested in learning more about the advantages and differences with this kind of organising.

How would you respond to criticisms that these small victories are all well and good, but they are not a model for creating social change faced as we are with an onslaught on jobs, housing, public services, etc across the world?

As you have pointed out the struggles are rather small scale, involving an issue that only affects a single individual or family, or a small group of workers or tenants, who have often left their old job or rental situation. This is the main limitation of our current organising method. However we don't see this as a huge obstacle because we aren't intending to limit ourselves to just these small fights forever. Instead we view them as first steps to more ambitious projects. As we build up experience, confidence, membership, a support base, contacts,

reputation and so on, we intend to branch out into other forms of organisation, such as helping set up and assisting tenants' and workplace groups - the first steps to do so are already underway. We are committed to a flexible, experimental approach. I view these small fights as a training ground for class struggle organising, from which we can progress to bigger, more collective, more prolonged projects. They aren't a model for social change as such but they contain a key ingredient required for large scale social change - direct action by the people facing a problem themselves.

SeaSol is in some sense an adaptation to modern conditions of high turnover and small workplaces - as one member has said we "organise the worker, not the workplace". Any worker who joins SeaSol after a problem at their old job is much better prepared to fight back if they encounter problems at their new job. It's an organisation of militants spread across different work and housing situations. Obviously, working towards organisation in specific workplaces and neighbourhoods is still vital.

Do you think that there is a danger that the group could be seen as or become some sort of radical charity, which is reliant on volunteers who basically help other people, like yourself?

As I said earlier, we try to make it clear that SeaSol is not some charity or social service. We offer solidarity, not charity. The person or people with the issue must take be willing to take a lead in the fight - they are the ones handing the demand to the boss, they will participate in and help plan all the actions in the campaign, and they have agreed to support other peoples' fights too. If they expect us to do all the work for them, and stop showing up to meetings or actions (without good reason), we'll eventually drop the fight. This is in contrast to a charity or social service that merely does things on behalf of the passive recipient.

How open is SeaSol with their politics? Are you openly anarchist?

As an individual member I'm openly anarchist within SeaSol (as are many others). SeaSol isn't an anarchist organisation, but it is based on principles of mutual aid, direct action and direct democracy. While all the founding members were anarchist or close to it, the majority of the membership aren't necessarily. SeaSol is however an environment where almost everyone is open to anarchist ideas, because they are a logical extension of what we are doing - fighting together against bosses and landlords, planning things collectively, pooling our resources, realising that we have power together.

What lessons do you think other workers can take from your group?

That even in these times of defeat and economic depression it's still quite feasible to fight back and win. That anarchist ideas work in real life. That collective direct action around small issues is an effective starting point for further struggle.

Pom-pou-s Prick Pre-dict-s Fu-ture.

youth revolt cyber war

Gerold Celente & the Trends Research Institute on 2011

Gerold Celente is the founder of Trends Research Institute, a shitty corporate think tank that projects current economic and social trends into forecasts for the near future. His annoying and condescending tone aside, it's worth taking a look at his analysis having accurately predicted the dot.com crash, the housing bubble, the Iraq war and many other significant events in the last decade and more. Here's a list of the top 10 trends for 2011.

Hello folks. I hope you're all having a wonderful new year. I hope you're in for some bad news because here it is:

After the tumultuous years of the Great Recession, a battered people may wish that 2011 will bring a return to kinder, gentler times. But that is not what we are predicting. Instead, the fruits of government and institutional action – and inaction – on many fronts will ripen in unplanned-for fashions. Trends we have previously identified, and that



have been brewing for some time, will reach maturity in 2011, impacting just about everyone in the world.

1. **Wake-Up Call In 2011**, the people of all nations will fully recognize how grave economic conditions have become, how ineffectual and self-serving the so-called solutions have been, and how dire the consequences will be. Having become convinced of the inability of leaders and know-it-all “arbiters of everything” to fulfill their promises, the people will do more than just question authority, they will defy authority. The seeds of revolution will be sown....

2. **Crack-Up 2011** Among our Top Trends for last year was the “Crash of 2010.” What happened? The stock market didn't crash. We know. We made it clear in our Autumn Trends Journal that we were not forecasting a stock market crash – the equity markets were no longer a legitimate indicator of recovery or the real state of the economy. Yet the reliable indicators (employment numbers, the real estate market, currency pressures, sovereign debt problems) all bordered between crisis and disaster. In 2011, with the arsenal of schemes to prop

them up depleted, we predict "Crack-Up 2011": teetering economies will collapse currency wars will ensue, trade barriers will be erected, economic unions will splinter, and the onset of the "Greatest Depression" will be recognized by everyone....

3. **Screw the People** As times get even tougher and people get even poorer, the "authorities" will intensify their efforts to extract the funds needed to meet fiscal obligations. While there will be variations on the theme, the governments' song will be the same: cut what you give, raise what you take.

4. **Crime Waves** No job + no money + compounding debt = high stress, strained relations, short fuses. In 2011, with the fuse lit, it will be prime time for Crime Time. When people lose everything and they have nothing left to lose, they lose it. Hardship-driven crimes will be committed across the socioeconomic spectrum by legions of the on-the-edge desperate who will do whatever they must to keep a roof over their heads and put food on the table....

5. **Crackdown on Liberty** As crime rates rise, so will the voices demanding a crackdown. A national crusade to "Get Tough on Crime" will be waged against the citizenry. And just as in the "War on Terror," where "suspected terrorists" are killed before proven guilty or jailed without trial, in the "War on Crime" everyone is a suspect until proven innocent....

6. **Alternative Energy** In laboratories and workshops unnoticed by mainstream analysts, scientific visionaries and entrepreneurs are forging a new physics incorporating principles once thought impossible, working to create devices that liberate more energy than they consume. What are they, and how long will it be before they can be brought to market? Shrewd investors will ignore the "can't be done" skepticism, and examine the newly emerging energy trend opportunities that will come of age in 2011....

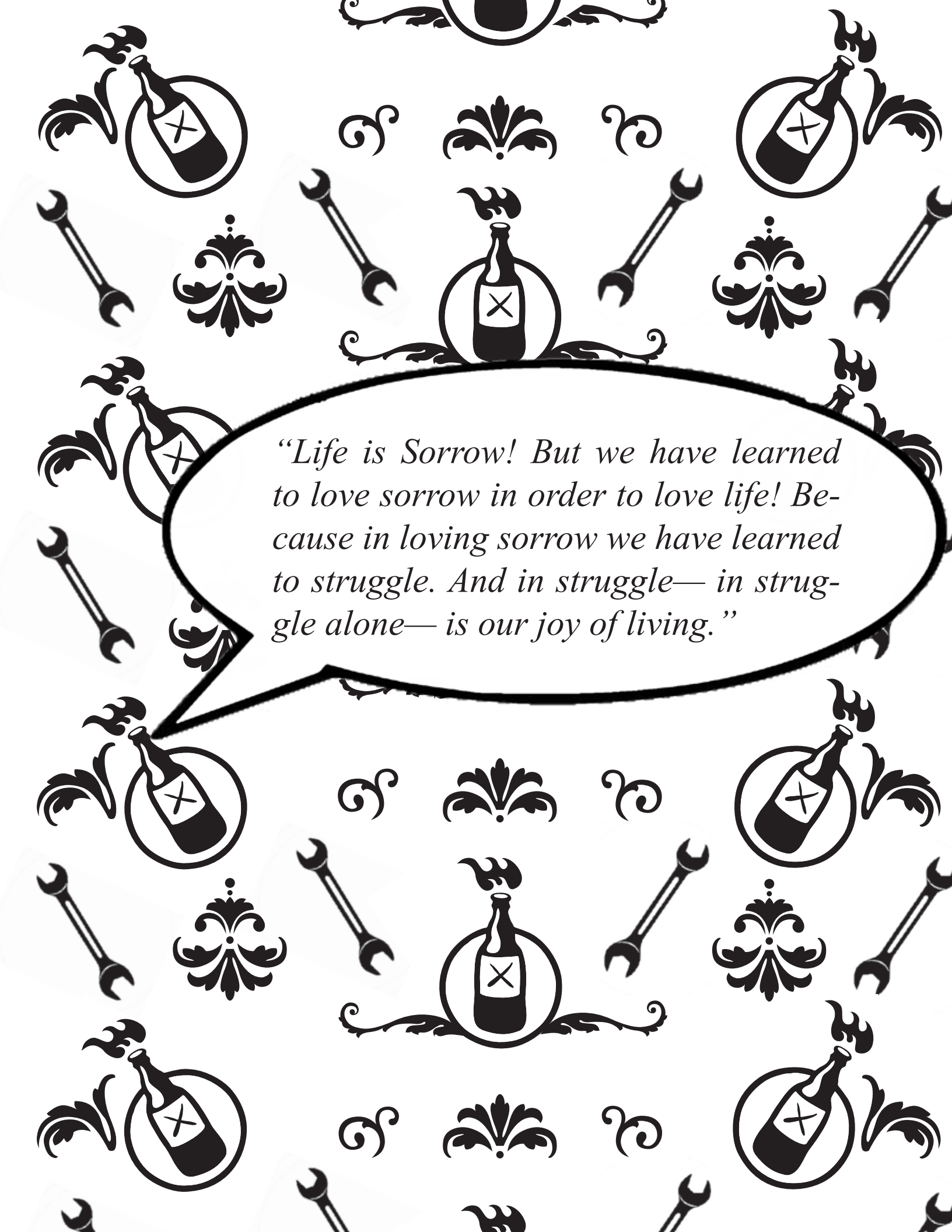
7. **Journalism 2.0** Though the trend has been in the making since the dawn of the Internet Revolution, 2011 will mark the year that new methods of news and information distribution will render the 20th century model obsolete. With its unparalleled reach across borders and language barriers, "Journalism

2.0" has the potential to influence and educate citizens in a way that governments and corporate media moguls would never permit. Of the hundreds of trends we have forecast over three decades, few have the possibility of such far-reaching effects....

8. **Cyberwars** Just a decade ago, when the digital age was blooming and hackers were looked upon as annoying geeks, we forecast that the intrinsic fragility of the Internet and the vulnerability of the data it carried made it ripe for cyber-crime and cyber-warfare to flourish. In 2010, every major government acknowledged that Cyberwar was a clear and present danger and, in fact, had already begun. The demonstrable effects of Cyberwar and its companion, Cybercrime, are already significant – and will come of age in 2011. Equally disruptive will be the harsh measures taken by global governments to control free access to the web, identify its users, and literally shut down computers that it considers a threat to national security....

9. **Youth of the World Unite** University degrees in hand yet out of work, in debt and with no prospects on the horizon, feeling betrayed and angry, forced to live back at home, young adults and 20-somethings are mad as hell, and they're not going to take it anymore. Filled with vigor, rife with passion, but not mature enough to control their impulses, the confrontations they engage in will often escalate disproportionately. Government efforts to exert control and return the youth to quiet complacency will be ham-fisted and ineffectual. The Revolution will be televised, blogged, YouTubed, Twit-tered and....

10. **End of The World!** The closer we get to 2012, the louder the calls will be that the "End is Near!" There have always been sects, at any time in history, that saw signs and portents proving the end of the world was imminent. But 2012 seems to hold a special meaning across a wide segment of "End-time" believers. Among the Armageddonites, the actual end of the world and annihilation of the Earth in 2012 is a matter of certainty. Even the rational and informed that carefully follow the news of never-ending global crises, may sometimes feel the world is in a perilous state. Both streams of thought are leading many to reevaluate their chances for personal survival, be it in heaven or on earth....



“Life is Sorrow! But we have learned to love sorrow in order to love life! Because in loving sorrow we have learned to struggle. And in struggle— in struggle alone— is our joy of living.”

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