



# PLAIN WORDS

ANARCHIST COUNTER-INFORMATION IN BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA

ISSUE ONE

FEBRUARY 2017

ANTI-OPPRESSION &  
THE INTERNET

PRISON STRIKE  
RETROSPECTIVE

REVENGE FOR  
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ACTION CHRONOLOGY

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# PLAIN WORDS



**Plain Words** is a website and publication that focuses on spreading news and developing analyses of struggles in and around Bloomington, Indiana. As anarchists, we approach these struggles from an anti-state, anti-capitalist perspective. However, we aren't interested in developing a specific party line – even an anarchist one – and instead value the diverse forms resistance can take. Our anarchism is vibrant, undogmatic, and finds common cause with all others who fight for a world without the state, capital, and all structures of domination.

All texts and images in Plain Words are taken from the internet or submitted to us by others. **We are not an organization or specific group**, but simply a vehicle for spreading words and actions of resistance in Bloomington.

As such, **we actively seek collaboration**. If you have news, images, reportbacks of actions and demonstrations, communiques, event information, publications, analyses of local trends and situations, updates on projects and campaigns, or anything else coming from an anti-authoritarian, anti-capitalist perspective, please get in touch.

If you have comments on or critiques of anything we've printed that you'd like us to publish, feel free to send them our way.

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heartening to see so many in attendance (estimates say over a thousand!), one could quickly spot many signs and slogans of patriotic trash and invited speakers included the mayor's wife, exhibiting a rather shallow analysis of power relations, even those that exist in our "liberal utopia." However, some of the speakers told moving stories of how racism, islamophobia, and the tyrannical travel ban affect their family and friends. Eventually, the large group marched to the Showers (City Council) building, with a smaller group temporarily taking the streets. Once they arrived, as many as would fit flooded into the lobby, while the rest chanted outside. Some people called for an occupation of Showers, but in a moment of seeming confusion and fear, others

dismissed the crowd. This left just a couple dozen inside, discussing how to proceed with an occupation. Once several groups had left to gather supplies and spread the word to friends, the city authorities moved in on the diminished group. For a few minutes, an aide of the mayor played good cop, asking the group to reduce their demands to something deliverable to the mayor, and to come back at "business hours." Obviously ignored and laughed off, she was followed by the armed police, who threatened to "escort out" anyone who did not willingly exit the building. All of those remaining inside decided to leave as a group chanting, "No cops, No KKK, No fascist USA!" to continue discussions inspired by the short occupation.

**2/6/17:** Political prisoners Zolo Agona Azania was released from prison after 35 years, 27 and a half of them spent on death row. A former Black Panther organizing in northwest Indiana, in the 1980s Zolo was rail-roaded into a conviction for killing a cop, which he has consistently denied. Zolo spent his decades in prison learning, writing, fighting abuse and exploitation by the Indiana Dept. of Corrections, and helping fellow prisoners. Finally, he has been released to friends from Indiana and Illinois waiting to welcome him, and has begun to rebuild his life.



***Monroe County saw lower voter turnout in 2016 than in 2008 and was also on the lower end of voter turnout across the states. Just nine counties saw a lower portion of registered voters cast ballots.***

***NO ONE:  
THE PEOPLE'S CANDIDATE***



# ANTI & OPPRESSION & THE INTERNET



Information technology is ubiquitous in present day, it is now considered odd and suspicious to not have a smartphone or any social media accounts. Many people who were not using these technologies heavily in the past are now suckered in by them, partially because they are the new normal that everyone else is doing.

I grew up spending hours on the internet and playing video games every day, back before it was socially normal to do so. Most of my leisure time during my adolescence was spent staring into a screen. I have since realized how much damage it was doing to me, and the extent to which it ruined my concentration, helped stunt my emotional maturity, and generally made me an anxious person. Now I am hesitant to subject myself to the alienation of passively consuming spectacles like television and video games, and carry a deep mistrust of the control inherent in information technology. That these technologies are being cast in a liberatory light seems like a serious error to me, and this essay is a theory I've developed over time while participating and noticing others participate in life over social media.

Isolation and atomization are at the core of capitalist society. The internet is increasing this separation and is subsuming more and more of daily life. Nevertheless, there's a popular narrative which casts this technology in an anti-oppression light, it goes something like this:

"Before the internet, marginalized people (people with oppressed identities and neuro-atypical people) would not have much of an opportunity to see and discuss their experiences with each other. With social networks, marginalized people can connect with each other and realize that they share overlapping experiences of oppression. The internet has fostered a mass 'wokeness' (gaining of political consciousness) of young people not seen in decades. People with mental health disabilities can now share coping strategies and feel assured that others suffer from their ailments, and that they are not alone in the world. It offers a method of finding & creating community that bypasses face-to-face interactions that are stressful or debilitating. Without the internet, they would have just been hidden under the normative culture, and felt alone and frustrated, or simply unaware."

This line of thought is flawed, but it makes some sense. Life in the west since World War II has been very isolating and atomizing, in that people are kept to their homes, codependent relationships, and toxic nuclear family mores, while spending their leisure time passively consuming entertainment media. The conformity of the 50s seems like a stark example of this, but as the decades went on this phenomenon actually increased. Participation in social clubs and adult team sports declined, public space was enclosed and privatized, and average hours of television viewing increased. In this basic context, yes, the internet fosters a connection between people that is appealing due to any other connection being absent in the recent past.

That said, while there probably has been a relatively large-scale "wokeness," it has not created a situation where politically conscious people rise up against systems of domination and oppression. As of yet, it has primarily produced non-revolutionary identity politics that, through groupthink, aim to discipline an ideal set of personal behaviors onto isolated individuals. Revolutionary impulses against capitalism, white supremacy, and patriarchy crumble into scolding an individuals' language and behavior based on privilege resulting from generalizations



## WHAT IS ANARCHISM?

Anarchism is the idea that people should be free to shape the contents of their own lives. It asserts that rulers and systems that control an individual in their daily life are harmful regardless of who is in charge or what purpose the system serves. Lacking the ability to have direct control over the course of one's life is the definition of powerlessness, and such a condition creates debased, repressed people with toxic relationships and alienated, damaging habits. From an anarchist perspective, a free and genuine human community would require relationships of power that are fluid, ones which lack the hierarchies of leaders and followers. Refusing hierarchical relations would create people who are experienced in taking self-initiative; have healthy methods of engaging in conflict with each other; are in touch with their own bodies; and are assertive in sticking up for themselves, their loved ones, and what they think is right.

Anarchists historically have been opposed primarily to capitalism and the state, as well as any form of oppression that privileges some to the detriment of others, and that coerces people into identities, roles, and expected behaviors they didn't choose for themselves. Capitalism, in addition to unfairly furthering economic inequality, exploits and dominates all that it touches. It

has colonized and commodified the entire world, exploiting one segment of the population who work jobs that are meaningless and exhausting, and excluding another, who are forced to find more precarious, often criminalized, means of survival. The state – meaning the police, courts, prisons, military, and government – is a tool of domination that empowers one group to exert control over the rest of the population. Whether it's a capitalist ruling class or a communist ruling party, the state is there to manage the contradictions created by this toxic society, and to make sure that revolutionaries, such as anarchists, don't successfully overturn existing social relations.

Anarchism is revolutionary, but it is also deeply personal. While Communists justify dictatorships and mass killings in the name of a pending "glorious revolution," anarchists don't separate ends from means. To live as an anarchist means to strive to embody one's values in daily life: to not dominate others, to not allow yourself to be dominated, and to attack the causes of your misery now instead of waiting for a revolution. Anarchism doesn't seek to crush the individual beneath the weight of social coercion and conformity, nor promote an exploitative selfishness that precludes the possibility of life shared in common. We desire a world in which individuals choose

their associations freely, and where the means of life are given to each according to their need, from each according to their ability and desire.

Rather than a grand political theory that seeks to impose its vision upon all, anarchism is a tension: against domination, for freedom. How this plays out varies widely, depending on one's context, desires, and dreams.

We have no party line, and we prefer it that way.

### Further reading

**Life Without Law**  
by Strangers in a Tangled Wilderness

**The Abolition of Work**  
by Bob Black

**Living My Life**  
by Emma Goldman

**Revolution of Everyday Life**  
by Raoul Vaneigem

**Letters of Insurgents**  
by Fredy Perlman

But *our* bellies were full of rage! As the march approached the building of Indiana University's School of Informatics and Computing, balls full of paint were passed throughout the march. Individuals threw a dozen paint balls at the building as chants went up against Trump and the national security apparatus he now controls. The School of Informatics and Computing is directly tied to the ever-increasing web of control that Obama has perfected over the past 8 years, and which Trump will now inherit. The department's Center for Complex Networks and Systems Research

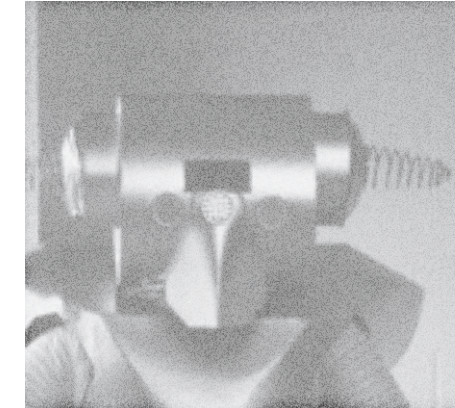
County Jail! But first, it seemed like the right time to drag a bank's rolling dumpster into the street, overturn it, and scatter its contents. With the dumpster blocking traffic, we came upon the jail, which received a beautiful new paint job as the crowd rained paint balls down on its pristine Indiana limestone. People are sick of suffering as their friends and family are locked up by the pigs with the guns and the pigs with the gavels, and are ready to fight back. Freedom to the prisoners!

Metal trash cans, news boxes, sandwich boards, flares, and flash fireworks

We know that the coming years will require much of us. We have many skills to develop, projects to create, and social spaces to liberate. But without a capacity to fight – to attack those who want to murder, imprison, and deport us – our struggle will remain forever on the defensive. Last night showed that caring for each other, getting organized, being courageous, challenging our self-imposed boundaries, and attacking our oppressors is not only possible, but joyous, playful, transformative, and effective.

As the march hit its end, we made our way to IU's sample gates where a smoke

about static identities. This tendency has been used to extinguish revolts by separating those in struggle via a relation of "allyship" and ultimately strengthening reformist non-profits. How is it that non-profit



groups in Minneapolis using Black Panther imagery and rhetoric were so successful in weakening the forces of rebellion last year? The answer is in the medium, and specifically not the message.

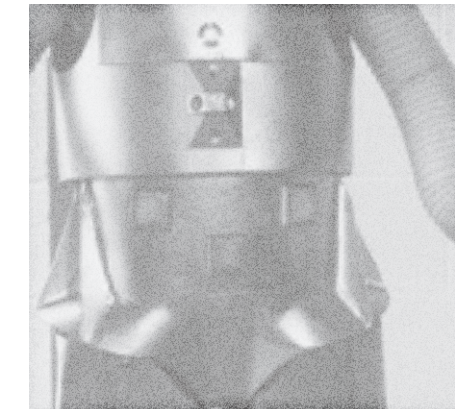
Bonds produced through internet social connections are weak and generally don't yield feelings of power and the capacity to have an impact on the world. Likely this is because working together to end those oppressions is not even an option, since capitalism's separation between people isn't actually broken. Where to turn then with one's ideas and critiques? The focus becomes insular: on one's own individual behaviors, language, and projected image.

Often relationships over the internet are maintained via text, or the occasional image and short video. These communications can be drafted and redrafted, while phone calls and interacting face-to-face in real time are increasingly being seen as too "awkward." What causes this and then follows from it even stronger is neurotic introspection. That which marginalizes becomes a fixation, as opposed to basis of a bond between people that has the potential to make one another stronger through resistance to it. Anxiety and awkwardness result from a heightened fixation on oneself as a result of any ability to develop solid bonds between becoming stunted.

When isolated people find each other in life, they potentially become more powerful together. This is quantitative, in that more people means more possibilities, but more importantly it's qualitative. Relationships can deepen through experiences that are shared together. And stronger relationships make stronger people. Think about the courage that people seemingly

spontaneously acquire when someone they love is in danger. Bonds between people aren't always that dramatic, but they are ubiquitous in daily life. When my friend thinks of a funny joke and smiles as they begin to tell it, I smile back even before I've heard the punchline. What's happening in this moment of affectation is not located inside them, nor inside me, but instead in the invisible bond between us. Emotions are contagious, and that makes them political.

Another reason why this post-Occupy wokeness hasn't produced gains for revolution and anarchy is the lack of power that comes from it. The immense focus on victimization and shameful self-flagellation is directly opposite from the anarchist idea that one should try to gain control of one's life. To be clear, I'm not posing anarchy as a bootstraps mentality, but rather to posit that anarchists see themselves as protagonists in their own lives. The bonds between



us aren't based on our victimhood, but on our resistance to what hurts us. "Destroy what destroys you." I am constantly trying to think of ways to project myself onto this world, and to attack those things which I see as sabotaging the possibility of me living a free life through healthy relationships with other people and the planet.

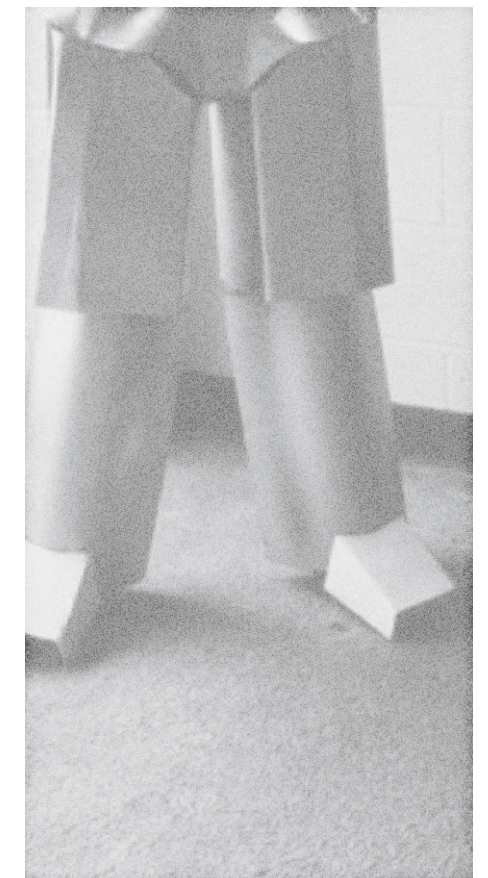
When one isn't able to wage war against the world around them, they do battle in the world inside themselves. And judging by how neurotic, anxious, and paralyzed the population has become, it's a losing one.

In "We Are All Very Anxious" by Plan C, a valuable essay that can be easily found online, it's suggested that anxiety is a defining characteristic of our era. Social media and the internet are surely related to this. Everything that one says on the internet has the potential to stay archived and accessible for people to see and judge you, possibly for decades. Additionally, social media promotes bite-sized thought, ideas,

and communications, where complex ideas are shrunk and ethical conundrums are flattened into oversimplified dichotomies promoting moralistic reaction and denunciation. Face-to-face interaction provides at least the possibility for empathy, in that you see the person whose feelings you are about to hurt; but the style of communication through the internet promotes cruelty. It also enforces a social life based on the mini-rewards of notifications and likes.

What all these recent cultural developments have brought is an expansion of performance in everyday life, where one is constantly trying to impress those around them, or if not that, at least worried about the things they say. As every psychologist and self-help book will tell you, this is the exact opposite of a healthy way to approach life.

Progress is destroying the earth and putting another layer of colonization over our social relationships, including one to ourselves. It was briefly de-enchanted after the '60s but now, at the worst time possible, it's looking seductive again. Let's put a hostility towards progress back alongside the social struggles and projects we've been a part of. Or, at the very least, let's realize that technology is not neutral, and that it carries the culture and social relationships of the systems that created it.



is funded by Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), Intelligence Advanced Research Projects Activity (IARPA), the Office of Naval Research (ONR), and prison profiteers Eli Lilly and Company; it has ties to the National Security Agency (NSA) and U.S. Department of Homeland Security; and it has connections to JP Morgan Chase and AT&T, Microsoft and IBM Life Sciences, and other architects of the open air prison in which we live.

Onwards towards the Monroe

were thrown and brought into the street as we proceeded back down Kirkwood keeping cars at a safe distance from the crowd. Why waste our time getting in petty back and forths with bystanders or people when there are more fun things to do?

With streets blocked and the spirit of the crowd strengthened by the progression of attacks up to this point, individuals began kicking things up a notch. Multiple ATMs were smashed, a bank entrance was repainted, and a bank window was smashed.

bomb was let off and people dispersed into the night laughing and celebrating. Day one of the Trump administration, day one of a new terrain of revolt and social struggle. We have only begun to fight.

*from itsgoingdown.org*



## NEW YEAR'S EVE REPORTBACK

**B**reaking away from the jail demo tradition, we kicked off the new year with something fresh and exciting. At the stroke of midnight we dropped four banners and let five thousand fliers rain down from two downtown parking garages. United with friends, we reveled in the togetherness we will carry with us into the new year. 2016 was shitty and we expect that 2017 will be as well; however, we recognize the need to continue fighting. With these modest acts, we sharpened coordination practices that we will need in the coming months and years. Each of the banners reflects an element of our revolt we intend to strengthen and spread over the next year – combative memory for our fallen fighters, solidarity with our imprisoned comrades, determination to continue fighting no matter what is thrown at us, and struggle against immediate manifestations of power.

As December ends, we also take time to remember the lives of our fallen warriors. William Avalon Rodgers was an Earth liberationist who took his own life on

December 21, 2005 while in jail awaiting trial on arson charges. Kuwasi Balagoon was a former Black Panther, fighter in the Black Liberation Army, bisexual, and anarchist who died in prison from medical neglect due to AIDS-related illness on December 13, 1986.

December 2016 marks 11 years since Avalon's death and 30 since Kuwasi's. We will not allow those who sacrificed everything for freedom to be forgotten. As we continue our struggles against Power, we keep alive the memory of Kuwasi, Avalon, Alexandros Grigoropoulos, Sebastián Oversluis, Lambros Foundas, Mauricio Morales, Feral Pines, and all of our other comrades who have passed on. Memory, like fire, burns our enemies and keeps us warm.

We are consistently inspired by Marius Mason's spirit and take strength from each of his paintings, poems, and letters. In an attempt to return the favor, we also chose to highlight his acts this New Year's Eve. For many years, Marius lived and took action in Bloomington and we

intend to maintain the passion and fighting spirit that he once embodied here.

As a quaint college town and liberal bastion in a red state, Bloomington's iteration of state violence often takes the form of closing off public space to undesirable populations to maintain a sterile, commerce-friendly environment. One of the primary targets of this cleansing is the sizable homeless population. The city has deployed social worker cops, signs discouraging giving money to people on the street, and several new security cameras in popular hangouts like People's Park. Despite their language of safety and compassion, we know that the city government has no interest in genuine solutions to the problems of poverty, unaffordable housing, and addiction; in reality, it exists to manage and police the conditions that create these problems. We have made a choice to not fall for the soft policing of the non-profits and charities that are in the pocket of the city.

Whatever 2017 brings, we plan to face it head on.

# WE HAVE ONLY BEGUN TO FIGHT REPORTBACK FROM THE J20 BLOC AGAINST THE INAUGURATION, AGAINST THE STATE



**P**eople worked their way out of the shadows to meet at People's Park. Participants were handed complimentary gift bags which included a handout on safety in the streets, face and hand coverings, noise-makers, and other fun items for a night out on the town. It feels like a sign of the times that all of these tools were enthusiastically accepted and used by most people who received them. It doesn't seem hard for people to understand that in order

to fight this regime and its "Alt Right" foot soldiers, we need to begin to protect ourselves and each other.

While the small, but energetic, crowd of around 30 took the streets shouting "Fuck Donald Trump", crews broke off in relative ease to relax by each of the city's parking meters down Kirkwood, the main street in town. The meters were decorated with stickers drawing connections between the meters and the police (meter

money helps fund the BPD). Stickers decorated with "Don't Feed the Pigs," solidarity slogans with refugees and prisoners, anti-police/Trump messages were placed strategically on the solar panels that power the meters in an attempt to sabotage their functioning. And let's just say the pigs will go a little hungrier these days as the locks on over 35 meters were disabled with glue and/or had their card and coin slots blocked with expanding foam.



setting increasing precedents and legitimization for monitoring and controlling populations. While it would be lovely to see the prisons set ablaze, we must be careful not to help usher in a new, and much more insidious regime of social control.

It is certainly true that the prisoner struggle in early September was a strike against a system of slavery. But to frame the entire strike in that way is an oversimplification that flattens the diverse experiences and motivations of prisoners who took action that day. To reduce struggle against prison as primarily a withdrawal of labor is to elevate the exploitation of capital over the domination and control that directly immiserates prisoners' lives regardless of whether they work. During the build-up to the strike, the narrative of a "prisoner class" withdrawing their labor clearly rose in focus over other forms of action. This seems to be reading the specific situation of prisoners through the lens of the Old Left class struggle perspective, which is ill-suited to seeing anything except the wage relation between worker and capital. In this case, and

in many others as traditional forms of work break down, it doesn't fit.

The days surrounding the strike saw a surge in actions taken by anarchists in solidarity. Besides the Standing Rock NODAPL resistance, it seemed to be all that anarchists were focused on in the United States. But with the election of Donald Trump and an increasing focus on the Alt-Right, it appears that most anarchists have moved on to Antifa (anti-fascist) activities. Without comment on that terrain of action, it feels as if anarchists have a very short attention span, constantly moving between movements and struggles. But lacking an anarchist project of our own, does that just make us insurrectionary ambulance chasers?

### The Future

**R**epression is still coming down on prison rebels as a result of their participation in the strike. For months anarchists in Bloomington have

been hosting letter writing nights, call-ins, and fundraising efforts to support prisoners who have been retaliated against. On the last Monday of every month Bloomington Anarchist Black Cross hosts "Cage Flight" at Boxcar Books in order to discuss ongoing prisoner struggles and to write letters and cards to prisoners.

Do prison rebels feel emboldened and ready to take action again? Have they changed the seemingly apolitical climate inside the prisons? What impact and (anti-) politicization has this action had on the families of those who participated? Has the regime of race and gang barriers that keep prisoners from uniting against administrators been disturbed? What could we, anarchists outside the prison walls, have done better? What the consequences of the prisoner strike will be are unknown, and may not be known to us outside the prison walls for years to come. What seems clear, however, is that if we are to see an end to prison and its world, we have to continue our efforts in solidarity with prison rebels and against the entirety of prison society.



## REFLECTIONS ON THE SEPTEMBER 9<sup>TH</sup> PRISON STRIKE

## HOW TO WHEATPASTE

Wheatpasting is a simple, dirt-cheap way of spreading ideas, news, analyses, and creative expression outside of (and against) the pacified modes made available by the institutions that control and mangle our lives. Let's reclaim, together, the means of expression from the media, Facebook, Twitter, smartphones, and everything else that reduces us to mere observers of life. *Poetry is in the streets!*

### WHAT YOU NEED

- 1 cup of flour
- 2 cups of water
- Stove or hotplate
- A pot or pan
- A large paintbrush
- A bucket or container
- Flyers that you want to put up
- Latex gloves (if you don't wanna walk around with drippy hands)

### DIRECTIONS

- Mix the 1 cup of flour with 2 cups of water together in a pan and stir until there are no lumps.
- Heat the mixture by boiling it until it thickens.
- Cook for about half an hour, and then let it cool.
- Put the wheatpaste solution into a container, grab a paintbrush, some flyers, and head out into the night. Keep in mind that wheatpasting is not "legal" and therefore, it is best to go late at night and avoid being seen by cops.
- When you locate a visible, non-porous surface like metal or glass, use the paintbrush to apply the wheatpaste to either the back of the flyer or the surface itself and smooth the flyer down so there are little or no air bubbles. Put some more wheatpaste on the front of the flyer (especially the edges) to secure it to the surface.

**O**n September 9 2016, prisoners took action in 46 prisons for a nationally coordinated prisoner strike. Of those facilities, 31 experienced a lock-down, suspension, or full strike for at least 24 hours, affecting around 57,000 people. By not showing up for work, prisoners shut down the regular operations of prisons like Kinross in Michigan and Holman in Alabama. By rioting and through other combative tactics, they disrupted normalized routines and operations for even longer. It was the largest action ever taken by prisoners in the United States, and anarchists took part both inside and outside the prison walls.

The strike has primarily been framed as a battle against prison slavery, an institution codified into law "as a punishment for crime" in the 13th Amendment to the Constitution. Prisoners are often

employed for pennies an hour, performing not only the various tasks that keep the prison running, but sometimes producing commodities such as Starbucks cups or even putting out wildfires in California. No doubt, people participated in the strike for a variety of reasons, but the element of prison slavery was the narrative that stuck.

In Bloomington and elsewhere, anarchists helped lay down the infrastructure of the strike for a year prior to September's actions, longer if you consider informal prisoner support and solidarity projects anarchists have been regularly engaging in. We've created free zine distros and started correspondences with prisoners directly, organized conferences to facilitate our activities, spread the call for the strike to prisons nation-wide, put up flyers and posters about the strike throughout the cities where we live, and come to the aid of prisoners

facing retaliatory repression.

Anarchism is the idea that authority and systems of control are not only unnecessary, but that life would be much better without them. Prison is the embodiment of domination, and anarchists throughout history have attacked prisons, liberated comrades, and during revolutionary situations completely flung open their gates.

During the Russian Revolution of 1917-1921 the anarchist "Revolutionary Insurrection Army" in Ukraine, composed entirely of volunteers, sometimes opened the prison doors and blew up police stations once they liberated an area. The Iron Column, an anarchist militia formed during the Spanish Civil War in 1936, liberated prisoners from San Miguel de los Reyes prison, and prisoners would later join the Column in its defense of the Revolution from Communist and fascist forces. As re-

cently as February 23, 2016 anarchist Pola Roupa hijacked a helicopter in an attempt to free her comrade Nikos Maziotis and other prisoners from Koridallios prison in Greece.

In short, anarchists hate prisons, and a number of us devoted considerable time and energy to the prison strike.

When September 2016 began, anarchists in Bloomington organized open assemblies to facilitate the planning of actions in solidarity with the strike. We did not want to recreate the tedium and bureaucracy of Occupy, where every decision had to go through the bottleneck of a General Assembly's consensus. Instead, these assemblies were spaces where anyone could make a proposal for an action, and if other people attending wanted to participate they would then simply collaborate to do so. Discussion would happen regarding the proposals, but there was no decision-making body of any kind. This is an anarchy that rejects not only leaders and bosses, but the tyranny of the majority and the populist absurdity of large-group consensus.

These assemblies took place daily around the days of September 9, and a number of actions throughout Bloomington directly resulted from them.



### Strike Solidarity, Day 1: Democratic Party Campaign HQ disrupted

On September 8th, about a dozen people disrupted activities at the local Democratic Party campaign headquarters, the ruling party at the time. Standing outside the building, people held a large banner announcing the prisoner strike while a statement was read and others

passed out handbills. Additionally, a group of people went inside the headquarters to yell chants, clog sinks, tear down campaign posters, and scatter handbills. An American flag in the office found its way into a toilet. People walked away from the building tossing handbills in the air. From the handbill scattered at the action:

*As the ruling party, the Democrats and their Bureau of Prisons are responsible for the conditions in federal prisons and everyone being held hostage inside of them. They profit from the labor of prisoners and contract with countless companies and industries that do the same, while prisoners earn as little as a few cents per hour.*

*They are responsible for the exorbitant prices of phone calls, commissary foods, and other basic necessities in prison. For the mailroom censorship, both institutionalized and arbitrary, of political and other materials. They are responsible for the poor quality of water and food that some must endure for decades, or even the rest of their lives. And for the dismal or nonexistent health care for prisoners when these conditions start to take their toll.*

*The Democrats and their Department of "Justice" (DOJ) are responsible for overseeing similar and or worse regimes in state prisons systems. They are complicit with the abuse, exploitation, and terror that happens on their watch and with their consent.*

*The Democrats and their Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE) are responsible for tearing apart millions of families through raids, arrests, indefinite detentions, and ultimately deportations.*

*State and County Democrats are responsible for approving and funding the construction of additional compounds for keeping people locked in cages and pens, with the latest technology for ever tighter security and control.*

*Here in Bloomington, the jail is currently building a new structure to house more prisoners and create more holding cells for prisoners.*

*Bloomington Democrats have blood on their hands. One of this year's democratic candidates for sheriff was Steve Sharp, who was present when the BPD killed a black man, Denver Smith, during an episode of mental distress in September of 1983. In May, Sharp was defeated by the current sheriff, Brad Swain. It is under Swain's command that Clinton "Boo" Gilkie died of medical neglect in the Monroe County Jail on June 7th, 2016, preceded and followed by an alarming number of suicide attempts.*

*Because of this, we don't trust the Democrats, or any political party or regime. Their talk of reforms, purposeful incarceration, and a well-meaning rehabilitative carceral system mean*

*little to us. We have no interest in soft policing; it is because of the social arrangements they maintain that people commit crimes of poverty and desperation. We have no interest in their framing of guilt and innocence; it isn't only our wrongfully-convicted friends who we want back. And we have no interest in their discourse of "abolition"; imprisonment in our own homes by expensive technology around our ankles and constant state supervision is still imprisonment.*

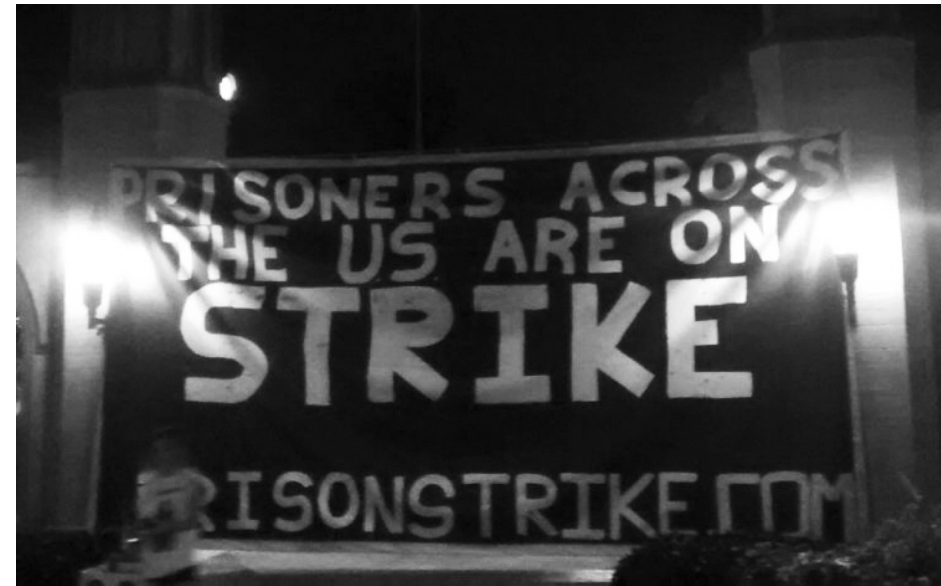
*To be clear, we don't expect the Democrats to solve anything. Where they have the power—and we know they have it—the only respectable thing to do would be to meet any demands of prisoners who are on strike and engaging in other forms of resistance and make sure prison administrations cannot bury, silence or torture them. If they are serious about prison reform and the well-being of prisoners, we can think of few small ways they could show it. We know every Democratic office has the capacity for call centers, media manipulation, and mass mailings. And we know a lot of prisoners that could use supportive call-ins, attention on their stories and struggles, and some new reading material... But we don't expect much from the ruling party that maintains an oppressive society held together by the threat and imposition of policing and imprisonment.*

*To illustrate what we're dealing with here: remember when the DOJ made a big spectacle and gave itself a giant pat on the back for cutting ties with private prisons? That applies to only 13 facilities across the country. Yes, 13. It says nothing about those ran by the Department of Homeland Security, including hundreds of immigrant detention facilities. Hopefully that means slightly less miserable lives for the thousands of people locked inside those 13 facilities, but government-run prisons are no more acceptable. A prison is prison, whether the COs are paid by GEO Group or the Indiana Department of Corrections.*

*The Democrats, those who follow their orders, and the suffocating world they perpetuate are locking up our friends, families, and those who inspire us by continuing to fight for themselves and each other, for freedom. It is clear which side they are on.*

*Down with the rulers.  
Away with every prison.  
Strength to those on strike.  
Power to prison rebels.*

The action was reported in the *Herald Times* without printing any part of the handbill's text, even though they doubtless had access to it on account of the hundreds of copies scattered inside and outside of the building.



### Strike Solidarity, Day 2: Microphone Demonstration

On the first day of the strike, September 9, 2016, anarchists hosted a microphone demo at Indiana University's Sample Gates.

A large banner that reads "PRISONERS ACROSS THE U.S. ARE ON STRIKE – Prisonstrike.com" was raised in the middle of the campus gateway. Using a speaker system, participants read aloud Chelsea Manning's hunger strike statement and Free Alabama Movement's "Let the Crops Rot in the Fields." Sean Swain's 9/9 statement from The Final Straw radio show and a segment from Crimethinc podcast about the history of prisoner resistance were also played.

People passed out handbills and had conversations with pedestrians and curious people who stopped to listen or ask what was going on. The demo lasted about an hour.

### Strike Solidarity, Day 3: Noise Demonstration

On September 10, about 30 people staged a noise demonstration outside of the county jail in solidarity with those locked up inside, as well as the 9/9 strikers. Noise was made, smoke-flares set off, and fireworks lit, illuminating the air as chants echoed off the walls in tandem with the honking horns of the blocked traffic. 800 flyers advocating solidarity with striking prisoners and condemning prison

slavery were both strewn about and passed to curious passersby/motorists. We held the space outside the jail and completely blocked the street for half an hour. Eventually we scattered and no arrests were made for this disruption.

Noise demos are a staple of anarchist action in recent years. Part of the logic of imprisonment is to isolate people from those outside of the prison walls. This makes it easier for prison officials to do anything to those locked up in their prisons without any reprisals or repercussions. All the abuses and misery taking place inside of prisons are kept out of sight and thus out of mind for the rest of society, or at least for those lucky enough to not have a loved one locked up. Partially in response to this, anarchists and others have established the tradition of converging outside of a prison or jail with the purpose of making a bunch of noise, launching fireworks, and holding



banners so that those locked up know they are not forgotten.

### Reflections

A recent thread in anarchist thought is that the logic of control and domination embodied in prison is becoming increasingly present throughout all of society. Surveillance cameras on every corner, more cops with scarier weapons, insidious "community police" operations, NSA spying, facial recognition software, and the algorithms of information technology all increase the power of the state and corporations in ensuring our paranoid obedience. Clearly, we have these and many other reasons for resistance, and the actions taken by anarchists outside the prison walls should be read not as an act of charitable support for the miserable victims of prison, but as solidarity from people also fighting against systems of control.

That said, the apparatus of prison is spreading in less metaphorical ways as well. With both conservative fiscal worries about balancing budgets and liberal concern over mass incarcerating non-violent drug offenders, the impetus for prison reform is in the air. But capitalism is an unstable system and needs a strong state to protect the normal rhythms of daily life that allows capital to reproduce itself. We may see a future with fewer physical prisons as we know them now, but replacing them an expansion of probation and ankle monitors confining people to house arrest. The control and domination of prison would disperse and decentralize throughout the society, if anything strengthening the capitalist system by