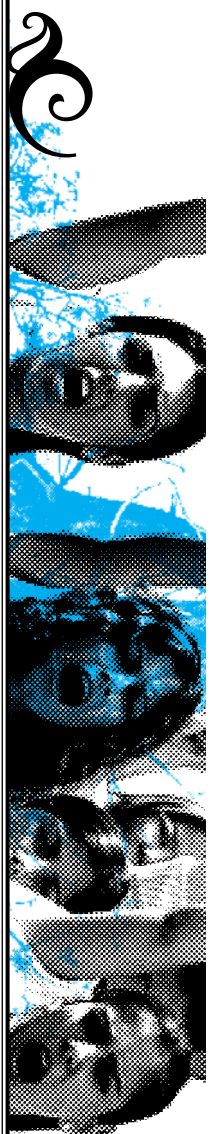
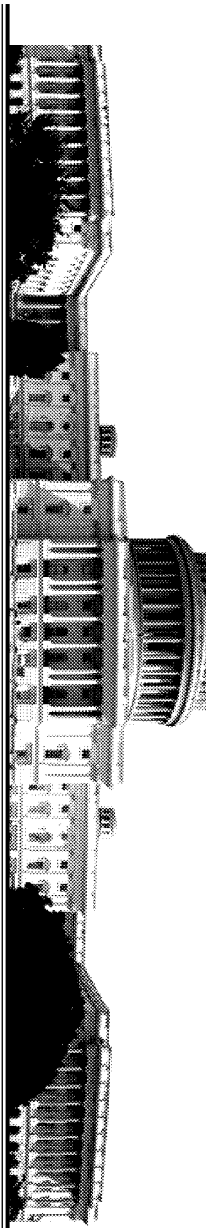
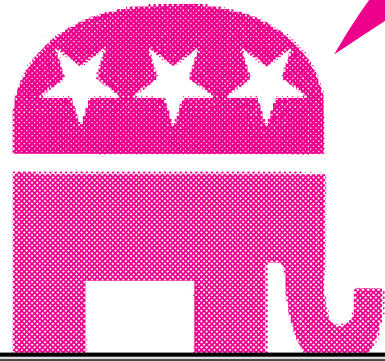


*An anti-partisan  
(beyond) voting  
guide to the  
2008 election*

# FALSE vs. REAL HOPE vs. CHANGE

THE BUSH ERA IS COMING TO AN END, AND ONCE AGAIN THE SPECTACLE OF A PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CAPTIVATES THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES. Enticed by vague rhetoric of hope and change, against a backdrop of increasing precarity and desperate global crises, millions will rally to elect a new politician to solve the problems the last batch of politicians created, or at least failed to alleviate. While we already don't have much of a choice in the two-party framework, the politicians and the mass media controlled by their major donors assure us that we don't have any other meaningful way to make a change than to go along and vote for the lesser of two evils. Certainly, the urgency of domestic and global crises demands that we all take responsibility for radically changing the world. BUT IS VOTING THE ONLY, OR EVEN THE MOST EFFECTIVE TOOL THAT WE HAVE?





Even if our candidate doesn't win, we can impact government policy by showing that we're concerned about the issues our candidate stands for.

*If all you can imagine to do about an issue that concerns you is to vote for a candidate, and even if your vote actually mattered statistically, the best that an election "victory" would ensure is their place in power, not what they will do*

*with it. Votes don't give politicians incentive to take action; when people bypass the established means of change and act directly to transform society, politicians must then scramble to catch up and prove their relevance*

*by confirming the changes that the people have enacted. And the belief that we can hold politicians accountable through the threat of withholding our votes in the next election rests on the fallacy that being voted out of office actually poses a threat to a member of the ruling class. Rather than investing our energy into electing the least objectionable candidate, we can organize social movements that more effectively pressure any ruler that comes along to make the changes we prioritize—or, better yet, make those changes ourselves.*

## FALSE CHOICE, FALSE HOPE

This election season, the politicians who piloted us into unwinnable wars, ecological catastrophes, and grievous imbalances of wealth and power will attempt to recast themselves as the only ones who can rescue us from them. If Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, and John McCain portray their values and stances regarding the war in Iraq, global warming, and the economy in opposition to each other, it's only to mask their shared ruling-class interests: securing US global military dominance, keeping political power for politicians over the rest of us, and upholding the interests of the wealthy corporations that seek to control economic and political power not just in the US, but around the world. In the end, no matter who we vote for, we will be electing the same system of rulers that facilitates war, ecological devastation, and the increasing disparity between rich and poor.

From the fundamental similarity between the interests of the two ruling parties emerges the central paradox of the election: when the compelling crises that profoundly concern the electorate are so obviously facilitated by the last batch of Democratic and Republican politicians, how can the current candidates present themselves as likely hopes to solve them? With current popular opinion solidly against the war and anxious about global warming, the candidates have an interest in paying lip service towards finding solutions to these problems. But they find themselves in a difficult position, since the economic and government/military interests that fund, defend, and enforce Democratic and Republican power are the same ones underlying imperialist occupations and catastrophic climate change. So the importance of this election isn't how the politicians will solve these problems: they won't. The significance of this election lies in how the Democrats and Republicans will spin these urgent crises to retain their seats of power, and how the rest of us will refuse their false promises.

# NO WAR

"No Blood for Oil" has long been the slogan of the anti-war movement. Securing oil resources through bloodshed only makes sense to an economy in which oil is more precious than human life. The anti-war movement has thus embarked on a strategy of disrupting "business as usual." Demonstrations, political dissent, sabotage: these expressions of protest and discontent with the war cost the ruling class far more than the money they have to spend to fix the windows of their recruitment centers or the salaries of the police they pay to beat up anti-war demonstrators. More importantly, these acts of resistance cost the politicians an obedient electorate, because when we find direct ways to affect change, we no longer need politicians and their empty promises.

If Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton claim that they will eventually end the

war, it is only because the political cost of human life in this war has become too expensive for American imperial interest to continue unchallenged. It is now worthwhile for the Democrats to appropriate the anti-war movement, to pay lip service to its values, to sweep people away from direct action in the streets to predictable, contained boxes on ballots this November.

The Democrats, who uniformly support expanding the US military and its presence internationally, will not do anything about America's addiction to war. To them, the Iraq war is an aberration, rather than a logical conclusion of the largest military in the world coupled with an economy based on insatiable greed. The Pentagon itself is the single largest consumer of oil in the world, ensuring a never-ending cycle of war that will only escalate as the supply of oil decreases.

# NO WARMING

Never before have we had a political climate in which the presidential candidates unanimously acknowledged the significance of global warming. The state of our environment could not have grown so dire without government complicity in the destruction of the earth so that big business could make an easy buck. In Appalachia the government sells out entire mountains to literally be blown up for easier mining, American car companies take advantage of low emission standards to manufacture some of the least fuel efficient cars in the world, factory farms and industrial logging receive federal subsidies while they create an increasing amount of CO2 in the atmosphere, & the list goes on. For those who care about the earth and its inhabitants, the shift in rhetoric towards environmental concern may seem like a step in the right direction. However, allowing the same political system that has facilitated the destruction of the earth for corporate profit to co-opt the struggle against global climate change as a political "issue" will only ensure that any official

solutions operate within the logic of capitalism & the government, keeping those greedy interests intact and ensuring the further commodification & destruction of the planet.

In order to continue getting richer and secure their power, the rich who run this country must ignore, subvert, or overcome limits to growth. The secret of the ruling class' ability to hold on to power is how it uses limits and crises as new launch pads to secure their position in power. So the capitalist solution to climate change will look like, well, capitalism: carbon credits, Tradable Emissions Quotas, carbon futures, Al Gore's green investment banking firm. Then there's green consumerism: green cars, solar panels, green home makeovers. They don't care about the earth; they just need to make sure we keep buying, so they keep getting richer. Like the politicians they puppet, corporations aren't invested in honestly being responsible or accountable, only in convincing consumers to buy the "socially responsible" image they market, so that the consumer economy that threatens our planet's survival can keep grinding on.

## THE PRECEDENT OF RACE & THE PRESIDENTIAL RACE

While this summary suggests that this election is just another page in the long book of tyrannical government and a cutthroat economy, at the same time it undeniably touches on important issues, in particular the racial implications of Obama's campaign. For the first time, our next president might not be another white man. But how can a Black man emerge as a leading candidate for the Democratic nomination & the presidency, at the same time that the majority of all Black men in the US, at some point, serve time in prisons & jails? With a nationwide spread of nooses at high schools, colleges, and workplaces—the symbol of mass white complicity in racist terror though lynching—how is it possible that a Black candidate for president can garner compelling majorities in predominantly white states?

These paradoxes reveal how Obama's candidacy actually reinforces the foundation of white supremacy on which our country is based. His success reinforces

the myth that poverty, particularly Black poverty, is the fault of the poor. It is an alluring possibility that our country's legacy of racism might not prevent its targets from attaining political power, supposedly demonstrating the fulfillment of the democratic promise of America. But racism and white supremacy are deeply ingrained institutions, not offices to be held, & thus cannot be voted out. Obama's chance at the presidency says less about how far we have come in overcoming the racist foundations of our society, and more about the flexibility of the system to allow a person of color to lead its imperialist, ecocidal agenda. So long as Black people are being incarcerated at alarming rates, communities of color are held hostage by the threat of state violence, and the US military continues to occupy nations & kill people of color across the world (continuing the 500-year-old system of European colonization) the color of its President does not matter.

*Voting is not an expression of our power, but our powerlessness: it is an admission that we can only approach the resources and capabilities of our own society through the mediation of an elite ruling class. When we let candidates prefabricate our options for us, we relinquish control of our world and abdicate our agency in shaping it. The more people that vote, the more confidence politicians will have that the voters they represent will remain committed to the political and economic system from which they profit at the expense of their constituents and everyone else who will never be allowed to vote in a US election.*

*And real power can never be delegated, nor lived through anyone else. Real power means individual and collective self-determination—our ability to decide for ourselves how*

# NO BORDERS

The Republican approach to defusing capitalism's contradictions is to use its negative effects to turn us against each other, preventing us from uniting against our rulers who profit from our exploitation. Nowhere is this clearer than with debates around immigration, and how they've spun the issue to stir up racist fear in white America. Many working class Americans have bought into the lie that immigrants come here to steal jobs and destabilize our economy. In reality, the corporations who take factories overseas and leave thousands jobless in the US are the same ones pushing to open foreign markets to cheap goods and cheap labor, thus destabilizing the economies of Third World countries and driving their citizens to follow the capital extracted from their home countries back to the US.

In 1994 the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) opened up Mexico's market to cheap, government-subsidized

## NO MATTER WHO YOU VOTE FOR, THE SYSTEM WINS

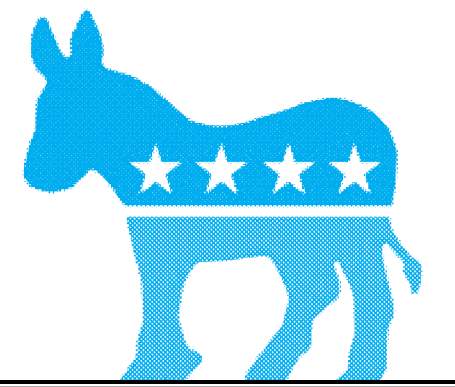
While the Republicans serve ruling class interests by shamelessly advancing an agenda of greed, reactionary conservatism, and military aggression, the Democrats serve as a pressure valve during times of political unrest. This year, the Democrats are using rhetoric of "hope" and "change" that affirms Americans' discontent, but steers clear of the real cause: capitalism. For instance, Obama's problem with the war is not that it is an unjust and brutal occupation stemming from US dependence on using military dominance to secure cheap oil. Instead, he criticizes the war's expense and drain on our military strength, wanting to send more troops to "win the fight in Afghanistan", and build the largest military in the history of the human race even larger—maintaining the under-

*lying goal of US military hegemony which breeds the kind of terrorism and hatred for the US that this "war on terror" was supposedly started to defeat in the first place.*

Democrats claim that all Americans should have health care, while never saying a word about the toxins and poisons released by their corporate donors that we eat, drink, and breathe everyday. The industries that "make it" in our economy—and the ones that underwrite political campaigns—are those with the fewest scruples about making a buck. They don't care if factory farmed animals pass on pesticides to our children, if we drink water full of pharmaceuticals and toxins because it is cheaper to dump them into our water supply, or if we breathe in pois-

My vote alone might not make much of a difference, but by joining a campaign and mobilizing other people to vote, we can make an impact and show some real power.

*ouselves? For instance, if environmentalist canvassers stopped trying to get voters to the polls to support eco-friendly candidates (whose interests will always align more with the factory owners than the communities breathing their smog) and instead spent that energy actually dismantling coal-fired power plants and polluting factories, we'd have cleaner air and water and a greater sense of our own power.*



onous fumes everyday from their power plants and factories. If an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, any sensible health care strategy would address the root cause of so much sickness, misery and death: our economic system, which values profit for a few over health and life for everyone.

All the candidates are the servants of money and oil, determined to uphold at

any cost, including the murder of Americans and Iraqis, a way of life that is destroying the planet and stealing our future. Bush's presidency proved an easy target for the discontent of many Americans, but his disastrous reign has only been a symptom of the larger diseases that plague our planet: capitalism and government. Revolution is the cure.

# VOTE OR REVOLT?

Beyond the fact that none of the individual candidates will ever free us from corporate tyranny or end social oppression, voting itself remains an ineffective means for achieving those ends. On the question of politics, of having a say in the way things are, voting is just about the only strategy anyone in the US can think of—voting and influencing others' votes. Yet nearly half of all eligible voters consistently choose to vote for no one rather than validate any of the candidates they're offered. Voter turnout is even less in many state and local elections, where more of an incentive to vote should exist because representatives are supposedly more accountable. Does this demonstrate apathy, a rejection of the responsibility to participate in shaping our world, or instead a frustration with the lack of options the system offers us? We have to create our own options, because our rulers will never offer any that could threaten their dominance.

Voting should take at most two minutes to think about—the amount of time it takes to pull the lever or press a button in the voting booth. Most people in the US will spend even less time, either because they are disillusioned with two options that don't represent their interests, or because they're disenfranchised for being felons, youth under 18, or "illegal" immigrants (as if any human being can be illegal). We should spend the rest of our time before, after, and during Election Day figuring out how we can act directly without the alienating bureaucracies that serve power and profit, not people. The most efficient way to get

things done is do it ourselves. Besides, this kind of direct action exerts leverage on *whichever* politicians are in power, by forcing them to attempt to prove their relevance by catching up to the gains of the people's power in action.

The Democratic and Republican National Conventions present spectacular opportunities to demonstrate resistance to war, global warming, capitalist exploitation, the increasing racist criminalization of communities of color, and electoral politics itself. **You're invited** to join tens of thousands of others from around the country who are disenfranchised with voting and with the false hopes we're presented with by the ruling class. At the conventions and beyond, we're taking direct action to interfere with business and politics as usual, because we want to do more than simply not participate in the system—we want to resist. These protests aren't a means to vote in a different manner for a few days, by marching and telling the politicians what we think in a vain hope that they'll listen to us. Instead, these are opportunities to disrupt the conventions, create entirely new models for politics and organizing based on freedom, cooperation, and autonomy, and to bring together people who will take home experiences with horizontal organizing, direct action, and radical possibilities to their own communities as tools for real change. Other worlds are possible: don't wait until November—**act now!**

## COLLECTIVES vs. POLITICAL PARTIES

*How do we organize ourselves as we work towards the worlds we want?*

Political parties stem from the premise that power is a scarcity that must be seized from those with conflicting interests. They operate by reducing diverse desires to a lowest common denominator to rally support for their candidate. The principle of maintaining power always takes precedence over any conviction or ideology; thus the major US political parties survive year after year by shifting their platforms, chameleon-like, to reflect whatever image they calculate the most voters/consumers will buy. And since the current political and economic system protects the monopoly of power held by the major parties and their corporate funders, any solutions they propose to social problems will have only one ultimate goal: to secure the status quo that keeps them in power. For example, Democrats focus on state-based proposals (legislation, international treaties, etc) to global climate change, whereas Republicans focus on "market" (i.e. corporate capitalist) solutions, and in this distinction they create the illusion of choice for voters. But the root cause of global climate change lies in the economic system driven by constant expansion that requires environmen-

tal devastation to function, along with the state that protects the sanctity of property so that it can continue. Thus any solutions proposed by the political parties will only cement the power of this system over us, while inhibiting any effective movement to address the root causes. However, in the US party-based framework of political power, they want you to believe that if you want to make a difference, your only option is to join with one of them, in hopes that if your party can wrestle enough power away from the others, they can enforce their will on everyone else.

An approach more empowering than signing on to a political party is organizing with people with whom you share interests to collectively realize your desires and your potential to make change. When we organize as equals, we value diverse perspectives, each individual's unique contributions, and complex understandings and realities, as opposed to the simplified, divisive issues that drive party politics. In this model, power is in abundance, not scarcity; and the further we build our capacity to work together and value each other's unique contributions, the more our individual and collective power increases. While it would take the bureaucracy of a political party months if not years to evaluate the potential costs and benefits to their power to address a certain issue, collectives can be started anywhere at any time, requiring no more than a few people to achieve or combat something. The power of political parties

comes from members' allegiance, whereas the power of collectives comes from participation.

In contrast to representative democracy, collective decision-making takes place on an ongoing basis, allowing participants to exercise real control over the projects to which they lend their time and effort. Unlike majority-rule democracy, collectives can use consensus decision making, which values the needs and concerns of each individual equally; if one person's needs are unmet by a resolution, it is everyone's responsibility to find a new solution acceptable to all. Collective decision-making does not demand that we accept any person's power over another, though it does require that everybody consider everyone else's needs. What it loses in efficiency it makes up tenfold in freedom and accountability. Instead of asking that people choose leaders or find common cause by homogenizing themselves, collectives form a more powerful working whole while allowing each participant to retain his or her own autonomy.

## ANARCHY vs. GOVERNMENT

*How is power distributed in the worlds we want?*

Government exists to protect property and control people; it is the absolute opposite of freedom. Whether the cops, judges, and soldiers protect the property of Communist party bureaucrats, the king, or wealthy capitalists in a Western democracy, the function remains the same. Without inequalities of wealth and power, government would be useless for lack of anything to defend; who needs to steal when we have the fruits of our own labors? However, we're told that only government can keep people safe from the threat we pose to each other if unchecked by a higher authority. But does relinquishing our self-determination to a central authority leave us safer?

Our leaders couldn't protect us from terrorist attacks in 2001, but they did send Americans around the globe to kill and die in brutal occupations that entrenched anti-

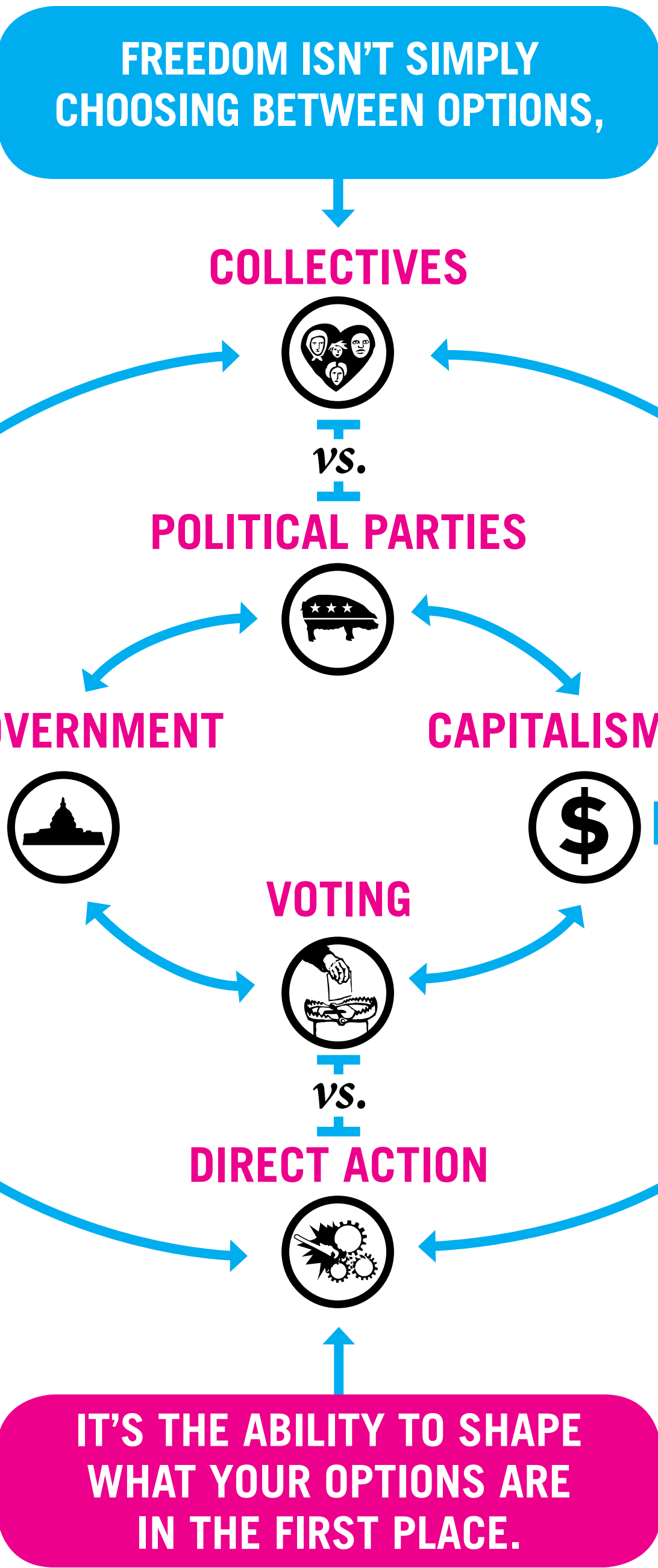
US resolve throughout the world. Meanwhile the government's rhetoric of fear, faithfully preached by the capitalist media, left many of us even more convinced that our safety relied on the state and military apparatus—when in fact the actions of the government have created unprecedented hatred towards its citizens. The "homeland" that the Department of Homeland Security claims to protect through secret prisons, torture, & surveillance can't refer to our communities (who frequently bear their attacks); the only thing kept secure by the expanding police state is the state apparatus itself. With 1 of every 100 American adults in prison, who is protected by all the incarceration? There is only one function for which government is necessary—the maintenance of itself—& its struggle for self-preservation enslaves us all.

Many understand anarchy as a general state of chaos, senseless violence, and material desperation. However, government bureaucracies & greedy corporations have ensured that this chaos has become the permanent state of affairs. Anarchy is the opposite of bureaucracy. There is nothing

more efficient than people acting on their own initiative as they see fit, & nothing more inefficient than attempting to dictate everyone's actions from above. Top-down coordination is only necessary to make people do something they would never do of their own accord.

Anarchy is the idea that no one is more qualified than you are to decide how you live, that no one should be able to vote on what you do with your time and your potential. The kind of freedom that anarchists fight for is not to be confused with so-called independence: no one is truly independent, since our lives all depend on each other. The glamorization of self-sufficiency in competitive society serves to accuse those who will not exploit others of being responsible for their own poverty. In contrast, anarchy offers a free interdependence between people who share consensus, highlighting the collectivity & cooperation that make individual freedom possible.

# FREEDOM ISN'T SIMPLY CHOOSING BETWEEN OPTIONS,



## MUTUAL AID vs. CAPITALISM

*How do we distribute resources in the worlds we want?*

Today, capitalism supposedly reigns supreme. United in their conviction that unlimited economic growth is necessary, the two parties differ only in how to most effectively stimulate it. Some economists have even declared the supposed victory of capitalist democracy in the post-Soviet world as "the end of history." But on the underside of the triumphant rhetoric lies the material misery of the many poor and the profound alienation of the few rich. If our economic system "works" so well, why are so few people actually secure in their basic needs or satisfied with their lives?

This widespread dissatisfaction isn't an accident—our economy relies on this feeling of incompleteness to keep us obediently consuming the newest solution being marketed to us. Capitalism demands constant expansion to survive; the dark side of this "growth" is the shrinking of the earth's natural resources as they are converted into dead units for economic exchange, as well as the toil of workers who are paid increasingly less for more labor.

The logic of capitalism operates directly at odds with human needs. When former World Bank president Lawrence Summers wrote, "the economic logic behind dumping a load of toxic waste in the lowest wage country is impeccable," certainly it must have been obvious that the human logic of such action is inexcusable and insane. However, this kind of insanity prevails under an economic system that materially rewards those most ruthless in their pursuit of wealth. When competition provides the basis of profit and one person's gain equals many others' loss in the zero-sum world of business, the human cost can only be unspeakably brutal. So as the world spirals into increasing poverty and ecological collapse, the corporations on top keep the wheels of misery in motion, secure in their illusion that the pursuit of profit is the only way forward. If the "end of history" means the extinction of the human race, then indeed capitalism is perhaps the only economic system so blinded to human and ecological realities to push us over that cliff.

But what could exist beyond capitalism?

After all, the pundits and economics professors have many of us convinced that capitalism is the basis of our daily survival. However, beneath all the talk of the stock market and interest rates lies the reality that none of us could survive against the capitalist economy if it wasn't for mutual aid and the gift economy. Child care, gift-giving, mentoring, co-ops, libraries, theft, bartering; these and a thousand other examples of mutual aid form the foundation on which the formal economy rests. And nearly all of these things are self-organized; we don't need a chair of the Federal Reserve to help us carpool to work or share tools with our neighbors. Our daily lives provide countless examples of how we cooperate, share, and resist the competitive greed driving the economy of investment bankers and multi-national corporations. Capitalism, rather than inescapably dominating our daily lives, simply gets in the way of us doing what we do best: supporting one another to meet our basic needs and create fulfilling lives.

Practicing mutual aid recognizes our shared interests, rather than assuming that competing will lead to the best results for everyone. Competition isn't human nature, as scientists and economists want us to believe; we can choose individually and collectively which "nature" creates the world we most want to live in, and work towards it together. In doing so we develop the trust in one another that we need to create a whole economy and way of living based on cooperation.

ests, or other power holders.

Voting is a lottery—if a candidate doesn't get elected, then all the energy his constituency put into supporting him is wasted, as the power they hoped he would exercise for them goes to someone else. With direct action you can be sure that your work will offer some kind of results, and the resources you develop in the process—whether those be experience, contacts and recognition in your community, or organizational infrastructure—last far beyond the election.

Voting forces everyone in a movement to try to agree on one platform, suppressing differences and suppressing everyone's individual desires. With direct action, on the other hand, no vast consensus is necessary: different groups can apply different approaches according to what they believe in and feel comfortable doing, which can still interact to form a mutually beneficial whole.

Finally, voting is only possible when election time comes around and can only

address the topics that are current in the political agendas of the candidates. During this election year, we hear constantly about the options available to us as voters, but almost nothing about our other opportunities to play a decisive role in our society during the other 364 days of the year. Direct action can be applied whenever you see fit, in every aspect of your life, in every part of the world you live in. While voting and direct action are not mutually exclusive, we hear so little about the latter precisely because it puts power back where it belongs: in the hands of the people from whom it originates. Not only can direct action more effectively accomplish our goals than voting, the experience of solving problems and creating a better world directly rather than through representatives opens up a limitless horizon of possibilities for managing our own lives, without relying on any authority to do it for us.

**THE SYSTEM IS ALL SOCIAL AND POLITICAL POSSIBILITY COMPRESSED INTO A SINGLE POINT; THE ILLUSION OF CHOICE MASKING A PROFOUND LACK OF AGENCY OVER OUR OWN LIVES.**

**IT'S THE ABILITY TO SHAPE WHAT YOUR OPTIONS ARE IN THE FIRST PLACE.**

**DIRECT ACTION vs. VOTING**  
*What tools do we use to create the worlds we want?*

Voting is the least effective strategy for having a say in society. You can vote once or twice a year, but it's what you do every day that counts. The alternative to voting, broadly speaking, is acting directly to represent your interests yourself. Direct action is occasionally misunderstood to mean a specific kind of campaigning, lobbying for influence on elected officials by means of political activist tactics; but it properly refers to any action or strategy that cuts out intermediaries and solves problems directly, without appealing to elected representatives, corporate inter-

**REVOLUTION MEANS EXPLODING THE CONSTRAINTS THAT KEEP US LOCKED INTO THIS ONE COMPRESSED POINT OF POSSIBILITY OF HOW WE CAN LIVE TOGETHER, AND ALLOWING ALL OF US TO EXPAND OUTWARDS INTO THE LIMITLESS POSSIBILITIES THAT EXIST BEYOND HIERARCHY.**

# RESISTANCE

## SMASH THE SYSTEM



The Democratic National Convention takes place August 25-28 in Denver, CO. The Republican National Convention is September 1-4 in St. Paul, MN. You can participate in blockades to disrupt the conventions and put the power in the streets.



You can make the police think twice before brutalizing somebody by organizing a CopWatch program, in which civilians keep watch of the police through patrolling the neighborhood, recording incidents of police harassment, and taking down badge numbers and names.



You can cut into the profit of destructive corporations by shutting down their stores with sabotage or street theater, by blocking the shipments of their commodities, and by exposing their wrongdoings.



You can distribute literature about direct action and demonstrate creative ways to meet our needs without politicians outside of voting booths on election day.



You can support people in prison by sending them books and letters. Especially try to support folks from the communities you belong to, so you can keep them involved and up-to-date in spite of their incarceration.



You can seize the means of production and use them to produce for human needs, not profit. Short of shutting down and taking back a factory, you can reappropriate photo-copies, food, and other resources useful to organizing against the exploitation of work and capitalism.



You can disable the war machine by harassing military recruiters and spreading counter-recruitment information. On the street, you can confront them about their lies and promises. You can decorate their offices with spray paint, posters, and the occasional broken window...or even more.

Unlike the ballot, where you have pre-selected choices, with direct action you have limitless possibilities for creation and resistance. These are just a few.



You can become the media by writing, photographing, and filming your own news and posting or printing them through the Indymedia(org) network.



You can plant community gardens on unused plots of land, reaping both fresh food and solid bonds with your neighbors.



You can organize collective bike recycleries to share tools, parts, and skills, decreasing your reliance on cars, capitalism, and experts.



You can find ways to resolve conflicts and address abusive behavior through community accountability groups of peers, rather than invoking more violence through police and prisons.



You can reclaim the roads for bikes through Critical Mass rides that challenge the stranglehold of car culture.



You can collect food that would otherwise go to waste and share it with your friends and neighbors through a Food Not Bombs group and grocery distribution programs.



You can organize non-hierarchical self-education groups & skill-shares to teach each other the knowledge your community wants, without schools.



You can occupy abandoned and unused buildings for housing & community projects, & defend people facing evictions from their homes.



You can set up Really Really Free Markets in parks or community centers to share all

sorts of goods and services for free and to cultivate a local culture of mutual aid.



With your friends and comrades, you can organize affinity groups: small, tight-knit collectives that can effectively carry out actions at demonstrations or on your own.



You can set up pirate radio stations to broadcast alternative views and break the corporate monopoly of the airwaves.



You can refuse government and corporate regulation of public space through joyous and unpermitted Reclaim the Streets parties.



You can connect with people & communities in resistance all across the globe...we are everywhere!

# START A REVOLUTION



# CREATION

# ANARCHY & ANARCHISTS WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE WANT



**ANARCHISM** is the word we use to express our passionate desire for a world on our own terms. Everyone from capitalists to communists uses the word "freedom" as some catch all term that their way of running the world can bring you. When we use it here, we don't intend to use the same empty rhetoric. Democracy, Justice, Liberty, Freedom, Revolution—they've all been co-opted by everything from tyrannical governments to cell phone commercials, almost to the point they don't mean anything anymore. We mean for a world without rulers, a world without borders, and a world where when freedom is spoken of it's for all, not just those within a particular nation, class, race, gender, or religion. We want to break down such divisions altogether.

Anarchism describes both the type of society we envision as well as our process for creating it, based on mutual aid, voluntary association, autonomy, and cooperation. We didn't come up with this word through testing it on focus groups, and it

doesn't concern us whether or not you use it, or any other label, for your own frustration and alienation from the status quo of voting for politicians, or your desires for something different. We don't want to take power to then impose what we believe would be better rules and more just restrictions. We don't want to run the world; we want everyone to run their own lives together. Whether as an anarchist, a Democrat or Republican, or anything else, what's important isn't what you call yourself, but how you resist oppression and create alternatives.



**DIRECT ACTION** is the term we use for the path out of the world we live in now into the ones we desire. In taking direct action, we bypass the established channels for political expression, and address problems and accomplish goals directly by undertaking them ourselves. For us, it's not just about disagreeing with the stances of one or all of the candidates we're offered—it's about

questioning whether any politician can represent us or create a world in which we can live freely. While some might be willing to bite their tongues for a more progressive Democrat or cross their fingers on a third party candidate, many of us have dreams that will never fit into ballot boxes...

## AND WE'RE WRITING TO INVITE YOU TO PARTICIPATE ALONGSIDE OF US.

Unlike presidential elections and the shelves of chain stores, where your consumer choices are neatly pre-selected and laid out for you by people you'll never meet, amongst anarchists you'll actually have to think for yourself. No one will ask you what your stances are on "the issues," as defined and framed by the politicians and the experts. Instead, we want to know:

## WHAT ARE YOUR DESIRES?

## WHAT KIND OF WORLD DO YOU WANT TO LIVE IN?

No one can sell you any fashionably packaged solutions to your alienation from the political system—least of all anarchists! Our goal isn't to become candidates and convince you to vote for us or our positions—we want everyone to articulate their own visions, and to have the tools and the agency to enact those visions for

themselves. We want to completely leave behind the world of partitioned "issues," the consumerist illusion of choice, and the idea that anyone can represent us. In their place, we're creating relationships of affinity with those around us who share common interests, similar alienation, and compatible visions of a way to live without ruling or being ruled.

Sure, there are glimpses into other worlds of possibility that inspire us...but ultimately, anyone who lays out a formula for The Revolution with a capital R plays the same game as the politicians who claim to offer us salvation through their expertly designed plans to manage our discontent. Anyway, the point isn't to have it all figured out; the point is to *act*. Freedom is not a commodity, it's a process; we become free by acting freely, and no one can do that for us.

When we step outside of the trap of voting in elections into the vast universe of possibility that exists through direct action, we hold the keys to all of the worlds we've only dreamed of, the worlds we never saw in the carefully worded questions of the pollsters or the polished rhetoric of the lesser of two evils. We have worlds to win beyond the electoral system, worlds that are beginning to unfold around you even now. Let's reclaim our lives from the empty promises of the ballot boxes and start realizing our dreams, right here and right now.

## JOIN THE RESISTANCE TO POLITICS-AS-USUAL AT THE

### DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION

August 25–28, Denver, CO  
[www.dncdisruption08.org](http://www.dncdisruption08.org)

### REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION

September 1–4, St. Paul, MN  
[www.nornc.org](http://www.nornc.org)

An excellent time to take direct action against war, warming, borders, police repression, capitalism, and oppression.  
 A great time to meet thousands of others ready to go beyond voting to create a freer, more just world.



Of course I want equality and self-determination, but it's just unrealistic in the world today. We should push for progress by electing the best candidate available.

Political parties do not offer any kind of progress beyond their power. Sure, the parties differ over exactly how much to repress personal freedoms or spend on bombs—but do we ever get to vote

on issues of how power is distributed? Do we ever get to vote on who controls "public" spaces such as shopping malls, or whether workers are entitled to the full product of their labor, or any other question that could seriously change

the way we live?  
 In such a state of affairs, the essential function of the democratic process is to limit the appearance of what is possible to the narrow spectrum debated by candidates for office. This demoralizes dissidents and contributes to the general impression that they are impotent utopians - when nothing is more utopian than trusting representatives from the owning class to redress the grievances caused by their own dominance, and nothing more impotent than accepting their political system as the only possible political system.

# VOTE *or* REVOLT?



My vote is my voice, so I should use it. We should be grateful that we live in a society where we are allowed a voice in our government.

*If democracy in America means we're only permitted to speak once every year or two, while the decisions made by those politicians who claim to speak for us impact us every single day, then having a "voice" certainly doesn't correspond to having any self-determination in our day-to-day*

*lives. Voting in elections is an expression of our voicelessness, an admission that we can't find any way to speak other than mouthing the words of our rulers at their appointed intervals. Of course we can and must use our voices—but why limit our vocabulary to such a flawed and indirect language? When the only voice they offer us is about which wealthy politician*

*can best further US capitalism's imperialist, ecocidal agenda, it's no wonder that more votes go to no one in every US election than to any candidate. But the disillusionment that fuels voter abstention offers just as little resistance to the violence of the status quo as futile ballot-casting, unless it's accompanied by the kind of voice that speaks louder than words (or votes) ever could: direct action.*

*Remember, if voting changed anything, it would be illegal—but the same goes for not voting, too. Whether we vote or not, the ruling class wants us to remain docile. Let's bring the struggle to their front steps, and build the worlds we want to see ourselves, here and now.*

*The president can only claim to "represent" us in the absence of passionate, visible resistance outside of the electoral process. So long as we confine our participation to voting and accept a system that delegates our power and agency to representatives, we are accountable for whatever crises our government creates, because of our failure to resist them. But when we directly challenge the authority they claim to hold over us, we rupture the illusion that politicians, or anyone else, can speak on our behalf. If we've handed over responsibility for our society and our own lives to our rulers, then we can't be surprised when they act in their own interests instead of ours,*

The president represents our whole country, whether you like it or not—if you don't vote, you can't complain.

*as they always have. If all you do is vote, you can't complain!*

*When were you ever offered a choice about whether or not you wanted to be ruled at all, rather than simply voicing an opinion about which ruler is best suited to appropriate your power? We didn't consent to this system, and we refuse to validate our own*

*disempowerment—but instead of just complaining, we can take back responsibility for our own liberation by acting directly to interrupt injustice and creating better ways to live.*



Whether or not I think it's a good system, we need to vote because the reality is that politicians make the decisions that impact our lives.



*The decisions made by politicians (or any other gang of thugs seeking to control our lives) only become reality because we recognize and enact them. Republicans and Democrats can vote for all the wars they want, but not a single bullet can be fired without someone mining the ore, smelting the iron, manufacturing the gun and the casing, transporting it across the world, and donning the soldier's uniform. At every step in that process, people wake up,*

*go to work, and make daily choices to keep the gears grinding. Of course, none of those choices could be called "free"—from the miner whose family could be evicted if he doesn't bring home that paycheck, to the truck driver who can't find a better paying job without a college degree, to the soldier whose family pressured her to go to college and had no other means of getting the money. Each and every one of us forms a strand in this web of coercion keeping the machines of war and death and industry running. And every day*

*provides us an opportunity to resist the dictates of our rulers simply by refusing to follow the orders of our bosses who answer to them, and supporting each other in our refusal.*

*Beyond that, even those of us outside of those spheres have the power to disrupt every step in the process. From sabotaging the munitions factory to blockading the mines, from bringing food to the striking dockworkers to housing GI resisters, we can call upon an infinite array of tactics to resist whatever tricks the politicians think up next. Instead of hoping (painfully naïvely, if their voting records indicate anything) that electing a Democrat will stop the US occupation of Iraq, we can devote the energy and resources to directly ending it ourselves.*

*AND WHO KNOWS, IN THE PROCESS WE MIGHT FORGET WHY WE THOUGHT WE NEEDED POLITICIANS IN THE FIRST PLACE.*

## A Publication of Unconventional Action

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