



Tides of Flame

a Seattle anarchist paper

joy ~ freedom ~ rebellion

SPECIAL OCCUPATION ISSUE

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*Who will revive the
violent whirlpools
of flame*

*if not us and those
that we consider
brothers?*

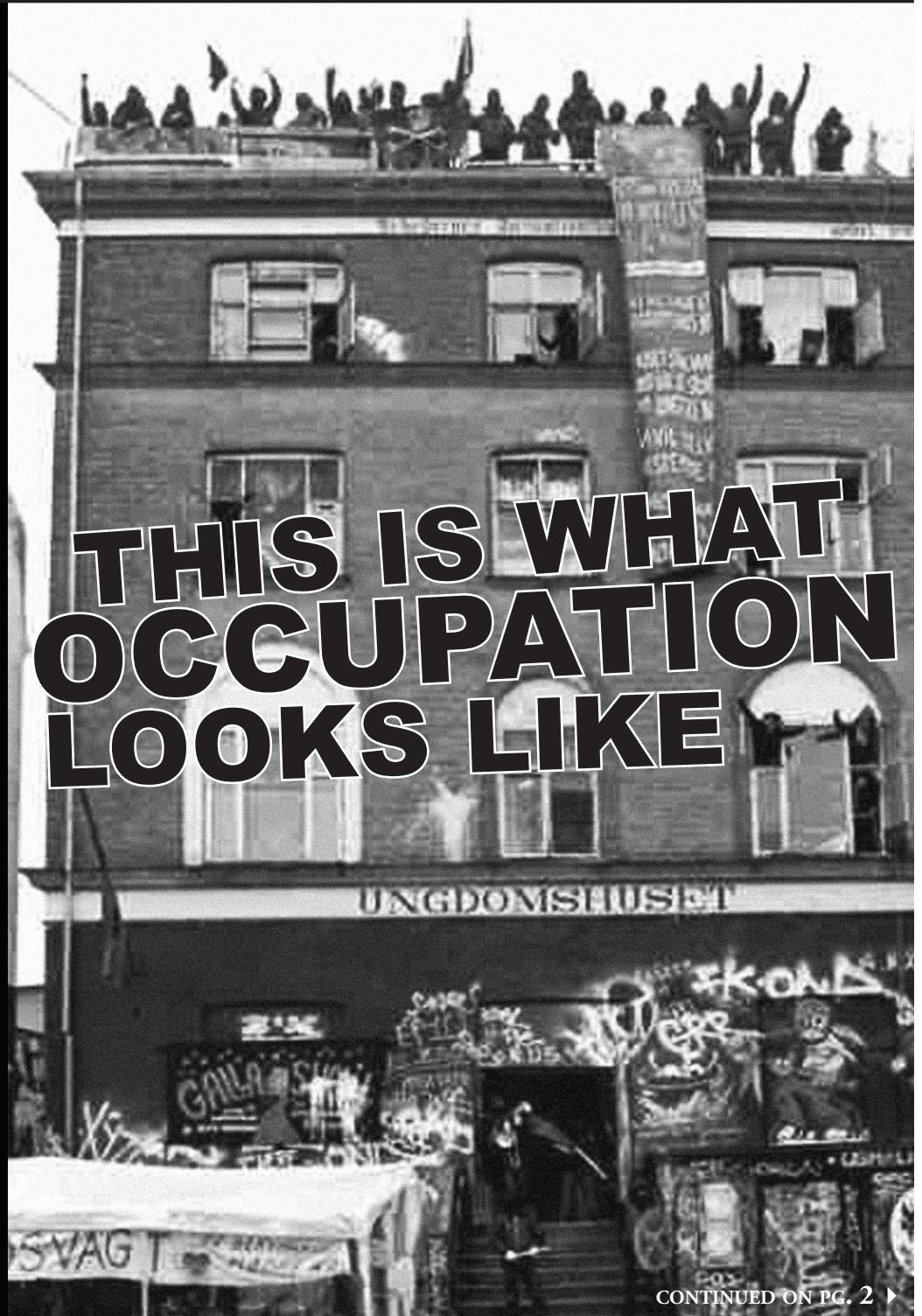
Come!

*New friends: this will
please you.*

*We will never work,
oh tides of flame!*

**This world
will explode.**

A. Rimbaud



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◀ Occupy Buildings

Anarchists have been occupying space for well over a hundred years now. The same old problems keep arising whenever we do so: the police attack and murder us, the middle class condemns us, and the capitalists starve us out. But we keep trying even though it doesn't get any easier. If you are a regular reader of *Tides of Flame*, you may have gathered that anarchist history is blacked-out and nearly forgotten. In the spirit of keeping the flame alive, we'll fill you in on some examples and methods of anarchist occupations.

The picture on the front cover of this issue is of the Ungdomshuset (Youth House) in Copenhagen, Denmark. Since the turn of the 20th century, the building had housed various leftist collectives. Government repression made it difficult for radical groups to find places for meetings and so these groups built the house with their own hands. Construction on what was then called the Folkets Hus (People's House) was finished in 1897, and for the next decades it served as a hub for subversive activity. International Women's Day was created at a meeting in this house in 1910. In 1918, the storming of the Danish Stock Exchange was planned there. The house was located at 69 Jagtvej, and the symbol of Gemini eventually became its emblem.

In 1982, a group of anarchists took over the house and named it Ungdomshuset, signifying a new era for the historical building. At the time, anarchists were squatting buildings and neighborhoods all over Western Europe and the house served as a vital node in the network of anarchist infrastructure. Artists such as Nick Cave and Bjork played there, along with dozens of legendary European punk bands. Food was given out for free, talks were held,

and demonstrations were planned inside the house. In 1999, the house was put up for sale by the city (the official owner of the building). In response to this, the anarchists hung a banner from the roof that read "For sale along with 500 autonomen, stone throwing, violent psychopaths from hell." The house was eventually sold to a christian group, but the anarchists remained for the next eight years, not paying any rent.

During that time, Ungdomshuset continued to fuel rebellion on the streets of Copenhagen. A pirate radio housed inside the building broadcast uncensored messages of defiance. A people's kitchen fed and maintained a large community of anarchists, street people, free-thinkers, and students. As always, demonstrations and actions were planned and often started from this building. So it is no surprise that when, in 2006, the owners announced they would tear down the building, the free people of Copenhagen rose up in revolt.

The evangelical christian owners of the building, convinced the anarchists were under the influence of the devil, were determined to get rid of the demons. Before the actual eviction, over 2,000 people took over the streets on December 16th, 2006. Burning barricades were placed all over the city, police were attacked with stones, sticks, and fireworks, and countless tear gas canisters were fired at the rebels. When the night was over, the police has arrested 273 people, the most that had been arrested in Denmark since the Nazi occupation.

On March 1st, 2007, the house was

evicted by hundreds of riot police and special units who landed on the roof of the building via helicopter. For the next four days, Copenhagen was engulfed in rage and chaos. Police vans were torched with molotov cocktails, dozens of burning barricades blocked the streets, and a school was burnt down. The famous statue of Hans Christian Anderson's "Little Mermaid" was painted pink, her stone base anointed with the Gemini symbol and an big circle-A.

On March 5th, the building was torn down and the demons were left without a home. But the fires of the anarchists were a testament to the energy that had kept the house alive and thriving for over a century. Ungdomshuset was not the only occupied house in Copenhagen, although it was the most famous. To this day, there still exist anarchist-occupied houses and buildings (called "squats" in English) in Denmark and throughout Europe.

Occupy Neighborhoods



This used to be a parking lot.

Beyond occupying buildings, anarchists and other anti-authoritarians also occupy entire neighborhoods. One such neighborhood exists in the eternal city of Athens, Greece. It is called Exarchia and has been an anarchist haven

Breaking *the Myth of Egypt's* NONVIOLENT REVOLUTION

Most Americans seem to agree that the toppling of Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak was a non-violent revolution. This is a truly mystifying phenomenon, given the facts. In reality, Egyptian rebels confronted state authority using a diversity of tactics, including both nonviolent and violent means. And the “revolution” itself is far from complete these many months later. Despite Mubarak’s fall, power is still concentrated in the hands of a very few—this time those of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces. These new leaders are the senior officers of the same military previously applauded for not turning their guns on their own people.

It is very important to break the myth of Egypt’s “nonviolent revolution,” especially in light of the recent explosion of supposedly “Tahrir-style” occupations popping up in hundreds of cities across the US. One stark difference between occupations like the one in Westlake Plaza and those in many other parts of the world is the nearly unquestioned acceptance of strict nonviolence.

In Tahrir Square, protesters again and again countered the violence of the police and pro-government vigilantes with both spontaneous and organized self-defense. Though many remained nonviolent, those willing to fight armed themselves with whatever they could find—rocks, sticks, Molotov cocktails, knives—and defended the occupation. Hundreds lost their lives in clashes



Burnt hull of the ruling party's headquarters, Cairo.

throughout Egypt as burning barricades lit the night sky. To insist that the Egyptian uprising was nonviolent erases the contribution these brave fighters made to the struggle and is incredibly insulting.

Even worse is the tendency among certain sectors of the American left to credit white American Gene Sharp’s nonviolence theories as a major inspiration for the Arab Spring. In reality, a decades-long war of repression was being waged against any who spoke or acted against the Mubarak regime. The Tunisian revolt, not often held up

as such a pure example of nonviolent struggle (and for good reason), is what truly spurred those millions of angry Egyptians into action. The Tunisians’ bravery and defiance surely proved much more inspirational than any single nonviolence theorist’s ideas.

In case the point has not yet been clearly made, consider January 28, 2011, the Egyptian “Day of Rage.” On this day, rioting protesters attacked and burned a great many police stations and vehicles, often making off with arms and other useful equipment. The rather large headquarters of the National Democratic Party—Mubarak’s party—was attacked and burned as well on this day.

To be clear, we are not interested in perpetuating the violence/nonviolence dichotomy. Nonviolent tactics and more militant ones both have their strengths and weaknesses. We should

choose our tactics based on effectiveness, not on religious adherence to nonviolence or fetishization of violence.

The problem lies in dogmatically and moralistically defending nonviolence while decrying any use or talk of violence or self-defense as the work of agents provocateurs. With little debate the Occupy movement has adopted a stance of nonviolence while at the same time holding up two oftentimes violent revolutions as its main inspiration. On the surface this is simply hypocritical, but it also brings up an important question. Is dogmatic adherence to nonvio

FORGOTTEN HISTORY

Anarchists *and the* Battle in Seattle

Time is not linear and we always return to the same moment, on the verge of breaking out of our cages. Sometimes the gap between these singular moments can last for decades. We grow old, forget what it felt like, and almost lose our connection with the eternal source of all rebellion. But sometimes we are lucky and receive another chance to put all of our will and energy into another one of these moments where everything can change and the promises of youth can overflow the constraints of age.

One of these moments occurred for many people for a few strange days in the winter of 1999. An activist network had planned for months to shut down the World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference that was to take place at the Convention Center starting on November 30th. The day before the conference started, thousands of people swarmed downtown Seattle, hoping to peacefully show the world that they were against global capitalism and what it was doing to the planet. Some of them even dressed like turtles and marched alongside trade unionists, but all of them were prevented from going anywhere near the delegates by a massive number of riot police.

Beneath the high windows of the hotels where the delegates were staying, a large group of people surrounded the Nike Town on Pike and 6th. Everyone present detested the practices of Nike and their use of sweatshop labor, but only a small group actually did anything with their anger. Anarchists and other people serious about their convictions began to bang on the windows of Nike Town. This modest, feeble effort to break the windows of a vile corporation was enough to send certain people into a frenzy. Almost at once, people in the crowd began to chant “non-violence” while attempting to physically restrain the angry ones. These confused people, who were rumored to dislike Nike, ended up protecting that same corporation

from physical damage.

Later in the day, five thousand people encircled the (now demolished) Kingdome and chanted for the WTO to “cancel the debt” of “undeveloped” nations, unaware that the capitalist conference delegates truly did not care about them. While this was going on, a group of people occupied an empty building near the Seattle Center in defiance of the law. The contrast between these two events exemplifies the split within the anti-globalization movement of the time: symbolic protest and direct action.

The next day, November 30th, was the day when the squandered energy of thousands of people finally burst out of their bodies and invaded Seattle. It all started early in the morning with a group called the Direct Action Network blockading intersections around the Convention Center with structures and their bodies. These blockades began to grow and eventually were so effective that delegates could not get from their hotels to the conference.

Anarchists also began setting up barricades in the street, but because they were dressed in black and hid their faces, they were chased away by “non-violent” activists. Unable to work with the rest of the protesters, anarchists and others marched away, lead by a mobile group of musicians carrying black and green flags. Around 10:15 PM, these people begin physically attacking buildings owned by Bank of America, Washington Mutual, Nike, and US Bank, among others. In short, these anarchists attacked the architects of the current financial crisis nine years before it happened. While this type of activity is nothing new to anarchists, it was complete heresy to the ideologues of dogmatic pacifism.

Because the blockades were effective at keeping the delegates from the conference, the police began to assault the peaceful protesters. The police would blame the anarchists, and this fic-

tion would spread into the minds and mouths of non-violent activists, but the truth of the matter is that the police were already dressed in riot gear, already had tear gas launchers and pepper spray, and had received orders to clear the way for the delegates. The attack on the non-violent blockaders had nothing to do with the anarchists and everything to do with the authoritarian command structure of the police. The police did the job they were instructed to do that day.



Disgruntled retail workers? -

By the afternoon, downtown was in complete chaos. Some people reported seeing spirits dancing in the streets, others said they saw “mythical animals” running atop the concrete. The anarchists destroyed corporate shops in the shopping district, and soon enough dozens of people were looting stores and taking what they wanted. The delegates and guests, including the Secretary of State, remained trapped in their hotels. Fires were lit on the street and people danced to insane rhythms. Hundreds of people

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More Jobs? No thanks!

I seek a meaningful life.

Vacant time, dead time, the time of emptiness and fear of emptiness – this is the time of work. There will be no more time to fill, but a liberation of energy.

-The Invisible Committee



WTO Protests, Seattle, 1999

From droning chants of “Money for jobs and education/ Not for wars and occupation!” to a rally at Westlake Plaza in support of Obama’s American Jobs Act, many Occupy Seattle protesters seem hell-bent on putting the unemployed and underemployed back to work. But is the problem really a lack of jobs or is it the economic system—*capitalism*—itself? Will more jobs actually get at the root of poverty or simply expand exploitation and misery?

Under capitalism, we must have jobs in order to get the things we need. We

exchange our time (and thus our lives) for the money we need in order to live. It’s actually quite absurd. Our lives are an endless cycle of work to live to work. This is why anarchists often refer to work, without the least bit of irony, as wage slavery. When one’s mind and body are subject to a system that demands time and labor in return for the barest essentials; when the choice is hunger and homelessness or all the drudgery of the time-clock, work is forced, it is coerced, and it is very, very violent.

To be against work is not to be against *doing*. An anarchist critique of work comes from the desire for a passionate life filled with joy and creativity, doing what is necessary and vital for survival *on one’s own terms*. The work week, as it stands, is unnecessarily long. Many people’s days are tied up in meaningless, mind-numbing labor, foaming milk, pushing brooms, and standing for hours in front of tills brimming with cash that isn’t theirs. If every unhappy wage slave’s time was liberated, just imagine how many people would be left with all the time in the world, looking for ways to re-create their lives.

The American Jobs Act is Obama’s answer to Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal. On the surface, stimulating the economy and rebuilding American infrastructure may seem like a good idea to many—after all, who wants another bridge collapse? But when examined more critically and from a historical perspective, it becomes obvious that both the New Deal and the American Jobs Act were/are more about rejuvenating American capitalism and shoring up popular support for a strong, centralized, and authoritarian government than about helping people to live more fulfilling lives. There is a big difference between a group of autonomous individuals coming together to build a cedar

footbridge over water, connecting one side of a river to the other, for their own particular reasons, and a government providing tax cuts to private construction companies who hire workers to repair the damaged arteries of capitalism.

And, make no mistake, this is exactly what the American Jobs Act is all about. Forget the feel-good patriotism and remember that FDR was racist. Let go of the lies your teacher told you and recall that the New Deal resulted in the same old terrible shit: bosses and wage slaves, environmental destruction through projects like the Hoover Dam, and war aplenty. All those heart-warming Fireside Chats were just the manipulative bedtime stories of a man whose heart was frozen by power.

American poverty and unemployment have never been “solved” because the capitalists and politicians that have always run this country need the poor like they need water. They use and abuse us and cloud our minds with a ridiculous pride for the system that keeps us from freedom. Luckily, more and more of us are finally getting the joke.

In this society, work is honorable. To not work is to be lazy, selfish, unlucky, or just generally defective. What is missing from this very common analysis of work is that unemployment is actually necessary to the health of capitalism. When some are out of work, the rest are kept captives of fear—at least *I have a job*, some think, *at least I can afford food and place to live*. Unemployment also serves to keep wages down and profits up. After all, if you don’t like your paycheck or show too little enthusiasm on the job, there is always someone ready to replace you.

Though the previous generation was promised less work thanks to automation and healthy retirement funds, we now see our mothers and fathers, even

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WTO

◀ CONTINUED FROM PG. 4


were gassed, beaten, and tortured by the police, having pepper spray blasted directly into their eyes in order to break the blockades. Nearly fifty thousand people were clogging to entirety of the downtown core. Metro stopped running buses throughout Seattle, cars could not drive down the streets, and the psychic layout of the city had changed. In the areas between the people and the police existed a free area, and the joy experienced in those hours of November 30th was beyond description. There were no more laws in certain parts of Seattle and people experienced the freedom that only rebellion can set loose.

But, of course, the police still existed, with all of their armor and weapons, and eventually began to push everyone up the hill into a still counter-cultural Capitol Hill. Once there, the residents of the neighborhood got a taste of the force that the police use to crush any potent rebellion. They attacked people indiscriminately, pushing the crowd up to the Egyptian Theater where fires were lit in the street. It was not until nearly midnight that the police succeeded in driving everyone back into their homes. However, the energy of that day carried over into the next three days. But that is a story for another time.

In closing, let it be said that the promise of November 30th vanished soon after the beginning of the twenty-first century. There was too much division, too many single-issue causes, and not enough resolve amongst the anti-globalization movement to make the commitment to throw themselves into the battle to physically destroy capitalism. September 11th, 2001, came, taking everyone's eyes off the spread of capitalism and heralding a nightmare of repression, surveillance, and paranoia.

Some people from those days in the winter of 1999 went off to wage a low-level guerrilla war against the destroyers of the Pacific Northwest, only to be captured and destroyed by the authorities.

Others got jobs with NGO's and embraced a green-yuppie lifestyle. Some betrayed their friends and themselves while others died of heroin overdoses on the street. Some have made it out alive, still remembering what they glimpsed during that time.

And here we are, a dozen years later, looking at a small park in downtown Seattle, where hundreds of people are learning once again to rebel and act together in defiance of the law. Let us not wait another decade for a chance to break free. Let us take this opportunity and push it as far as we can. Hopefully, we will not restrain each other this time and will instead fight together, always. 

Occupy

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Since the 1970's. A US-backed fascist Sdictatorship ruled Greece from 1967 to 1974, and Exarchia was where the rebellion against the government broke out in on November 15th, 1973.

The Athens Polytechnic University, located in Exarchia, was the epicenter of this rebellion, with students going on strike, barricading the campus, and building a pirate radio over which they transmitted messages calling on the people to rise up. On November 17th, the government sent in tanks and soldiers to crush the occupation of the campus. The military murdered over 25 people that night and injured hundreds more.

After the crackdown, the fascist government collapsed and a new "democratic" government was installed. But the people of Exarchia never forgot what the government had done to them, and ever since those days Exarchia has been a free area. Police are not welcome anywhere in the neighborhood and will only enter in groups, always clad in riot gear. Over the years, government offices, police stations, and banks have been routinely attacked, burnt, and bombed out of the neighborhood. As of this writing, these

institutions have to be guarded by police armed with assault rifles. In addition to this, police buses filled with 25 riot cops are always on standby for any spontaneous attacks. Despite this, Exarchia remains a place full of life and activity.

The Polytechnic University is still used as a place for meeting and planning by anarchists and other free people. On any random night, the lecture halls might be filled with two hundred people, either having a GENERAL ASSEMBLY or a meeting. The air will be filled with cigarette smoke, people will be drinking beer, and critical issues for the defense of the neighborhood and the anarchist space will be discussed with passion and intention. The walls of the University are covered in graffiti and posters, the administration bends to the whims of the occupiers, and undocumented people seek protection there. Unfortunately, sensing that this kind of autonomous space is becoming increasingly dangerous to the status quo, the Greek government recently allowed police the ability to enter the campus, something that was forbidden since the massacre of 1973.

The heart of Exarchia is its square. It is smaller than Westlake Park but has the same triangular shape. In the center of it is a statue of three dancing children on which political posters are pasted. Hundreds of people use the park every day, and it is so autonomous that young teens commonly make Molotov cocktails in plain sight. Drinking and smoking weed are common, and the square is bustling well into the early hours of the morning. Just a few blocks from Exarchia Square is the self-managed park, a former parking lot that was turned into a garden, playground, amphitheater, and socializing area. Hundreds of people gather there every night, smoking, drinking, and having discussions. In the summer people project movies, play music, and carry on until the sun rises. The park was built illegally and has withstood numerous assaults by the police since it was built in 2008. As of

-----> this writing, the park is still there.

Exarchia is not perfect but it certainly is special. The neighborhood is so strong that when a 16 year-old anarchist was killed in 2008 by a cop in the alley between Exarchia Square and the park, the entire neighborhood rose up and triggered an insurrection that spread throughout Greece. For a month, the streets of Athens burned, igniting a global economic panic in the context of the new recession. Were it not for the occupied neighborhood of Exarchia, this might have never happened.

The strength of an occupation is dependent on the courage of the occupiers and the power of the spirit that animates them. This courage and this spirit make it possible for a building or a neighborhood to transform into a space free from authority. All of us have the power to liberate space and to create an environment in which we can live our dreams. Let's go for it, not only here in Westlake Park, but in every building, neighborhood, and workplace in Seattle. 🌀

THE POLICE ARE THE TOOL OF THE 1%

The Police might just be doing their job when they eventually evict us from the plaza, but they do in fact have a choice, just like we have a choice in say whether to call in sick for work or not. A question we should ask is: If the Police really were part of the 99%, if they were really with us, then why would they evict us? Why would they continue to just "do their job"?

The Police help the banks evict us from our foreclosed homes everyday, but if they really were with us in this struggle-then why don't they stop? This struggle against corporate greed requires people giving up roles (such as the police) that are needed to lubricate the nuts and bolts that hold the status quo together. This would mean for them to not follow orders from their superiors,



Athens Polytechnic University

this would mean no longer being police.

The Police might be blue-collar or part of the "99%," but they enforce the laws that keep the divide between the rich and the poor intact. The police are the protectors of the 1%. The police are the ones firing tear gas and rubber bullets whenever a demonstration gets out of hand. They are the ones who stand between every hungry person and the grocery shelves stocked with food, between every homeless person and the buildings standing empty, between every immigrant and her family. The police are the ones who beat Occupy Wall Street protestors, who gunned down John T Williams and Oscar Grant, and who murdered Fred Hampton in his bed. They are the ones who once enforced segregation in the United States and who back the bosses and the 1% in every strike.

The Police as an institution, that is an extension of the 1%, are fundamentally and very concretely in the way of what we really want—the end of a society based on class divisions. The downtown police officers might be the nicest people in the world, but they will still be the ones evicting us from the plaza. They are still part of that same extension.

This means they're not to be trusted by any of us involved in the occupation. 🌀

SAVE THESE DATES:

*Anarchist General
Assembly*

October 18, 7pm
@ The Vera Project
305 Harrison Street



*March Against
Police Brutality*

October 22, 2pm
@ Westlake Plaza
4th and Pine

Egypt

◀ CONTINUED FROM PG. 3

lence in our best interest as a movement?

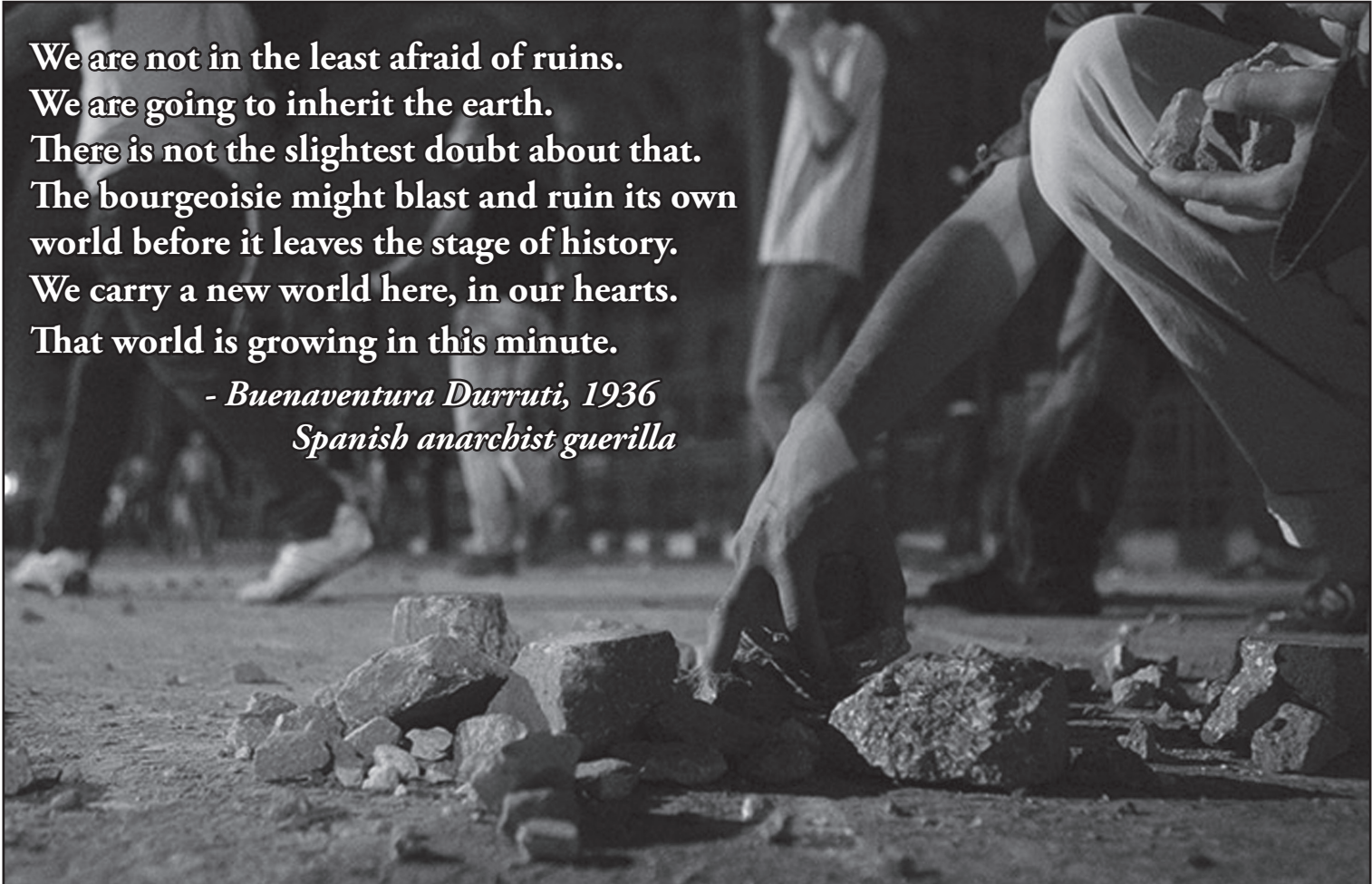
Just as the people of Egypt at times had to resort to self defense and property destruction to achieve their goals, there may be a time in which the Occupy movement finds it to be strategic to use these tactics as well. And we should be ready to support them. It might be that some people have been beaten down so many times, their rage bottled up for so long, that they topple a police barricade, or fight back when the police try to tear down our tents, or break out the windows at a bank. And we should support them, for their rage is real and dignified. That day might be a month from now, a year from now, or it might be this very moment. Before it's too late, Occupy Seattle should embrace a diversity of tactics. Otherwise, the movement risks losing some of its most passionate supporters. 🐦

Work Sucks

◀ CONTINUED FROM PG. 5

our grandparents, working longer and harder. As for us, we're just screwed. Buried beneath mountains of student loan or credit card debt, making low wages, for all intents and purposes futureless: this is our inheritance. And we all know it.

The plea for job growth perfectly represents the lack of imagination encouraged by capitalism. I am perplexed and deeply saddened when I see people my age (twenty-five) and even younger getting excited about more jobs, green jobs, better jobs. As for myself, I have tried to get out of working as much as possible. Instead, I spend my days searching for others like me, waiting, chasing sparks of rebellion, printing leaflets and scattering them to the wind. They, like the page you're holding in your hands, are messages to the restless, to the dreamers, to the worksick revolutionaries just waiting for the chance to pick a fight with the big boss... and win. 🐦



**We are not in the least afraid of ruins.
We are going to inherit the earth.
There is not the slightest doubt about that.
The bourgeoisie might blast and ruin its own
world before it leaves the stage of history.
We carry a new world here, in our hearts.
That world is growing in this minute.**

*- Buenaventura Durruti, 1936
Spanish anarchist guerilla*

An Egyptian protester gathers stones to throw at riot police in Tahrir Square - June 29, 2011

*pugetsoundanarchists.org
anarchistinternational.org
anarchistnews.org*

*theanarchistlibrary.org
continualwar.wordpress.com
waronsociety.noblogs.org*