

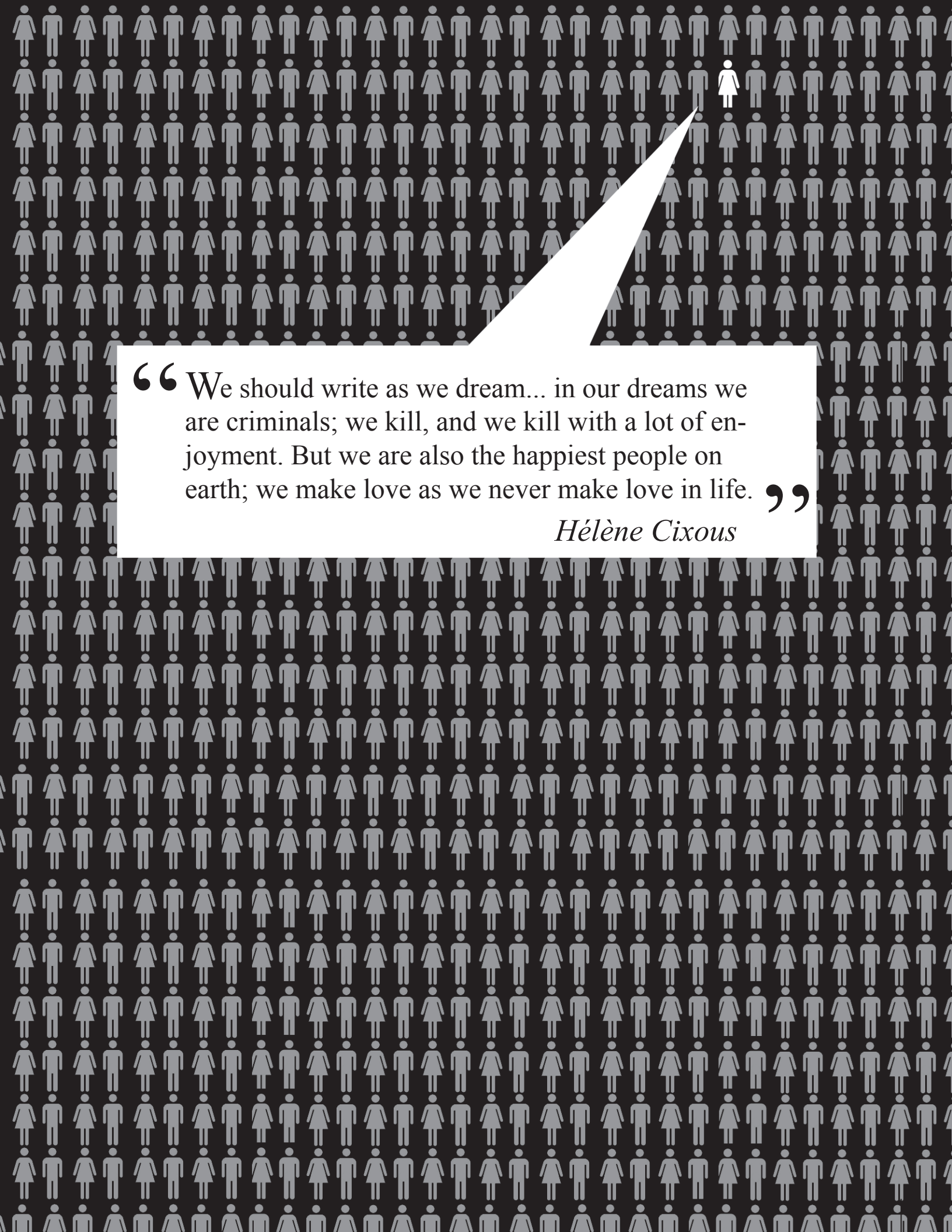
autonomy

issue no. 2 WINTER 2009 - 2010

//253



Photograph of one of the many nameless, faceless condos of Tacoma.



“We should write as we dream... in our dreams we are criminals; we kill, and we kill with a lot of enjoyment. But we are also the happiest people on earth; we make love as we never make love in life.”

Hélène Cixous

← **autonomy//253**

issue no. 2 WINTER 2009 - 2010

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To request a drop-off location for Autonomy//253 or to ask us to plug-in a project or an event, or to submit letters, articles, or other information, send us a message.

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ANSWERS TO A QUESTIONNAIRE

[Q] What does the word “autonomy” mean?

“Self-rule”. It is the capacity of each individual to determine their own actions, to exercise as much freedom in their lives as humanly possible, and to be free to associate with others in whatever way imagined... but not to be coerced into passively accepting social and political arrangements or hierarchies.

[Q] How often do you print *Autonomy*//253?

That all depends on the number of contributions we receive. We’ve printed two issues since October 2009. So far, The Bureau of Taking Back Public Space, The Committee of Surrealist Urban Planners, The Alienated Ad Council and a handful of anonymous contributors from Olympia and Tacoma have given a shit enough to submit to *Autonomy*//253. We continue to look for 253-based



artwork and 253-based writings and ideas to put into this magazine. This magazine is for the 253 and by the 253. We are just getting started... you are the ones who make it possible.

[Q] Was Autonomy//253 initially thought of as an art collective or something like that?

No. We were initially thought of as a group of friends who share similar ideas, who have various skills to put to good use. We see ourselves as artists, yes. But we see the movement of art as the realization as a practice in everyday life, inseparable from the experiences of art one is encouraged only to have in consumerist and observable situations (see *Communique No. 3* page 34). We see the last task of art as the destruction of art-as-commodity.

[Q] Was Autonomy//253 initially thought of as a political organization? Do you write for a political movement?

No, and no. Everything is political. To separate the "political" part of our lives from everything else is a snare or a trap the present culture has accepted. All movement is political. All information is political. In that sense we are part of some political movement, to be sure, part of a political movement to take our lives into our own hands, broadly speaking. But the phrase "political movement" today implies a specialized activity carried out by teams of conspiring politicians and organizers. For example, Ron Paul and Barack Obama were "political movements". These are political organizations seeking to strengthen themselves by disempowering others, by taking away their autonomy. We seek no power over anyone but ourselves.

Our writings, centered on the spontaneity of real people and real events occurring in and around the 253, is the activity of undeniably "political" people in the sense that their rebellious activity itself is political. The unseen struggles against all forms of "alienation" are absolutely political. Our task is to show these struggles. Our task is to unveil our invisible lives, and our invisible deaths. Additionally, we strive to help our friends and allies in their de-alienating projects carried out in the 253, by advertising them here.

[Q] What do you mean by "alienation"?

We mean this: if you don't make your own shoes, you're alienated from your shoes. If the shoe factory closed, if the shoe store closed, where would you get your shoes? Maybe you'd find some in a box somewhere or steal them from someone else. But even then, you still wouldn't be making your own shoes.

We mean this: if you spend all day checking in and checking out movies at a video store, you're alienated from your work. You don't



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actually make anything, you just make sure people can watch movies. You don't have any connection with what you're doing and in the end, it really doesn't matter. Alienation is what we all share, for the most part, in the 253. Nothing really matters.

[Q] Is "capitalism" the only evil you recognize, or are there others too?

Alienation is not just something that happens in capitalist societies, but takes places in patriarchies and racist power structures too. Power rests not only in the hands of the ruling classes of capitalist societies, but in dominant groups of every variety (whites vs. other races, men vs. women, homeowners vs. the homeless, the privileged and unprivileged) and between individuals. However - the basis of all these forms of oppression find their ultimate rise and fall in "the state". By this we mean the governments, whether city, state or federal. And we include the institutions of the governments on this shit list too: the militaries, the policing systems, the NSA, the CIA, the FBI, the banking and monetary systems, etc. These are all extensions of the state's power, and hence, a power that keeps our movements against alienation from being successful... For now, however, we must also acknowledge that many revolutionary possibilities have been blocked by way of the superstructure's cultural domination. This stops us from achieving revolutionary consciousness in daily life. So, aside from the real forces of alienation, we aim to

expose another evil as well: that shroud of false information lies, the ideological cement... it prevents us from upending alienation from the root. The ideological shroud is otherwise referred to by us as "the society of the spectacle".

[Q] Well, since Barack Obama was elected President, isn't there no hope for the political movements?

We used the phrase "political movement" the way most people use it, but we did this to expose its ambiguity. The US opposition to the Iraq War was a political movement. It is dead now. We do not see ourselves as part of a "political movement" struggling for a particular pet issue, like the war in Afghanistan or Iraq. So the word "political movement" is ambiguous to us. The real revolutionary movement for "total self-management," expressing itself in the direct action of individuals against all forms of alienation, has little in common with "the movement" but the name. This real movement, in struggling for consciousness of itself, must first of all combat what passes for it: its various ideological distortions, its bureaucratic representations, and its spectacular-ization.

[Q] How exactly does the "society of the spectacle" operate? What do you mean?

The "society of the spectacle" paints its own picture of itself and its enemies. It imposes its own ideological categories on the world. Above all, it erects a more-or-less unified false opposition (like the cliché "revolutionary" commodities you can buy at Macy's and Hot Topic) which reinforce the society by the apparent all-inclusiveness of its false options.

To the extent that truly radical acts are not destroyed by the hands of the ruling class, the false revolutionary opposition is quick to take the real opposition under its own wing: "the true becomes a moment of the false" (Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*).

[Q] Why do you focus so much on issues of "urban space"?

We live in cities, mostly. Most of us have only known cities. Living in the woods is something we might like to do, but that only happens in movies, right? The "urban space" is where we are stuck. It is all we know. But that does not mean we have to let a bunch of assholes in City Hall tell us what goes where and why. We encourage people to alter the city around them however they see fit. "Urban space" is important because it holds the greatest number of people in it. It determines how we think, move and relate to one another. People who ignore "urban space" are like generals ignoring the layout of a battlefield. To ignore "urban space" is folly.

[Q] Do you consider yourselves "vanguards" of the 253?

No, we are the avant-garde of the 253!

Every avant-garde has sought to surpass what has come before it. We wish to inject dangerous ideas into the minds of all who read this magazine in the perhaps mistaken hope that you will surpass us and burn this magazine. We don't deserve to be the cutting edge of anything. You do!

Vanguards lead people, convinced they know the correct path to take. We know for sure that we are on the wrong path. If you follow us, we want nothing to do with you.

So, please, get lost!

[Q] Why aren't more people "involved" in the 253 area?

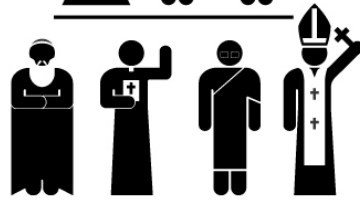
Well, that's an interesting question. There are a lot of reasons. In most cases, people have to work and they really don't like their job. They've never had time to do anything other than go to work, get wasted after work, maybe meet some dude at a bar, hook up, perhaps get into a relationship, waste time with this guy who ends up being a complete shithead, keep going to work, get all sad about how no one will ever love them and



SUPERSTRUCTURE



"We rule you"



"We fool you"



"We shoot at you"

BASE



pyramid of the
capitalist system

no.1

then spend the rest of their free time reading People magazine. Or something like that.

In the end, people don't have a lot of time for anything. People get distracted, don't know what they want, but end up playing X-Box, going out to dinner with their girlfriend and watching Avatar. All these things are better than going to work.

But no one ever flips their shit. No one goes crazy and feels trapped in their boring, endless routines. If people just went a little more crazy, maybe they'd get out of their routines and get "involved."

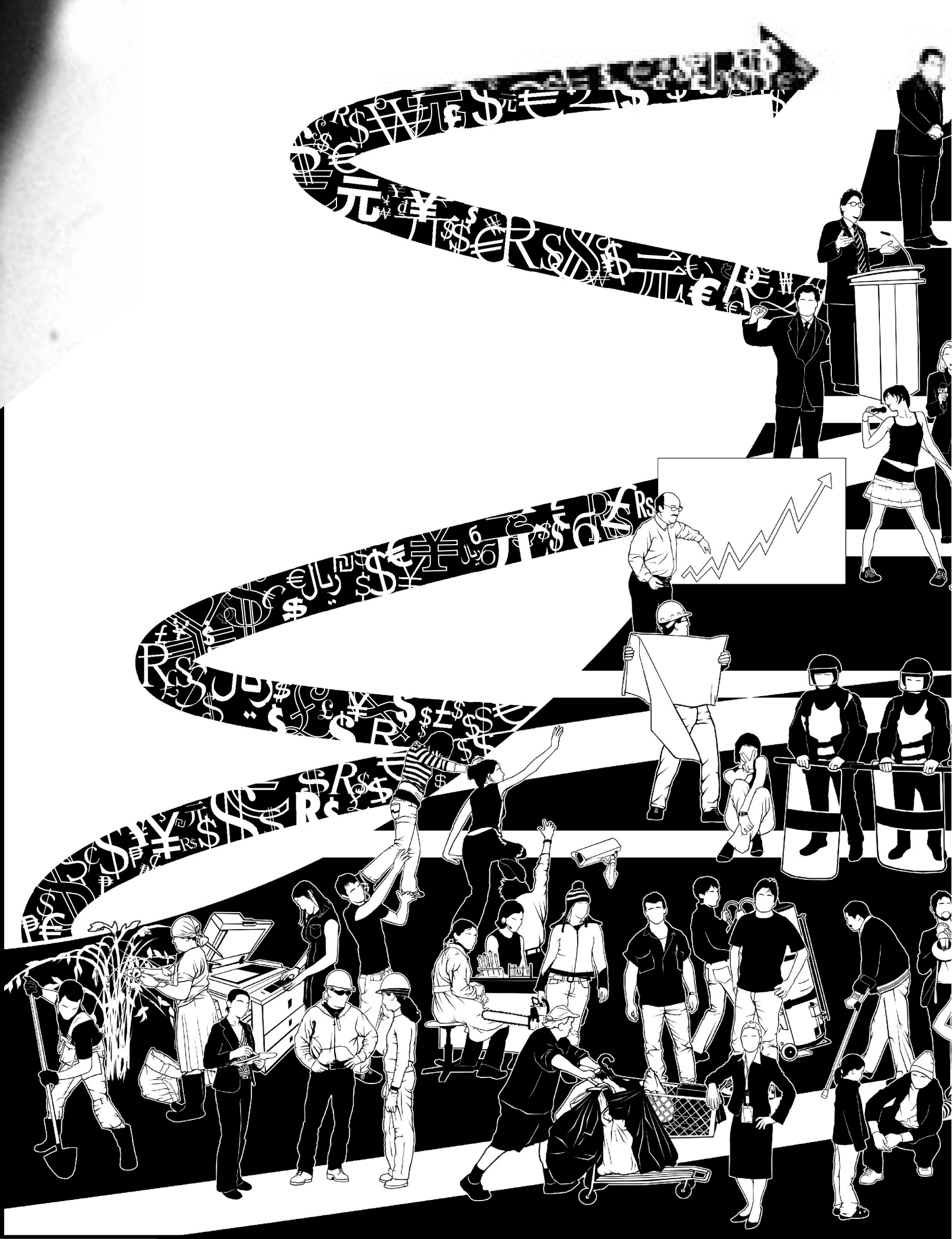
What does that even mean, though? "Involved?" With what, exactly? No one knows how to change anything because no one has ever had to. Someone else has always done it for them. The police, the city government, Obama.

Until people stop being so depressed, trapped and lazy, no one will be involved in anything but their shitty relationships, their dumb jobs, their alcoholic weekends and their own, personal versions of hell.

It's all up to you, people. Just do it. Quit.

And now... Autonomy//253!





[illegible]

THE Hilltop panopticon

a CCTV camera mapping project
the bureau of taking back public space

This map shows the locations of surveillance cameras in Tacoma's Hilltop neighborhood. With each issue of *Autonomy*//253 the Bureau will add more city blocks and expand the scope of the map. The purpose of this project is to allow the reader to contemplate how targeted populations such as the Hilltop community, are disciplined through the practice of observation.

Panopticon:\\

Okay so what is a panopticon? A panopticon is a place where everything can be seen and watched. The term was first used to describe a new kind of prison system in England during the 1800s where the prisoners were observed by a central tower in the center of a circular, rotunda-shaped cellblock. Since Michel Foucault wrote about the term in his book *Discipline and Punish*, the term has become a metaphor for present-day surveillance technologies that you see everywhere.







DO YOU SUFFER FROM ALIENATION?

symptoms include:

- Realizing the pursuits of your peers are useless.
- Searching for an undefined dream or goal.
- A deep sense of remorse for goals not accomplished.
- Insecurity regarding the fact that your actions are meaningless.
- Insecurity concerning ability to love themselves, let alone another person.
- Disappointment with one's job.
- Boredom with social interactions.
- Loss of closeness to friends.
- Having no commonality with other people in the same situations as yourself.
- A sense that everyone is, somehow, doing better than you.

**Alienation is a pervasive symptom of capitalist society.
Don't treat the symptoms, eradicate the cause.**

Some Recent Activities of the Imaginary Party

submitted anonymously
all quotes from the journal, *Tiqqun*

"The Imaginary Party is the party that tends to become real, incessantly."

- *Tiqqun*

On January 29th, 2009, someone shot a laser beam at an airplane. It happened in a town called Burien, just north of the Sea-Tac International Airport. Twelve planes reported being hit with a focused beam of green light during their takeoff and landings. The police immediately began to look for the perpetrators but were unable to find any suspects.

After the initial burst of activity, there was a brief pause. But it continued to happen at random over the next month. In March of 2009, the police arrested Christopher C. Saunders for allegedly shining a

green laser at a plane. The owners of a horse that Saunders had been shining a laser at during a party called and informed the police about his behavior. After being arrested, his bail was set at 100,000 dollars. He was charged and held on suspicion of unlawful discharge of a laser. When questioned by the police, Saunders told them he was at a party and was shining a green laser in multiple directions, including the neighbor's horse. He told them there was a chance he may have 'lasered' an airplane on accident. Before being arrested, he handed over the green pen-laser he had been carrying the night of the party. After holding him for 3 days, the police released Saunders due to lack of concrete evidence. Christopher Saunders was 24 at the time of his arrest.

It is very easy to imagine the party in question. Everyone is 19-26 years of age and very drunk. Most of the people in the suburban house have jobs or are actively looking for one. None of them owns a house. They drink on into the night as the planes constantly fly overhead. Suddenly, one of the parties takes out a laser-pen and starts shining it haphazardly in all directions. Everyone laughs as a green light begins to hit random people in the face. Perhaps the laser is accidentally cast upwards at the landing airplanes. Or maybe intentionally. It is irrelevant to the purposes of this article. What matters is the one moment at the party, filled with laughter. Everyone surrounding Christopher C. Saunders watches him as he fires his laser. None of them know that in that moment, with green light leaping up from the



ground, Christopher became a member of the unseen, invisible and imaginary enemy of every system: *the Imaginary Party*.

"The adversary no longer carries the name of enemy, but in revenge they are placed outside the law and outside of humanity for having broken and disturbed the peace." - *Tiqqun*

Despite the arrest and release of Saunders, the lasers continued to hit airplanes. For a brief moment, the system thought it had found the culprit. The media began to construct a story about a petty criminal who had been in jail twice before the age of 20. It appeared that the unseen enemy was taking on form. Christopher C. Saunders. Resident of Burien. Age 24. The system was ready to turn him into an example of what would happen to others. But when Saunders was exonerated, the system was once again left with nothing but an invisible enemy shooting lasers into the sky. To this day, no one has been arrested and no planes have crashed.

During the initial period of hysteria surrounding the laser discharging, the authorities stated to the public that anyone caught shooting a laser at a plane would be charged as a terrorist. It is unclear whether or not the people involved in giving these warnings actually believed the perpetrators to be bona fide terrorists. Nevertheless, if anyone were to be caught, it would be up to them to prove they were not terrorists.

The neighborhoods around Sea-Tac International Airport are vast expanses of boredom. The houses all have decently large yards, the blocks are all identical rectangles, the strip malls are sometimes within walking distance but always reachable by car. Metro Transit buses will get you to downtown Seattle in over an hour. There is very little to do besides go from house to job, job to store, store to house, house to bar, bar to house. A 16 year old boy and girl consumed with boredom and possessing a laser-pen might look up from these lamp-lit neighborhood streets and see the familiar

airplanes flying above. It would only be a matter of time before they decided to use their lasers, especially on the planes which never stop arriving and never stop departing. To the teenagers, this is a playful act. To the system, it is an act of war. The war we see everyday is a war between two forces. One is real, with its own police and media and army. The other is imaginary and nonexistent, composed entirely of individuals who do not know they are a part of it. The Imaginary Party does not exist. And yet it continues to act.

"Those who do not understand war do not understand their own times." - *Tiqqun*

20 miles North of Sea-Tac International Airport is the city of Seattle. A sprawling metropolis, Seattle encompasses many separate towns into its body. All are connected by vast boulevards that stretch endlessly into the distance. In the core of this metropolis, nestled on a slope overlooking the water of Elliott Bay, are the skyscrapers of Downtown. The black Bank of America stands the tallest of them all, casting its shadow over the chilly canyons of concrete and glass.

On February 4th, 2009, less than a week after the first lasering of an airplane, a man walked into a bank. It was a Washington Mutual bank at the time. It has since been bought out by Chase. The bank was in the heart of the Downtown. At 3:30 pm, the nicely dressed man walked up to a teller and placed a bag on the counter. He informed the teller that he had a bomb and demanded an unknown amount of money. Once he had been given the money, he told the teller that he could activate the bomb with his cell phone and instructed the teller to wait a certain amount of time before calling the police. The nicely dressed man then fled on foot, disappearing into the metropolis. When the police arrived they cordoned off that part of Downtown, paralyzing it for what remained of the day. Two robots were sent



in to handle the bag. When the bag was inspected, the police discovered that there was no bomb inside. The nicely dressed man was not captured. The robbery faded into the collective memory of those who work and frequent Downtown Seattle.

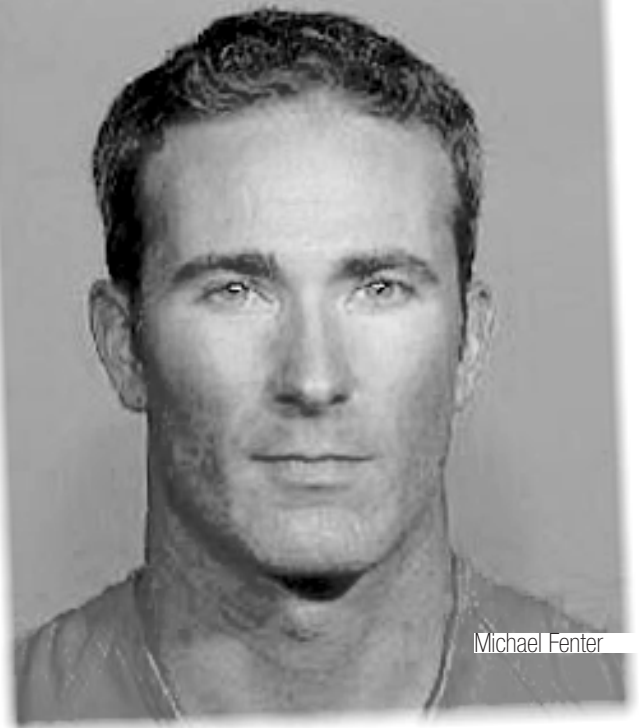
“Here, the protagonists move on such perfectly strange planes, one from the other, that they do not meet except at very rare points of intersection, and everything accounted for, by the whim of a certain chance.”

- Tiqqun

Much like Downtown Seattle, Downtown Tacoma is perched atop a hill overlooking the water. Its skyscrapers hang over the Port of Tacoma and the Northwest Detention Center for illegal immigrants. On the weekdays, during the lunch hour and after 5 pm, the downtown

is bustling with activity. People taking a break from school at UW Tacoma, people catching the bus home from a day working in a bank, people waiting to bum a cigarette. But in the late hours and on the weekends, there is hardly any activity in Downtown Tacoma. The streets are lifeless and dead, save for the crowds exiting and leaving the few bars. When no one is working, the skyscrapers hang pointlessly over a deserted kingdom.

On October 8th, 2009, a man walked into the Bank of America on the corner of 9th and A in Downtown Tacoma. He carried a con-



Michael Fenter



cealed pistol and a bag. He approached the teller and informed them that he had a bomb which could be detonated by his partner outside. He gave the teller 10 minutes to fill a bag with cash. While the bag was being filled, another Bank Of America employee called 911. When the man left with 73,000 dollars, he found himself surrounded by police officers, all pointing their guns at him.

After being disarmed and arrested, the police found harmless blasting caps in the bag he brought into the bank. The man did



not give his name to authorities. When they tried to fingerprint him, the authorities found he had super-glued his fingertips. While robbing the bank, he had worn a false goatee. The man eventually told the police he was Patrick Henry, the name of the man who originally coined the phrase "Give Me Liberty Or Give Me Death." It took several days for the authorities to determine his true identity.

Of America in April and a Sacramento Wells Fargo in August. He is currently being held in the Sea-Tac Federal Detention Center. Kateen and her mother Bev have since closed the gates of the Compass Rose farm to the media. They have yelled at camera crews, telling them to "Get the hell out of here!" The Fenter family have appealed to their community to help them through

Michael's indefinite absence.



Michael Fenter at a Bank of America, Tacoma

"Each day makes a little more clear, in spite of the growing obscurity, the mournful profile of civil war where no one knows who does and does not fight, where confusion is limited by death alone; where nothing is assured, in the end, but worse to come."

- Tiqqun

His name is Michael Fenter. He is 40 years old. The father of 3 children, he lived near Port Townsend at the Compass Rose Farm with his wife Kateen Fenter and her mother Bev. He graduated from the Northwest School of Wooden Boatbuilding and worked at the Sea Marine in Port Townsend. His wife says he is not much of a farmer, but his carpentry skills were put to use at the farm and the income from his job at Sea Marine kept the Compass Rose going.

In January of 2009, Fenter quit his job at Sea Marine and began working for someone in Oregon. After the arrest of her husband, Kateen called her husband's boss and confirmed that he had been coming in to work. When Michael was arrested, he was supposed to have been out of town, working at his job. Kateen first learned of his arrest when an FBI agent called her and said her husband had been arrested for bank robbery.

The FBI are now saying that Michael Fenter is accused of robbing the Seattle Washington Mutual in February, a San Francisco Bank

Port Townsend is a small Victorian town perched at the end of the Quimper Penninsula. The town has a population of 9,000. The number is perhaps smaller. It is surrounded by the waters of the Juan de Fuca Strait and the Olympic Mountains. There is a food co-op in Port Townsend that has sold produce grown on the Compass Rose farm. The co-op serves as a central hub for many people in a town that is very small and perched at the end of the world.

On the nearby cliffs are the bunkers left over from WWII. In fear of a potential Imperial Japanese invasion, the military poured concrete along the edges of the cliffs and pointed artillery at the water. Now, the bunkers are empty shells filled with shadows, graffiti and water. To the south of Port Townsend is the Bangor Trident Base. The Trident submarines which dock here carry nuclear weapons inside their dark husks. They are guarded night and day. There are enough warheads in one submarine to obliterate the entire Olympic Peninsula twice over.



South of the Trident Base is the city of Bremerton. The city is built wholly around the Naval Station and many people from Bremerton have spent their lives working at the shipyard. At one point, the local government tried to market Bremerton as a convenient place for Seattle commuters to live. The metropolis of Seattle is only a short ferry ride away, and it was hoped that money would begin to pour into the traditionally working class city. But the craze never caught on and the gentrifiers largely remained where they were, across the water in Seattle.

40 miles south of Seattle is Fort Lewis, the largest army base in the area. There is not a town in the entire region which does not have a soldier living in it. On the bus there is someone just returned from Iraq, gazing intently at an i-Pod screen they do not want to look up from. Signs discouraging soldiers from committing suicide can be seen on every bus. For years now, people have been returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, telling stories, dying, killing each other, surviving. The person behind the cash register killed seven people in Iraq. The girl driving a Mazda down the street knows how to fly a helicopter. Everyone in the bar knows how to assemble and disassemble an M-16 rifle. There are military daughters who have lost fathers. There are military husbands who have killed their wives. Fort Lewis has employed much of the local population. Its lands stretch out underneath Mount Rainier, standing 14,411 feet over the the area. Within the expanses of young-growth trees, soldiers learn to endure physical and psychic stress. They learn to kill while crouching in the ferns and to die while running through the grass.

The military blots the landscape like a cancer.



US military deployment, Commencement Bay, Tacoma

“There are moments where one already lives as if this world no longer existed. During these times, and as a confirmation of this bad omen, we see the despairing tensing and contractions of a world that knows it is to die.”

- Tiqqun



Port Townsend, WA

On October 22nd, 2009, a man walked through a parking lot near the city auto yards in Seattle. Some workers at the yards, alarmed by his presence, decided to approach him. As they began to speak, an explosion happened nearby. As the flames erupted, the man sprinted away. Shortly after this, there were more explosions. Later in their investigation, the authorities were to find an American flag at the scene of the crime, along with a note condemning the police and eluding to future attacks. This act took place on the National Day Against Police Brutality. There were no developments in the pursuit of the bomber. The Seattle Police Department kept the warning of future attacks a secret, even from its own officers.

On October 31st, Halloween Night, a white car drifted up and down the streets of the Central District in Seattle. The car drove aimlessly, the driver looking for something. Up ahead, the driver spotted a police cruiser that was pulled over along the side of the road, its lights flashing. As if it was the future, three minutes too early, the car pulled up alongside the cruiser. A muzzle flash lit up the white car. The second cop suddenly found their partner dead and the white car speeding away, leaving behind an American flag which fluttered to the ground.

The police and mainstream-media immediately classified the murder as an assassination. What information was available was televised across the entire region. Slowly, details emerged about the note left at the scene of the car arson. It was only ever made public after the cop was killed. A manhunt began for the assassin. The description of a white car was made public and the mainstream-media filled their pages and broadcasts with lamentations over the dead 'hero.'

A memorial for the assassinated cop was held on November 7th. Hundreds of cops from as far as Olympia traveled to the city to be part of the grand procession down the streets of Seattle. A long line of cruisers flowed down the street, ending their spectacle at the Key Arena in Seattle. The mainstream media heavily covered this event, reminding everyone that this was a loss for the 'community,' that everyone was meant to grieve for the fallen cop, that his death was an attack on 'society.'

"It is a constant temptation, in effect, to conceive the positive existence of the Imaginary Party under the familiar species of the guerilla, of civil war, of partisan warfare, of a conflict without a precise front or a declaration of hostilities, without armistice or peace treaty."

- Tiqqun

On the same day, in the City of Tukwila just south of Seattle, three cops approached an apartment complex. They were responding to a tip that a white Datsun had been parked in front of the complex and had recently been covered in a tarp. The tip also revealed that the owner of the car had been acting strangely.

The cops waited to ambush the owner of the car. When he appeared, they left their cruisers and approached him. He immediately fled, stopped and pointed a handgun at them. When he pulled the trigger, there was no discharge. The man continued running and was soon shot, one of the bullets passing through his mouth.

He did not die, but is now paralyzed from the waist down. His name is Christopher Monfort. He is 41 years old. He most recently worked as a security guard. Before that he had a job driving trucks but was laid off. His boss said that he had been a diligent, hard worker. Christopher had attended the Highline Community College in Des Moines, just south of the Sea-Tac Airport. When he began, he had aspirations of being a police officer. He enrolled in the school's Administration of Justice program and later went on to get his BA at the University of Washington in March, 2008. While there, he began working on a program to encourage jurors to find black dependents not guilty for any non-violent crimes. He later worked with incarcerated youth at a juvenile hall, teaching them about the criminal justice system and encouraging them to remain outside of it. Everyone who knew Christopher described him as affable, outgoing and deeply concerned with the erosion of citizens' liberties.

After he was taken to a hospital in critical condition, the police searched his Tukwila apartment. They found the walls surrounding his front window lined with stacks of car tires, as if he had been expecting a shootout. Two rifles and several bombs made from gas cans were also inside, leading the authorities to believe that, had Christopher not been discovered, he would have struck more targets.



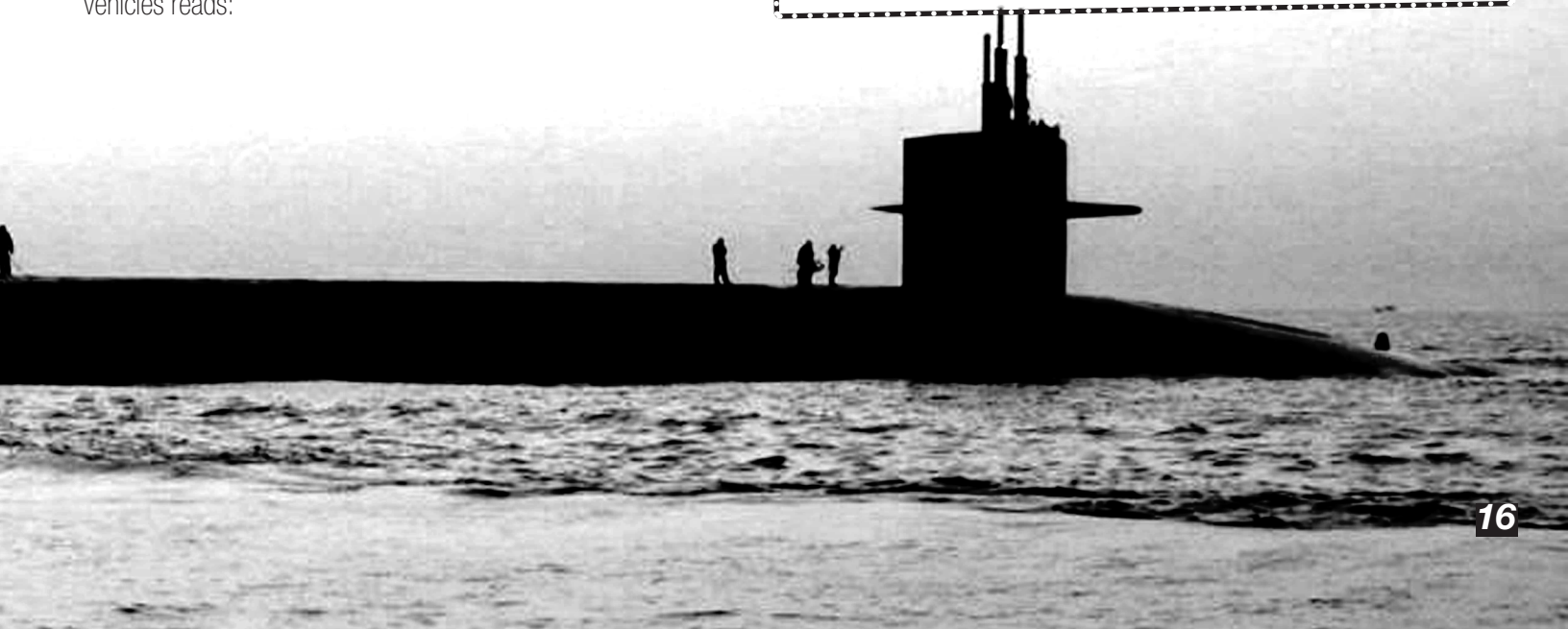


Seattle - October 22nd, 2009

When the full text of the note he left at the scene of the car bombings was released, the public discovered that Christopher began his actions in response to the beating of a 14 year-old girl. She had been beaten by a King County Sheriff named Paul Schene while in the Sea-Tac jail. One sheriff beat her while Travis Bruner watched, doing nothing to stop his partner. The beating had been caught on security camera and then released to the public several months after the fact. The sheriff who beat her was fired, the other was punished but remained with the King County Sheriff. The note that Monfort left near the bombed vehicles reads:

"These Deaths are dedicated to Deputy Travis Bruner, he stood by and did nothing, as Deputy Paul Schene Brutally beat an Unarmed 14 year old Girl in their care. You Swear a Solemn Oath to Protect US from All Harm, That includes You! Start policing each other or get ready to attend a lot of police funerals. We Pay your bills. You work for US."

- Christopher Monfort





Christopher Monfort

Monfort timed his bombs to go off at intervals. The first explosion was meant to lure police to the scene. The following explosions were meant to kill whoever was in the area. The only reason this did not happen was because Christopher had been spotted and the people who had seen him warned everyone in the area that someone had intentionally bombed the vehicles. He had meant to kill as many cops as he could.

"It is of this and exclusively of this that one speaks of without stop, because it is that which each day makes a little more visible the failures of the proper functioning of society. But one keeps from pronouncing its name...as one fears to invoke the devil."

- *Tiqun*

A mile south of Tacoma, near the northern edge of Fort Lewis, is the McChord Air Force Base. Every day, military planes take off and arrive in an endless circle. Across the street from the Northeastern corner of the base is a Forza coffee shop. The coffee shop is a regular haunt of cops from Tacoma and Lakewood. They arrive in groups, order coffee and browse the web during their breaks.

On November 29th, 2009, four Lakewood police officers entered the Forza and ordered coffee. They sat down at a table together and began working on their laptops. A man in jeans and a black jacket walked into the Forza. He walked past the cops and waited in line for coffee. When he reached the register, he opened his jacket, revealing a gun. The baristas ran away from the man as he turned around and opened fire.

He killed two of the cops immediately. The two remaining cops stood up. He shot one of them while the other drew their weapon. The assassin and the last remaining cop struggled, pushing and wrestling each other until they were outside the coffee shop. In the midst of the struggle, the assassin broke free from the cops grip. The cop shot the assassin, the assassin shot the cop. The cop died. The assassin fled to the south with a bullet wound below his navel.

The first day passed without the assassin being captured. The area around the coffee shop was closed off and K-9 units arrived to search the area. Once again, the police and mainstream-media classified the murders as assassinations. Later in the day, the police released the name and picture of a person of interest in the manhunt. The mainstream-media put his face on their websites and broadcasts. He was a 37 year old black male from Tacoma, just released from prison after being jailed for sexual assaulting a minor. He believed that he was Jesus, according to the media.



Christopher Monfort, "Jury Nullification"



Police seige of the Leschi Neighborhood, Seattle, November 30th, 2009

While the manhunt began for this self-proclaimed messiah, a procession for the assassinated cops was immediately organized. Whereas the procession for the cop assassinated in Seattle took place a week after the fact, this procession took place the night of the incident. Hundreds of cruisers lined the streets of Lakewood, one of the most crime-ridden cities in the South Puget Sound region. Deathly afraid of anyone applauding the assassinations in an area generally hostile to the police, the procession imposed itself on the streets, shutting down traffic, forcing everyone to watch it. The pictures of the four cops were displayed on broadcasts and websites, immediately referred to as heroes.

Immediately after the murders, people began to call 911 and report false information. The cops were pulled one way by a bogus tip, bringing their sniper rifles and armored vehicles, only to be pulled another way. By the end of the night, after the procession of the corpses to the morgue, it was clear that the man was being hidden. Hundreds of tips continued to pour into the ears of the police. One of those tips lead them to a house in the Leschi neighborhood in Seattle, several blocks away from where the Halloween assassination took place.

The Leschi Neighborhood was sealed off as the police besieged the house. For the entire evening and into the morning of November 30th, the state of exception ruled in Leschi. No one could move and everyone was told to stay inside as the police began gassing the house. Exasperated cops issued warnings, advice and commands through their megaphones, only to be met with silence. Eventually, the front door was blown open and a surveillance robot sent inside.

When Seattle awoke the next morning, newsreaders learned that the house had been empty the whole time. After stating that the man inside had probably bleed to death for his injury, the police had to admit they spent the evening locking down Leschi in order to attack a phantom. In their desperation, they followed another tip to the University of Washington, leading them to detain and search a black male in a classroom. More false tips continued to come in.



Surveillance video of police brutality. Officers Travis Burner (left) and Paul Schene (right).

The police began to pull over city buses and draw their guns on the passengers. Rumors began to circulate. He was in Olympia, Lakewood, Tacoma. He was everywhere on November 30th.

On November 31st, a cop cruising through the Rainier Valley district of Seattle came upon a silver Acura on the side of the road with the hood open. The license plates matched those of an Acura that was reported as stolen only an hour earlier. The cop began filling out his paperwork on the stolen vehicle when he saw a man walking down the street towards the car. The cop got out of his car and told the man to stop walking. The man did not stop. Soon, he was dead.

1st of May // 1 de Mayo Celebration in Tacoma



19 **May Day 2010**



His name was Maurice Clemmons. His youth was spent in prison. At one point he ran a landscaping business in Tacoma. His house was covered in security cameras and he was known for his spectacular Christmas displays. Six days before he killed the four cops, Maurice had been bailed out of jail. He was charged with raping a minor. After his release from jail, he told a small circle of friends that he was going to kill cops and that they should watch the TV.

After running from the Forza coffee shop with a bullet wound below the navel, Maurice was taken to safety by a small network of people. His sister bandaged his wound, his friends gave him keys to cars and cellphones. Maurice was transported to a house in Seattle. After getting word that the police were coming, he slipped out just before the siege in Leschi began. Maurice stayed ahead of the police until he was forced to steal a car. For

two days he carried himself with a gunshot wound but remained determined to live. In that stolen Acura, he pulled over to vomit or piss or fix a problem with car. No one can say what he was doing, or where he was going to go next. Maurice died with a gun he had stolen from one of the cops he assassinated. The cop who killed him is now being lauded as a hero.

"Their form is that of an hostility with no specific object, of a fundamental hatred that wells up, without respect for any obstacle, from a most unreachable interiority, from unaltered depths where humans maintain a veritable contact with themselves. That is why there emanates from them a force that all the chatter of the Spectacle cannot manage to hold back."

- Tiqqun





There is nothing connecting these incidents together. They are isolated not only because the media and the authorities have insured their isolation, but because they did not know each other. No one will be able to discover a secret code being passed between the actors in these incidents. There are no secret communiques or instructions from a central committee. But taken together, these incidents reveal how only a select few actors are necessary to throw authority into a blind, helpless spasm.

What is held in common between the actors described above is a potent disregard for everything. Shooting a laser at a plane meant nothing to the actors, nor did blowing up police cruisers or shooting cops in the head. What once mattered stopped mattering to them. And in their acts of negation they rose to a common disregard, their acts suddenly becoming positive. They robbed for their family and their farm. They ran to stay alive. They killed to avenge a 14 year old girl. They shot lasers at planes just for fun. In their disregard, they joined the Imaginary Party.

The Imaginary Party cannot be attacked by the police because it does not exist. It is made up of every actor who, intentionally or not, undermines authority at every level. When they are caught, actors in the Imaginary Party are made into isolated individuals, insane deviants who are to be quickly disposed of. Authority cannot admit the existence of the Imaginary Party for one reason: the Imaginary Party is just another word for the population. And the population is never allowed to be against authority.

The media will only acknowledge the absolute positivity of authority, never the silent negativity of the population. Screens are filled with images of candlelight vigils and pictures of patriots saluting hearses. The countless, unseen people who die amongst the population do not have front page funerals. Only that which is sanctified and approved by authority is given the title of 'hero' and remembered as such. Everything else is left to obscurity and isolation.

There has always been a constant level of activity from the Imaginary Party, but recent events indicate that something has altered. The level of disregard in the actors is increasing, just as the fear in the guardians of order is increasing. Everything is proving to be fragile and easily thrown into disorder. This fragility is televised on the nightly news and printed on the front page of the newspaper. With each new incident, power reveals its desperation, weakness and fear. It knows that its worst enemy, the Imaginary Party, lives in its own body, growing like a translucent cancer. ■

-Olympia, December 4, 2009



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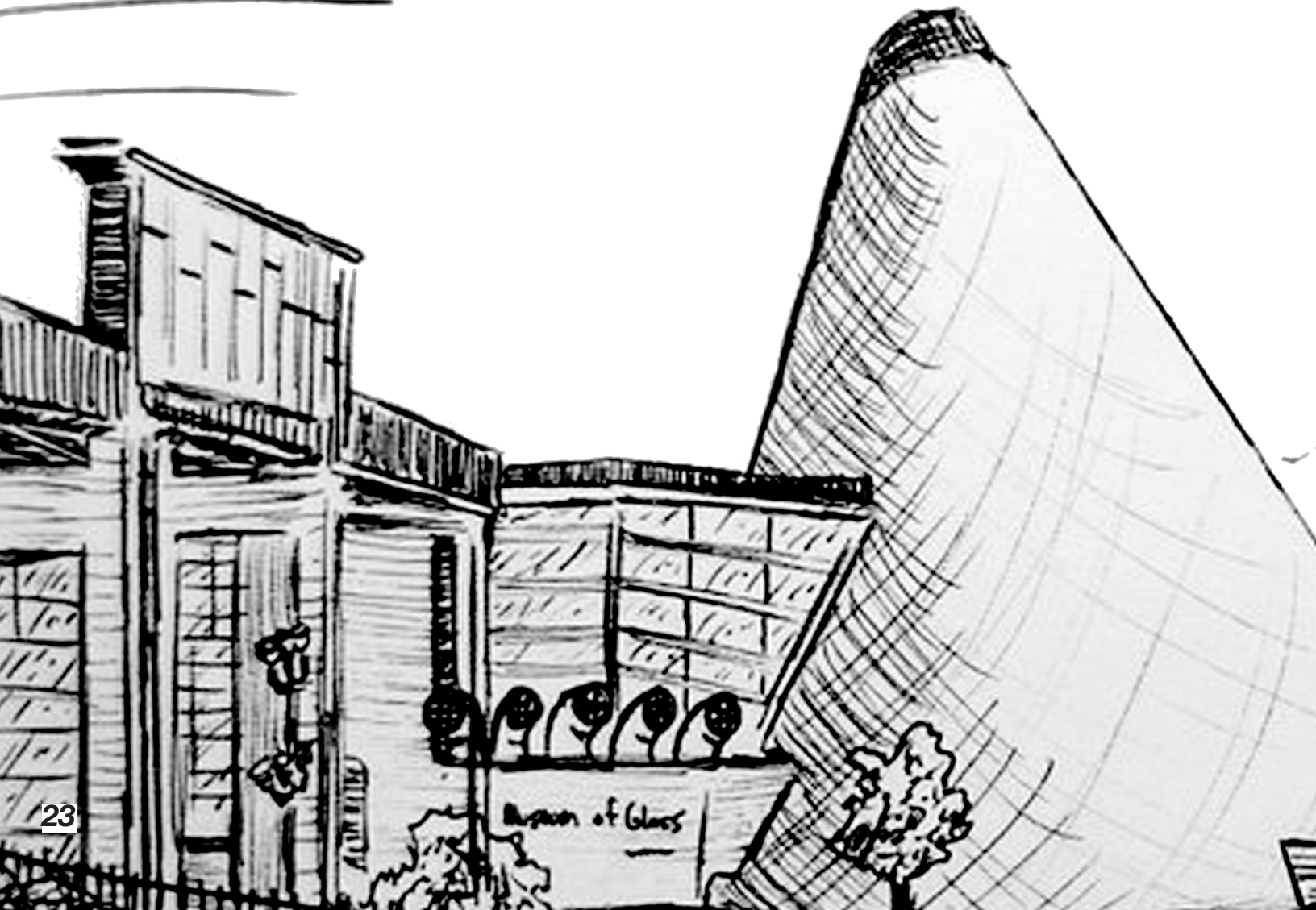
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RATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS

for the CITY OF
TACOMA

written by The Committee of Surrealist Urban Planners



To illustrate the absurdity of imagining un-alienated cities, The Committee of Surrealist Urban Planners set out to explore the playful dimensions of our urban environment, with the goal of reimagining the City of Tacoma as if everything about it were here to have fun with.

W

e have been up all night, friends, wandering beneath city lights whose steel towers shine like trapped souls. We like them illuminated by the internal glow of an electric heart. Trampling upon these trails of concrete we have been discussing the logic of the City to its limits and begun scrawling upon this paper our demented writing. We have made the following conclusions.

To interrupt the spectacle of daily life, we have decided to abandon politeness and social convention to become fools. All those irksome interactions that seem to plague our days, all that awkward small talk to avoid sounding foolish. Enough! We are done listening to chatter with no meaning, we are through with courtesy and restraint for the sake of not offending others! To a fool all things are foolish, especially subscribing to systems of social obligations and beliefs without ever testing their boundaries or stretching their constraints. Forget the scripts and the roles to which we have been branded! Tell me how you feel! Drop away all systems of politeness and social garb and come explore the social possibilities within this City of Destiny!

Once we have broken through the prism of our identity and socially conditioned existence, we can begin utilizing preexisting institutions and bureaucracies to further our exploration of the social. Our places of work will become places of play, where we will realize our creative impulses and frivolous passions. Every sales associate's customer service skills would be replaced with guerrilla theater and mime! No one will ever sell you anything again!



Every cubicle in every office building will be immediately converted into a blanket fort and defended from co-workers by any means necessary. Should an intruder encroach upon your space do not hesitate to shoot staples in their general direction, nor call them names and say embarrassing things you know about them. By maintaining the same office/retail space and social networks created by the previous erroneous efforts of state and capitalist management while maintaining a freedom of form and content, we believe that these once-buzzing hives of accumulated capital will blossom into leaderless networks of associates acting freely for their and their communities' self interest. What a novel concept!

The fountains located within the vibrant Downtown Business District will be opened as public baths, heated, of course. Let the economic disparity within the city become a visible blight upon its business community. Imagine, whole families bathing regularly in the shadows of the towering financial institutions responsible for their displacement. The irony won't be

lost on any patrons, we assure you. Young and old alike, sunning, bathing, fraternizing in the showery spray of the Wells Fargo Plaza. What Art! What Beauty! Instead of merely serving the interests and convenience of Tacoma's business community by cheuffering them between cubicle and car, the lightrail will immediately be renovated and converted into a roving dance party, complete with blacklights, glow sticks, inappropriate gestures, unwelcome advances, and sweaty bodies dancing all over you. At each stop from the Theater District to Freighthouse Square, different shitty local bands will be playing while attempting to spange for money, which they might receive in small doses from guilt-ridden patrons.

The Museums of Glass and History will be opened to the streets as a public lavatory so that we, too, may participate in their violent attacks upon meaning. Why should artists and historians remain the sole specialists in the definition of excrement? Our defecation upon the walls of the museum will lead to generations of inspired artists. There will be institutes devoted to the study of our urinating inside the galleries and museums of Tacoma! Manifestos will be published that revel in our desecration of the gallery!



Art schools should immediately cease and desist the teaching of currently held curriculum and leave the students with the ability and means to experiment and paint upon the very walls of this city, every medium available at their disposal. Surely you might say, but within reason? My Dear, we assure you, of course; wrecking balls and cranes reserved for the most severe and astonishing works that artists produce so rarely. They should hardly be a burden to the city. Imagine the potential for redesigning our city with the means to do so in the hands of its young and most creative! There you are roaming the alleys of Tacoma, wandering past a bank or an abandoned building, and then, crash! A wrecking ball tears through the corner sending colored bricks and painted glass in every direction.

How marvelous! ■■■■

- *The Committee of Surrealist Urban Planners*





interview with former members of the
pitch pipe INFOSHOP

[Q] What was the PitchPipe Infoshop?

[KG] The infoshop was an idea that five of us had to serve as a social space for the community of Tacoma. It would be operated based on anarchist principles and host a lending library with coffee and tea available. The idea was to create a space and eliminate the flow of money as a necessity in order to have these experiences. Three of us went to London in 2007 and had direct experience opening the Camberwell Squatted Center. This was a social center in an abandoned café with living quarters above it. PitchPipe started to materialize after we returned from that trip in the Summer of 2007. We decided we could just run it out of a house that some of us lived in so we wouldn't have to pay rent on a commercial space. In 2008 we switched the location of PitchPipe to a different house.

[Q] Do you feel any nostalgia toward the house? Or was it just a house, just a vessel for other things to happen?

[GC] I felt a little bit of nostalgia cleaning up some of the books today. I was going through the books with three of the original five people who started it. One of them lives in a different state now and just happened to be here. A lot of those books we all got together. It was some sort of nostalgic moment. But I have no specific connection to that house. It's just a house. It belongs to Zodiac Properties.

[Q] Throughout the years were there many anarchists visiting from other cities, or Tacoma?

[KG] There was more foot traffic from anarchists around the U.S. and even Canada than people directly from Tacoma or surrounding cities. But I was excited about visitors from out-of-town because I met some really amazing people through that. Though it got really old when it was on the map for every traveler kid to come by and assume they could just show up, unannounced, not knowing anyone who actually lived at the house. People didn't take into consideration that it was a house where people lived, and the infoshop was actually only open during certain times of the week. The messy travelers who came through not only deterred people who lived in Tacoma, but created a façade that we were creating something in Tacoma when really we were just a hub for travelers.

[Q] What did the neighborhood around the PitchPipe think about the house, and what was their reaction to it?

[GC] It depends on which house. The first house we didn't really have any neighbors. It was almost in the middle of nowhere. It wasn't surrounded by any other houses at all. Our landlord didn't really like us, and neither did the police. We had some events there, and they weren't into that. We used the first house to meet for protests, and they didn't like that either. At the second



Camberwell Squatted Center, London

house we had much more of a friendly relationship with our neighbors. These were actually neighbors whom we would give food, they would provide food, and they had friends who farmed and would give us boxes of food and bread. We would have dinner out on the front lawn, potluck style. We took care of their kids sometimes when they were out of town or out dancing — an eight year-old, a five year-old, a four years-old, and a smaller child who wasn't talking yet. Some of those kids we practically watched grow up, so that was definitely something I'm going to miss.

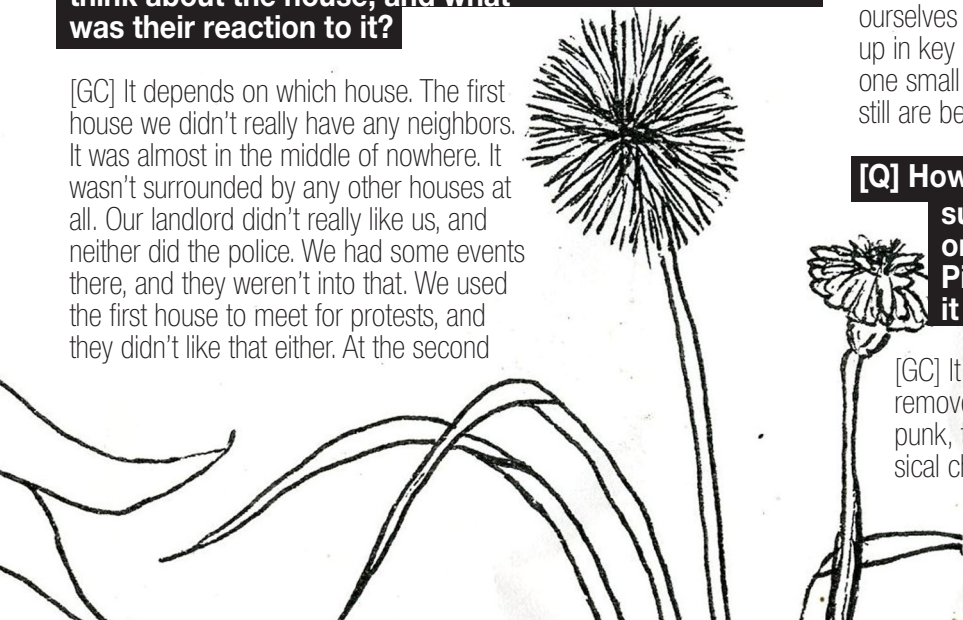
[Q] Do you think PitchPipe was overall successful at what it was trying to do?

[KG] For me it was an overall learning experience more than anything, so to measure the "success" would be difficult. I feel like it served the anarchist community well most of the time. But the intentions were so unclear and got so contorted towards the end of it all. There are experiences that I had throughout my involvement I would never want to give up, but I was disappointed in the outcome when I think about the original intentions.

[BR] It did work well for putting on anarchist events, raising bail money, having a free open space. But I feel there could have been a little more basic things happening: a general reading group, which did happen but stopped after a few attempts, or just basic anarchist activities and events that were general to people in Tacoma. Though the interaction between people in Tacoma and ourselves definitely did not happen because of fliers not being put up in key areas of the town, or fliers that were put up but only in one small area... Connections were made within its existence and still are being made because of its resonation.

[Q] How do you separate a radical space from the subculture that becomes a part of that? At one point people tried to separate the two at PitchPipe. Was that even possible, and was it successful?

[GC] It wasn't very possible, and some people would not remove themselves from the subculture. If someone listens to punk, that's fine. But it doesn't mean they're an anarchist. Musical choice has nothing to do with it. People were not willing



to leave it. There's no way we can make our space absent of that without figuring how we cannot become a part of that.

[BR] Personally, it may be entirely possible, it is just a matter of putting forth that intention within the space and acting upon that intention. Maybe doing a space that is focused on the needs of those around you. Examples being food, clothing or any other basic commodity offered for free. I am not interested in offering another society or world within this one. I would like to see more social centers like what was practiced in Italy during the 1970s. I think experimentation is key to a project's outcome.

[Q] Did the people who lived there have different lifestyles, and how did they conflict when some people wanted to live off-the-grid while others had higher standards?

[KG] In the first house not everyone considered themselves anarchists, and in the second house I think everyone had considered themselves anarchists. Either way, in both situations, I only knew one or two people really well. Otherwise I was going into a communal living situation with people I barely knew. There were definitely conflicting lifestyles based on the fact that everyone assumed things about each other through their politics or anti-politics, who they hung out with, what music they listened to, etc.

[GC] This is not unique with PitchPipe. It's seen in other projects and subcultures in general. There are many people from different economic backgrounds, who get together and unite under one subculture. To me that's really dangerous because I see people from really wealthy backgrounds pretending that they're not wealthy, and erasing their past, and therefore, erasing how they understand the world. And people who aren't from those backgrounds, kind of mixing in, and it's really dishonest. There was almost this 'social leveling' that happened. I think that's a problem with any subculture.

[BR] People did get into arguments pretty often and I generally think that is what happens. Arguments are part of growing, thinking and coming to terms with challenging ideas. Most of the conflicts were based around theory and individuals not being clear enough with their ideas.

[KG] Arguing and challenging each other in certain ways can be beneficial, but I also think that its important acknowledge that not everyone is going to get along and shouldn't feel trapped in living with people who they conflict with a lot.


[Q] Was it hard to practice "mutual aid" at the house? Anarchism seems like a philosophy of people coming to grips with their own potential, in a really creative way, a philosophy that's based on "mutual aid" and lots of work. It seems like a lot of work to be an anarchist. Did anarchists prove to be lazy in any of these situations?

[BR] To bring up the idea of "mutual aid" is funny. Mainly because of the fact that it was never mentioned from what I remember. We did not always



have group conversations at the house. There were group conversations between myself and a few other individuals... just not the entire house. As an anarchist I do not see what I do as "work" or some kind of hobby. For myself I see it as a constant way of acting and existing with every part of my life daily. As an anarchist I see it as part of my way of living to refuse, sabotage and subvert certain points within capitalist relations and power. Whether that is done individually or with a group of other individuals together is determined by what I am doing or how I am wanting to act in a situation. So no, anarchism is not "work".

[KG] Both in the house, and in the infoshop, there were some people that were great at providing "mutual aid" and a lot that were not so great at it, or not at all. I don't see what I do as work. I think effort is needed at times, but being responsible for my individual self and how I affect other people is not work to me. Taking care of myself and



the people I care about around me is not work for me. It's just something I do, and I can't really imagine anything different for how I treat people and take responsibility for myself. ... Contrary to what is probably expected most of time, anarchism is not a rejection of responsibility. People cannot rely on others to do what they aren't willing to do themselves, or cannot reciprocate in some way. And yes, I would say that anarchists did and still do to this day prove to be lazy in my reality.

[Q] So when anarchists get together post-PitchPipe to talk about projects, do they still talk about having a house like PitchPipe? Is having an infoshop a necessary benchmark? Or is it really that important?



[BR] I am very critical of the infoshop project or any infoshop project for that matter. I've been thinking of a lot more ways to connect to people who aren't identified as anarchists. I do feel it's nice to have a library or a place to get and share your ideas. Because it can be a place that definitely helps create and change an individual's ideas. But it can be done in other ways. In your own living room or whatever really. I never really had that when I began reading anarchist ideas. I had to buy things online and borrow texts from my friends. Which helped deepen my relationships with those friends I borrowed texts from but would have definitely appreciated conversation about the texts a little more.

[GC] I think anarchists should open up small businesses. Not to just be small businesses, but to open coffee shops or used bookstores, with more social space. And it's okay if you charge a little bit of money for a cup of coffee. I don't think there's anything wrong with that. We do need space that people feel comfortable going into: being exposed to those ideas, talking about their own ideas, sharing things, having events, movie showings, community potlucks, whatever the hell people want to do. I don't think a house — a punk house — is something the world needs more of. As a place to spawn revolutionary ideas, I don't think a punk house is what needs to happen.

[Q] Do you think the anarchist subculture is afraid of making money? Do anarchists say, "Oh no, we don't want to be successful in that way." Is that a legitimate concern?

[GC] I have a suspicion that many anarchists in the United States don't want to make money because they don't understand what it feels like to not have money. A lot of people romanticize poverty. Many romanticize and glorify living in the most desolate of conditions. It's really easy to do that if you don't come from a position of poverty. If you don't come from that, it's easy to be like, "Yeah this is new, this is it, this is revolutionary." But I don't want to live like this my whole life. I don't want to have to sell my labor either. But I'm going to do the best I can for myself and people I care about. I'm not going to get mad at someone for trying to make a living. Yeah, capitalism makes everyone a part of it, makes everyone participate in it, but I just can't get behind condemning people for trying to help themselves. We should be trying to help ourselves, and by helping ourselves, destroy capitalism. And we're probably going to need some kind of money to do that. Not like, "Voting With Your Dollar". But opening spaces, printing literature, etc. Some of that you can't dumpster. You can't dumpster a social center.

[Q] The idea behind PitchPipe was to have a communal living space also. Is that something worth pursuing separately or not? Is that something people should just do if they want to, and not have it be thought of as this grand realization, "Oh, we should live communally"?

[KG] More often than not, there was crossover between the communal living space and the infoshop. Not all who lived behind the curtain upstairs were part of PitchPipe, and not all who were apart of PitchPipe lived at the house. Somehow everyone had just been lumped into one unit. I feel like communal living situations need to be very specific and very intentional with the people who are deciding to live in them.

[GC] Communalizing space is not a bad idea. But there are people who get so rigidly dogmatic about it. You can buy a sandwich, and you think it's your sandwich—and it is your goddamn sandwich. Someone can't just open the fridge and say, "Fuck you, this is The Peoples' sandwich!" If someone did that to me I'd be like, "Fuck you, you're a jackass." Anarchism takes responsibility behind it to back it up. People don't have a lot of that. Our culture, our schools, don't teach us responsibility, or teach us to understand what consequences are. It's your choice to share your personal property or resources. Other people can't make that decision for you.

[BR] I am definitely not for the sharing of everything. Theoretically, if they want to live communally, then do so. It may be easy for that group to act against this world by means of attack, or just a general ease upon their relationships. But this is how a lot of proj-

ects—whether individual or as a group-of individuals—could ice over and just fall back into surviving within capitalism. When your means of surviving or living in a communized space becomes such a focus (the sharing everything with everyone) it eventually glosses over any critical point within acting. This is another key element to my individual practice. I think it is important to see your means of survival as staging yourself or readying yourself for your next move, whatever that may be exactly.

[Q] If you're an anarchist and you're deciding where to live, what makes you choose Tacoma over any other city? Wouldn't one theory be "Let's move to a city that's almost on the brink?" And that's what a lot of historical anarchist figures have done, like Bakunin or Kropotkin. They moved to places where there was a "spirit of revolt" in the air. So why live in a place like Tacoma where it's waxing and waning all the time, and is usually nothing but an alienated, highly militarized city?

[GC] Most places we go today are going to be alienated and militarized to varying degrees. I don't personally feel that "shit is on the brink" anywhere more than they are here in Tacoma. But the situations that famous anarchists like Mikhail Bakunin and Peter Kropotkin were moving to had quite a bit more clarity. Anarchists today aren't thinking, "Where can I go where they have the spirit of revolt? Where can I go to build the fires of revolution?" or whatever Bakunin was thinking. I've developed many unique relationships here that I consider very important and valuable to me. I've developed my own ideas for the last four-or-so years here and I don't plan

on leaving anytime soon. Aside from that, I am very skeptical of those who chase the "spirit of revolt" around the entire country, only to find themselves chasing that elusive "spirit" to yet another place again in four months.

[BR] Tacoma is a highly interesting place to live because of what can arise within this place — its potentiality. Each city has its functions and its situations that make it inspiring. I used to have a big aversion to cities and found myself at points freaking out because civilization is "so fucked up" and we just need to "run away to the country". This is another idea I have a problem with. The city and the country are one in the same—they both have aspects of each other and feed off their symbiotic survival. Then I moved to Tacoma and felt something different from the people I began living around and sharing my life with. I started reading Bonanno and more "insurrectionary" anarchist texts which made me see the way the city exists. I began to move away from an anarcho-primitivist analysis to an anti-civilization analysis. I was looking more specifically at the relationships and developments of civilization—not the "post-life" where the Garden of Eden has come back and we live happily-ever-after in some post-world. What I am trying to say is that I don't want to just run away from what exists like the city or civilization. One has to understand it, feel it, see it, question why it exists, see how it exists. Then acknowledge those dynamics and act. What use is it to stage myself on the periphery when I can be at the heart of my enemy?

[Q] What is your attraction to the more insurrectionary modes of anarchism?

[BR] Consider Oakland, CA during New Years of 2008 when Oscar Grant was killed by BART police. Anarchists and youth ran through the downtown area of Oakland and broke windows of McDonalds, Wells Fargo and quite a few other buildings and some cars were set alight. This is particularly interesting because of the context and those involved. For one, anarchists were acting with youth from Oakland whom were angered that police had killed a twenty-something African American male... That is a clear distinction between the kind of life we live under capitalism and what is possible once one sees that. And I am not saying one has to do a certain amount of reading or anarchist studying to see this. Peoples' families and friends are fucked over by capitalism daily. A certain situation or event can cause one to make a clear analysis of their rage at daily life within this world and the way it functions. The death of a family member by a cop, fired from one's job, your house foreclosed, always counting change at the end of the month, etc., etc. Anarchism is as much a feeling, an emotion, an idea, as it is a daily act. The city has different types of situations that occur between the many polarizations that keep the city functioning. The Northwest Detention Center, gentrification, drug abuse, the included and excluded, and the hostility against the police. I have been distancing myself from any sort of "political" organizing, and instead practicing an anti-political form of "organizing"... informal, on a face-to-face basis... where the situations I am a part of are felt and seen. I act with people around me, locally, through my eyes... not read on some



distant planet or newspaper.

[Q] Three years ago the PitchPipe Infoshop opened up, and then other groups started forming, the SDS, animal rights activists, etc. People started thinking, "Oh wow, Tacoma has anarchists, Tacoma has things going on." What do you think is happening now in comparison, and what should happen, as far as "upping the anti" goes in Tacoma?

[GC] A good emphasis would be to toss and ditch the word "radical" and flat-out retake the word "revolutionary." Not like how *Socialist Alternative* other left groups take it. But something really different. Not just "radical" but something revolutionary. I'm working on opening a couple of things myself, like eventually book publishing, and selling books and literature. I've wanted to do some kind of social center, not like the traditional infoshop, but something like a small bookstore or coffee shop where we could go, talk, study. Just like Blackwater but run by anarchists, or like OneHeart with the computers, only run by anarchists. We don't have to have a bunch of posters about being vegan on the walls (most of us aren't vegan anymore anyways) and have a bunch of cliché anarchist crap lying around. We can be like, "Yeah we're anarchists, want some fucking coffee?" That's like the kind of stuff I want to work on. I want to start my own printing business. I'm going to be here for the long haul, at least for a couple more years. I have a lot of time to figure this stuff out, and I want to actually organize so we can be an effective social force to combat capitalism. And really combat it too, not talking about metaphorically combating capitalism, like opening up a co-op. If you open up a co-op it should be part of an anti-authoritarian struggle against capitalism. That's what I'm going for, the real deal, not just Food Not Bombs.

[Q] Most anarchists in the United States are in their early twenties or younger. Do you think this is a phase anarchists in Tacoma are going through? Some people will undoubtedly just get married, have families, resign their lives and become a part of the system of capitalism completely.

[GC] Let's be honest with ourselves right now, all of those involved in this interview, both interviewer and those interviewed. We have all met anarchists of all different age groups. It is not much of a mystery to us that people get older, people have kids sometimes and often people get married to someone whom they say they love. What makes a difference is who is around me at that moment in time and how long they have been around.

[BR] It can be a phase for some people. Capitalism has had the ability to take the symbol of anarchism, the circle A, and recuperate its meaning. It branded it onto different pieces of clothing. Young kids at Hot Topic equate the rebellious mohawk-wearing teenager with anarchism. So, there it becomes a phase which is detached from one's actual life. Giving up does not have to be equated with having a family or kids. That can be a strength because of the



outcome of how a child can perceive the world and how they want to live. Anarchists can be students, moms, dads, uncles, truckdrivers, dishwashers, whatever really. Its just how that job or means of being is used at the point of their anarchist practice. A lot of times anarchist practice is seen as this subversive subculture that exists where people are focused on merely surviving within the desert, the city, the civilization...

[Q] Is it worthwhile to build, over the course of your life, an intergenerational anarchist movement?

[KG] There is nothing that I want more than the involvement of multiple generations in anarchism. I think it's so important to bridge those gaps, to teach those who are younger, to learn from those who have experienced more. I hope that one day I will have a healthy anarchist community to surround my potential children with. To have that support from those I know and trust means these ideas will not just fade out and become something that was apart of their youth.

[GC] I grew up not having much connection or even knowing any other anarchists who where older than twenty three. For myself and my friends at the time, that was a pivotal moment in the development of ourselves and our ideas. I really feel that lack of a multi-generational anarchist movement definitely has something to do with the hopelessness I ended up seeing in a lot of my friends who had some amazing talents and creative ideas. That is something that I still think about often today. It is nothing less than tragic to see the ones you love and care about to fall into the role of narcissistic workhorse, with little or no real drive to take their life into their own hands. I feel as if the existence of multi-generational anarchists would greatly help youth who have critical ideas and philosophical minds develop themselves how they see fit. Those of us who are older can help younger people and be helped by those older than us by acting as a guide rather than playing a leadership role. ■ ■ ■

Though the PitchPipe Infoshop closed its doors in 2008, it continued to exist as communal-style house and anarchist hub until New Year's Eve 2010, when it was condemned as "uninhabitable" due to electricity issues and boarded up by the Tacoma Police.

WASH YOU OWN DISHES

"If you can't wash, it's not my revolution" *Dilemma Goldman*

CAPITALISM:

You wash the dishes, the ones who own them profit.

ANARCHISM:

We all share in the dishwashing.

DEMOCRACY

Even as a dishwasher, you deserve a say in which politician is best suited to protect the economy that keeps you in the kitchen

NEOLIBERALISM (AKA "Free Trade")

The dishes are shipped overseas to be washed and you're free to develop your own combination of Unemployment and Nationalism

MARXISM

Between shifts, the dishwasher studies the intricacies of dialectical materialism. It turns out that thanks to his efforts, the dirty dishes have been accumulating value for his boss to invest in more dishes. The stuff about the dictatorship of the proletariat is more perplexing, but the party theorists reassure him that it makes perfect sense to them. Under their direction, he joins his fellow dishwashers in a risky coup d'état. Afterwards, he is distraught to find himself still in the kitchen, washing dishes for party bureaucrats. The bureaucrats reassure him that they will eventually wither away.

SYNDICALISM

The dishwashers join labor syndicates that send representatives to a council, at which it is decided which dishes are to be washed and when

NATIONALISM

Forget about those dishes for a second—you're a citizen of the proudest nation on earth!

REFORM

Smaller stacks, warmer water, longer breaks—same dishes!

ANARCHA-FEMINISM

You wash dishes for the boss—who washes the dishes at home?

LIBERTARIANISM

You wash the dishes, the owners profit even more

SOCIALISM

Dishwashers' wages increase just enough to afford higher taxes

ANARCHO-PRIMITIVISM

Down with dishes!

FASCISM

The Mexicans who washed the dishes are deported, the Jews who owned the place are imprisoned, and everyone else is conscripted for military service

ANARCHO-PUNK

Down with washing!

UNEMPLOYMENT

The only thing worse than being trapped in a dishroom is being trapped outside one

COMMUNISM

From each according to his means, to each according to his need—as determined outside the dishroom

INSURRECTIONARY ANARCHISM

A quixotic attempt to distill a political theory from the practice of smashing dishes

R ES



Illustration courtesy of www.prole.info, from the excellent primer *Abolish Restaurants*

THE BUREAU OF TAKING BACK PUBLIC SPACE

COMMUNIQUE NO. 3

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

You are all interior designers.

...Look at the way you design the spaces you live in: your rooms, your kitchens, your hallways, your bathrooms, your porches... Did you not burden yourselves by placing objects and designing space to affect your everyday experiences of the world around? The knitter, sitting comfortably on the davenport, hangs "Home Sweet Home" above the fireplace. The art student, walking methodically but aimlessly through the Proctor District, tags "Wonder Creature" on city benches. The homeless man, steadily shuffling through the Tacoma Underworld, paints a message to City Hall on the wall next to him.

What all of you have in common is your shared conspiracy to define the world you live in...

Most people, unfortunately, take this idea of "public space" for granted. Most of you do not see that public space designable. But somebody had to design these spaces! Engineers once scribbled some lines on a piece of paper (and might have scribbled them otherwise) and now people have to walk and live by their plans. Except in rare neighborhoods where the city bureaucracy has little control over public spaces, because the public is so overwhelmingly active, "public space" is profoundly neglected. It is just an in-between zone.

Or rather, just in-between zones of alienation: between the workplace, where alienated workers compete for opportunities to stimulate an alienated society-- and the home, where alienated work produces alienated leisure.

... Even if there were more places to sit down in-between these hellish dimensions, how can they expect you to fill city benches without succumbing to an even more violent despair?

If the consciousness of these interior designers went beyond the limits of a capitalist and bureaucratic perspective, they might act as if society is theirs... act as if society consisted of people with whom to carry out projects, limited only by the available instruments and the available knowledge. Friends, can you see our potential for creation?


But friends, we must not not be concerned with the establishment safer and more efficient "pedestrian activity" -- as if faster-moving pedestrians could solve the discomforts of our lives. On the contrary, we must aim toward the superiority of social life as a whole.

Up until now, designers and pedestrians and artists have merely traversed landscapes and eaten them up one photograph at a time. The point, however, is to transform them!

The goal of everyone as an artist is to realize their life as a continuous fountain of creativity... to become artists in the sense that they attain the construction of their own lives... to become the specialized amateur, so to speak.

Because as artists, we specialize in the de-specialization of art!

As artists, our lives are a continuous game of events and situations we have created... a series of "situations" we ourselves are the artists of... Social life is itself one of these situations. The society of the spectacle is but one of these situations. What have we done to overcome it?

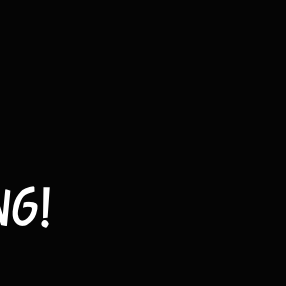
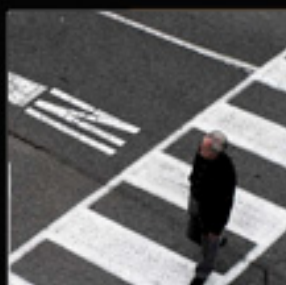


Pick a spot, call it your own. Transform social life!
Dedicate the practice of your art to it. Let us create
"spaces worth defending," as an architect, James
Howard Kunstler, once said. Aim not merely toward
establishing the superiority of "pedestrian activity"...
Aim toward the superiority of social life as a whole,
toward the diffusion of art everywhere!

Interior designers,
Out of your houses and into the streets!

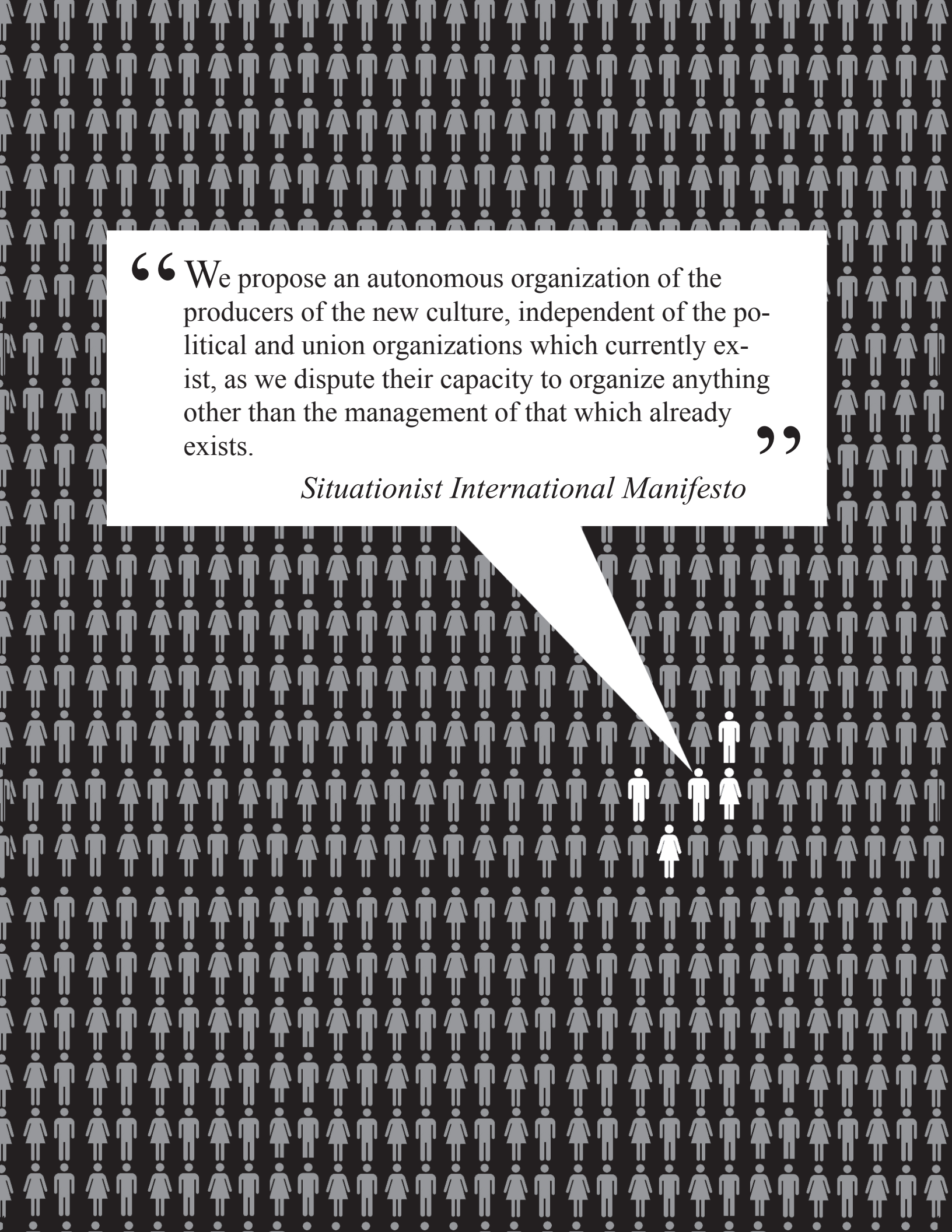
The search for revolutionary strategies continues,

The Bureau of Taking Back Public Space



CUTTING UP TACOMA THIS SPRING!
BUREAU OF TAKING
BACK PUBLIC SPACE





“ We propose an autonomous organization of the producers of the new culture, independent of the political and union organizations which currently exist, as we dispute their capacity to organize anything other than the management of that which already exists. ”

Situationist International Manifesto



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To request a drop-off location for Autonomy253 or to ask us to plug-in a project or an event, or to submit letters, articles, or other information, send us a message.

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