

# ACT/REACT

“They still don't want to admit to the world that this isn't the best and the fairest and most equal justice system. And that they are guilty of railroading people into jail. They don't want to, or never will, admit these things.”

-Leonard Peltier



i s s u e 4

a collection of writings  
from grand rapids anarchists

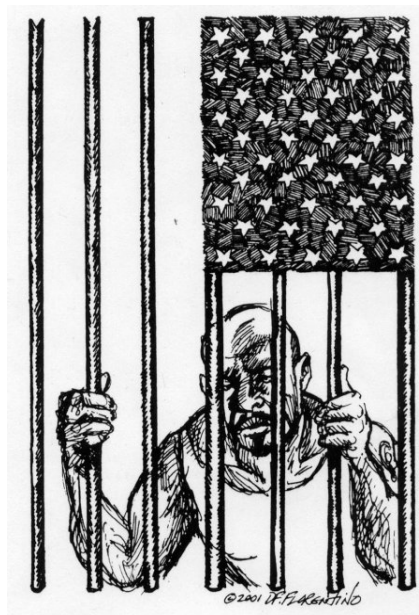
# A CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

- send submissions, feedback, questions, etc. to **actreactgr@gmail.com**.
- all topics welcome, as well as art, fiction, poetry, recipes, how-to's, stories, call(s)-to-action, skillshares, project proposals, and anything else you think needs to be in here!
- submissions are due by the 25th of september, and are ready for distribution the 1st of october.
- send files as .rtf (rich text format) or .jpg (JPEG).
- we do not share authorship information
  - there is no word limit
- no political affiliation, but this is an anarcho-centric publication. if you're article calls for blatant oppression, it will not be printed (we will not print fascist writings, political office campaigning articles, or bullshit like that)
- if you're interested in editing, include email address, nickname, and amount of articles you want to proofread in an email or submission.
- if you're interested in designing, include email address, nickname, and either .indd files (we use cs3) or design ideas in an email or submission.
- obviously, email is not the most secure way of sharing information, so please keep this in mind while you are submitting/editing articles.

And to anyone who sympathizes with them enough to vilify the rioters, I have only this to say: social war isn't pretty. The conditions of this society are atrocious, if you're reading this zine chances are you have your own long list of grievances. If you want to live in a world where people are free to act according to their desires, then that's how we're going to break free, by beginning to do so. I might not have done 100% of what the looters did, but we're talking about tens of thousands of people with their own lives, problems, dreams, and desires. The fact that they were able to break free from the spectacle's mediation of their perception of the world and let their desires run rampant should be exciting to those of us who have nothing but contempt for this society.

In retrospect, I do have some questions. What role did anarchists play during the riots? Why was the focus of the riots on looting and not as much on attacking the police? Does the looting of expensive commodities mean that people are still stuck in capitalism's shallow materialism? Why didn't the rioting spread from London to across the country, or continent, or world?

My hope is that people who read this article understand that ANY collective break from this society is of the utmost importance for those of us who want to live in a better world, and that the official reasons for a tear in the fabric aren't as relevant as some would have you think.



# PRISONER SUPPORT PROJECT

There are more than 2 million people incarcerated in the United States. Due to institutionalized racism and the criminalization of poverty, an overwhelming majority are poor and people of color. The U.S. judicial system has made it a crime to be homeless, to take money or food in order to survive, to live in an abandoned building, to sell or use substances that have not financially benefited big pharmaceutical companies, to protect the natural environment, to fight back against police brutality, etc. When people are arrested, many times they face the courts alone and without support; and upon imprisonment, become further isolated.

As anarchists we are at constant war with the State. And as anarchists in Grand Rapids, we haven't done such a great job supporting prisoners - be it our anarchist comrades, or other individuals victimized by the legal system. It is important to acknowledge that a known absence of prisoner support can be a deterrent to active resistance against the State. So it is here that we propose a Prisoner Support Project: writing letters to prisoners, sending books and zines, doing benefits for legal funds, setting up prisoner support sites, publishing prisoner writings, and whatever else we can think of.

What we're gonna need: pens, paper, envelopes, stamps, books, bands, show spaces, ideas, and most of all, PEOPLE WHO WANT TO SUPPORT PRISONERS! If you are interested in getting involved, or have ideas or questions, contact us at:

[psp.contact.gr@gmail.com](mailto:psp.contact.gr@gmail.com).



organize and control their actions and tell them that their desires aren't important and should be subordinate to "the cause" (or movement/party/organization) it makes perfect sense. And despite how much anarchists like to pretend we still aren't part of that shit, it still gets caught up in our discourse.

When I say the causes of the riot aren't real what I mean is that once the riots started, the causes meant next to nothing in lieu of the following actions. I have never been to London but I guarantee you the people who were looting, setting things on fire, and fighting the police were not doing so because they were angry over Duggan's murder. I'm sure a lot of them did feel angry about it, especially the black people to whom the constant threat of police violence hit home pretty hard, but anger over police shootings does not equal looting a storefront. They did it because they could. The start of the riots opened up a rupture in society where people could break free from living their lives only through shitty, pre-packaged roles; worker, consumer, citizen, student, etc.

By taking whatever commodities they could get their hands on, including electronics, dvds, appliances, clothes, and food, the looters are rejecting their roles as worker-consumers. The capitalist world keeps spinning because people, as workers, produce commodities and in turn are given money for their labor. As consumers, whose social worth is dictated by how much they consume, said people spend their hard-earned money buying commodities of their own. If they can't, they're meant to believe that it's because they're



inferior, and should be embarrassed at not having enough money or commodities. By looting, they are saying fuck it to the whole cycle. As Angry News puts it: "in a flash of illumination the solution to the existential dilemma is found: MUST HAVE/ CAN'T HAVE = TAKE."

Middle class people are scared to death by the footage, and the media is lapping that shit up. For days all I could see when I checked out the mainstream news was interviews with petty-bourgeois people whose stores were broken into.



## London Calling



On August 4 2011, 29-year old Mark Duggan was shot and killed by police in Tottenham, London, England. A peaceful march on August 6 turned into a riot that lasted four days and quickly spread throughout the city. The riots were characterized by massive looting and arson. The United States media was careful at first in revealing “the reasons” for the rioting, but by the 10th most people who cared knew the murder of Duggan played a large part in sparking the riots. I’m not sure if those who care in the U.S. know that black men in London have something like an eight times greater likelihood to be randomly stopped and searched by police. I’m also not sure if they’re aware of the human impact that the economy’s downturn has had in urban London, especially among black people. To be honest, I’m sick of hearing about “the reasons” of the riots because they aren’t real.

When shit gets spontaneously real like we saw in London, lefties are quick to talk about the reasons. It’s a form of apology. “We’re sorry for the riots but we know that they happened for a good reason!” That’s what I’m hearing constantly, even from anarchist groups like Workers Solidarity Movement. And for a group of people stuck in thinking politically, who want to convert more people to their cause, to

## To The Deniers

If there were no cattle trains in 1940s Europe  
Loaded up with  
Jewish multitudes, headed for imaginary  
Death camps, queing up for illusory  
Final showers in mythical  
Zyklon-B gas, mass commencement into make-believe  
Fleshpiles, filling in the Nazis’  
Open graves, constructs dug into soft earth of  
Someone’s twisted imagination,

If the victim’s photographs  
Were falsified,  
Photoshop magic conjurations,

If a young girl’s  
Diary entries, written whilst in hiding from stormtroopers  
Were forgeries by hand, pathological lies,

If the camp tattoos  
On a survivor’s aging, withered arm  
Were a lifelong  
Traumatic  
Mindtrick, possibly brought on by something else,

Seriously,

If the Holocaust never happened

Then you didn’t pick up this book

And you didn’t read this poem.

# SANTAYANA



What lies under the sand  
Driving force of attack  
And dominance over the Arab  
world----  
Return to Iraq

Retribution for terrorism  
Driving force of the plan  
On the hunt for fanatics-----  
Return to Afghanistan

Arise  
Face war  
Arise  
Onward to victory

Misinformation on television  
War's support on primetime  
This happened many times before  
Brand-new era, same old crimes

Those who cannot  
Remember the past  
Expect glory from combat-----  
So they repeat the past

Arise  
Face war  
Arise  
Only the dead have seen the end of  
war

in and out of shops, restaurants, stores and galleries, they are bound to want food, booze, a place to sleep and something fun to do. When this person is multiplied by quadruple digits, what comes of it is a haven for simple transactions amounting to more than most businesses can reasonably handle. A service-worker hell. Businesses often hire more workers just for artprize and even more often offer no breaks, no raise, and mandatory double overtime.

## A Million Canvases, A Few Thousand Artists

Art is not a staple of the US economy. However, during artprize, art is made into a catalyst for financial gains and reinstituting capital under the guise of tourism. This embellishment of the arts is not only false, but a step in a very negative direction. When did judges dictate when and where art could be created? What happened to art where now one allows their creation to be pawned off to the highest bidder? Commodification of the arts is not a new idea, but since when is it the only option?



## Gentrification

During artprize, the city is on lockdown. Those who have no roof to sleep under are forced into the surrounding neighborhoods, away from what little resource they have. Places like Degage ministries and God's Kitchen (free food services) are told to notify their clientele that the police will be arresting anyone seen loitering in the area (Division and Cherry). Experience Grand Rapids? Experience white-washing and cultural purity as people without pocketbooks are being violently scared away.

## Tear It Down

To keep it brief, as anarchists, I believe our role is to lend a helping hand to those damaged by artprize, employed and unemployed alike. I believe in a drastic rise in guerilla art, adamantly opposing the limits an artprize suggests. I believe in culture of mainstream resistance.

# fArtPrize



ArtPrize is an “open” art competition whose aim is to bring exposure to artists and bring Grand Rapids into a positive light in the world’s art stage. I see this as nothing more than an attempt to flux the local economy by investing in mass-tourism and exploitation of the arts, while the political, social, and economical repercussions are often, if not completely ignored. What thousands upon thousands of art-lovers, collectors, and investors are amassing around is working-class hell. Service work like the food and lodging industries are sent into triple overtime, often seeing 10+ hour work days and nights. The homeless and starving are shunned from the area completely, forcibly removed by police terror. The arts are made a mockery of while Dick Devos pays off the judges in a rigged election for the 100,000 dollar prize. Fact is, Grand Rapids (and everywhere else in the US) is kept afloat by the working class consumer, and artprize does nothing for anyone that doesn’t own a business or receive checks to create art by fuckheads like Devos.

## Big Prize, Little Business

Businesses in the artprize territory are obligated to display works inside their shops, stores and eateries. This attracts customers. Artists who want to display their work in these shops choose from a list of a couple hundred businesses. Obviously, some places are more desirable due to their inherit foot traffic. If you were to be trying to win an art completion via popular vote, you’d want the popular venues. However, venues can only host a small amount of work. First-come first-serve? No, spots in high trafficked venues are often bought out by the artist with the most investors. It would cost you another few hundred dollars after the initial entry fee to get onto the wall of the BOB or the GR art museum. This creates an unbalanced playing field, since the most viewed artists are often sponsored by companies like Steelcase and Amway. Above all, the economic value of thousands of tourists roaming the streets of Grand Rapids for 3 weeks looks pretty good to the figureheads of local and outsourced capital. While the average art-prizer meanders

I don’t envision  
Myself in mortal danger  
On the battlefield  
Nor would I  
Load up the chamber  
Handle the fucking steel  
Nor would any  
Innocents and friendlies  
Die by these hands  
That goes  
Against my nature, fucker----  
I disobey your commands

CHORUS: I am

Not  
Your  
Soldier  
Not  
Your  
Soldier  
Not  
Your  
Soldier  
Not an assassin  
For your cause [ TWICE ]

It’s one thing  
To fight someone  
Doing me the greatest harm  
It’s another  
Laying someone’s home to  
waste

# NON SERVIAM

And shooting the unarmed  
I won’t damage  
My body for you, fucker  
I won’t bite the dust  
The war you ask  
Me to fight is amoral  
I finally lost my trust

In you

[ REPEAT CHORUS ]

I’ll never see the battlefield  
I’ll never see combat death  
I’ll never join  
Amped-up  
Drugged-up soldiers  
With no trace of humanity left  
Throw me in the fucking brig  
Starve me if you must  
Call me a fucking coward  
This confirms my lack of trust

In you

[ REPEAT CHORUS ]



# Kingdom of Ash

Bright orange glow  
Penetrates the night.  
Inner-city epicentre  
Left ablaze, matching the intensity of this moment.  
Combined smells of flaming tyre rubber and bus metal  
Roll in strong on the nostrils.  
Thick debris  
Decorates the road into a mosaic of chaos.  
Ashen sticks, cindre and craters  
Stand in the place of buildings.  
Sirens blare, immediately  
Attacking eardrums, like a crying bird of prey  
Swooping downward for the kill.  
Youth and age  
Wage pitched battles across urban blocks, as if the  
Combat went on forever.

Elections can be fixed.  
The popular choice loses.  
The wrong man wins.  
Thus, representation of the whole by one  
Is an illusion.  
No two rulers  
Can save us.  
We are our own salvation  
Because their ballot machines cannot  
Calculate all our desires.  
Theocracy, democracy  
Aren't choices.  
Religious fanaticism, nationalism  
Aren't choices.  
They are obstructions to be removed.  
We won't make demands on their system  
To correct the electoral process.  
We seek its swift destruction  
Because it's the fifth obstruction.  
Politicians and clerics  
Do not own our every move.

The polls have failed. The polls are avoided.  
The torch, the stick, the bottle, the brick,  
The masque, the barricade  
Deliver our opinions more efficiently.

When the new regime ordered us to  
Stay silent & accept its rule, they  
Declared war on my generation. Total social war.

As in any war, there are mounting casualties  
On both sides. Divergent loyalties.

They can threaten nine million executions  
And that regime won't hold us back from  
Burning their illusion.  
My rage against their reign.  
Our power against their corruption.  
Our numbers against their defenders.  
Our blows, reducing the land where  
Lies and intimidation rule to  
A kingdom of ash.  
Deserved punishments  
In the orange glow of the bright  
Iranian night.

