



See you in the streets...

THIS
IS
THE
END.

act/react 7



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Obviously, we wouldn't encourage people to create any real change by directly impacting their lives and their world.

Comments? Questions? Trolling? Send 'em all my way: willowanarch@hushmail.com

- 1: Taken from 'At Daggers Drawn' by anon
- 2: The government giveth...the government taketh away...
- 3: Criminologists came up with this 'Broken Windows' theory. It says that, in urban environments, when windows are left broken it signals the weakness of the state and the fragility of the society. My conclusion from this: smash away!

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Farewell!

Thanks for checking out the last issue ever of act/react! We, the editors, have greatly enjoyed working on this project and we appreciate all of your contributions, readership, and comments. As you may know, act/react began in the Spring of 2011 in response to police repression that specifically targeted anarchists and punks. We wanted to maintain an anarchist presence here in GR without folks fearing that the police would harass them because of their ideological affiliations. Well, the police are still here, but the anarchists are

no longer afraid. We feel confident that the contextual usefulness of this zine has run its course, and there are so many projects right now that we think are more relevant to the current state of affairs in town. So grab some friends, start something rad, and don't let your projects outlive their utility! On that final note, we move forward, with great expectations for the future.

- some GR anarchists

of others; the latter acts for themselves and in solidarity with others acting for themselves. Here we have the left and the post-left. The left wants to appeal to the morality of the middle class; the post-left wants to create instances of social rupture (attacks, riots, insurrections). Obviously the two come into conflict all the time, but many people in GR act like there is no significant difference between the two. Calls for 'unity among the left' exemplify this. We want to destroy what's in our way and we want to do so by attacking society now, they want us to pose for the media passively letting cops douse us in pepper spray. We want to be victors; they want us to be victims.

I want to be clear on this point: I do NOT view the people at the Bloom Collective as my enemies. Or that they fall into the description of leftists above necessarily. In fact, I like and respect them as people; they're nice and care about what they do. My problem is that this very visible above-ground thing, the Bloom, attracts these and other people that are new to things, sucking away their time and energy, and reinforcing in them that the left's way of doing things is the only way. I don't want to speak for anyone but myself, but I suspect that all of these people would be better off if the Bloom Collective was gone.

You think you're helping people when you go to a protest that's about their plight, and perhaps you are in some way, but it's in attack that real solidarity comes from. By attacking the obstacles to your happiness you are showing other people that it is possible to attack this shiny, perfect-seeming world. [3] One in struggle against the totality of oppression becomes inspired, excited, and energized upon seeing others successfully attack the totality. I am not saying that only attack matters, but that it is through attack and social rupture that the bulldozers will stop being built, not through protests and boycotts. That being said, there is plenty of work to be done, and in no way do I think 'attacks' are objectively more important than other activity. It's from having the perspective that sabotaging the flow of society through social rupture as opposed to building a mass using populist methods that this work will be discovered, the creativity coming from small groups of trusting friends and comrades.

On one side there's the 'cause'-based, awareness-raising, critical mass-building leftist democrats, on the other there's strong-willing, passionate rebels who mean to end their own individual and collective oppression as soon as possible. The former acts on behalf



You got it dude?

Noise March through Downtown GR



On June 11, following a benefit show for Marie Mason and Eric McDavid, about 25 people took to the streets of downtown Grand Rapids for an impromptu march.

Early on during the show, a flyer was circulated that announcing the parade. Following the last band, several bucket drums, noise makers of various kinds, black flags (extremely large ones at that!), and other random stuff were made available. Immediately after the band finished, people took Division Ave. and headed into the heart of downtown. The parade went on for about half an hour blocking both lanes of the street at most times. The cops never caught up with the group and a few onlookers joined in after it was explained why and what was happening. People dispersed after returning to the show venue without any arrests – quitting while ahead!

This march was a lovely celebration of Marie and Eric's contributions to the struggle. Funds were raised and there was excitement in the air. It's refreshing to see people take to the streets without hesitation. Similarly, while the parade didn't have a real clear focus, it

doesn't come from nowhere; through our own individual submission to domination we reinforce the example of submission to each other. Our parents obey, our neighbors obey, our fellow students obey, our co-workers obey, and from this we learn to obey ourselves.

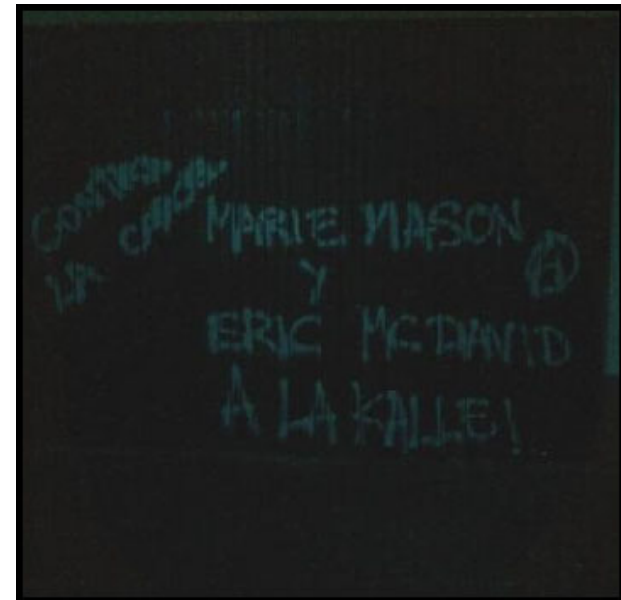
Don't focus on the 1%, they don't do shit, YOU make capitalism work; we all do. It's our 'first world problems', our misery, labor, alienation, boredom, stress, and anxiety that keeps capitalism going and that ultimately builds the bulldozers. Just as well, it is from our decision to act against what perpetuates these 'first-world problems' that real resistance comes, not from cause-based guilt and moralism. Even if we did manage to stop Caterpillar from sending bulldozers, that's a reformist tactic. The system will bite back in a million ways before you can do anything about it. The largest successes in terms of reform we've seen in the US are the abolition of slavery and the creation of the social democratic welfare state. Tell me again, how is the state of racism and white supremacy in the United States? What's the minimum wage and how easy is it to get job benefits? Slavery was replaced with prison labor and northern sweatshops, the welfare state is always being gutted, even today. [2]

in the Occupied Territories. This poster means to make the plight of the Palestinians into a 'cause' that we, the privileged Westerners, are supposed to rally behind out of guilt that "our" tax money and "our" corporations are doing all the damage. I assume the creators want a boycott or protests so that Caterpillar stops sending bulldozers to Israel. This strategy fails in only looking at the obviously shitty exceptions to daily life, like houses being bulldozed, as the problem, and treating normal everyday life as the goal. If we were to look at everyday life as the problem we would see that those Caterpillar bulldozers don't build themselves. It takes daily abuse and misguided allegiance from obedient workers and upstanding citizens for both their production and the maintenance of the social peace that allows for capitalism in general. That social peace



was nice for once to have something that was not watered down to appeal to some mythical mainstream or liberal/leftist framework. Was it perfect? Of course not, nothing ever is. There was a definite lack of a banner/leaflets for the onlookers who were excited. But we'll remember that for next time.

This march and benefit were just one of many actions that happened on June 11. Across the country fundraisers were held; while in Bloomington people held a "reclaim the streets" type action, in Seattle people had a march, and in other places various acts of vandalism occurred – making it an exciting day all around.



Safer and Sober Show Spaces



tainly not so as to be able to go to sleep with clearer ideas." [1] Let's be clear about something, the Bloom Collective is a project of leftism; the left is a political force that means to manage the proletariat. While the Bloom obviously rejects the leftism of Lenin, Mao, and the Democrats, the mode in which it operates still tends towards management. The democratic left has a goal: organize enough people to have a critical mass of guilt-ridden moralists who can then transform society. Its methods for achieving that goal include dicing up the totality of domination into bite-size easily digestible 'causes' that one feels morally obliged to invest themselves into. Anyone who takes initiative to end their own oppression by releasing their passions and desires in insurrectionary form against society is told they are 'alienating the masses' and an enemy to the cause. Maybe that last part is true; we are enemies to the cause, so let's embrace it and to hell with all this false unity. We're enemies of the left because they want to control us and we are uncontrollable.

Another poster on display that demonstrates why I think the Bloom's strategy for confronting oppression is irrelevant; it's a critique of Caterpillar and their "corporate human rights abuses," referring to their bulldozers being used to demolish Palestinian homes

best stifles real communities from forming. Democracy means majority rules. You know the majority right? That group of assholes who reproduce rape culture, who beat their kids, who would snitch on you the first chance they got, apparently we should let them dictate how we live our lives. If we applied democracy to music then we'd all be listening to LMFAO and Nickelback.

When one scans the materials at the Bloom Collective, the sense one gets is that there are a series of causes that need to be rallied upon, and that at best those causes all 'add up' to the real enemy which is 'capitalism.' The materials are all either on the history of imperialism (sections include Latin America, Iraq, War on Terror, Middle East, etc.) or discussion of a specific 'issue' (sections include media, prisons/police, war on drugs, LGTBQ). A patron of the Bloom, after reading all of these, may become particularly knowledgeable about these issues, sure, but what is their strategy for action? Raising more awareness? Because it focuses on these 'causes' in order to build a 'mass,' the Bloom fails in that their presentation of the situation doesn't lead to any cohesive, offensive strategy for abolishing capitalism. "If he or she analyses the transformation of capital and the State it is in order to attack them, cer-

First, let's define safer and sober spaces:

Safer spaces are spaces free of oppressive language and actions, with established procedures by which to confront folks who engage in such behavior, as well as an explicit zero-tolerance policy. These spaces accept the assertions made by survivors and actively keep perpetrators from entering the space. Sober spaces are not only free of drugs and alcohol, but also, ensure that folks partaking in said substances are not in the space while under the influence.

When I first bring up "safer and sober" spaces (or the lack thereof), people either don't know what the fuck I'm talking about, or they simply don't understand why such spaces might be important. And why would they? Here in Grand Rapids there hasn't been much intentionality concerning safer or sober spaces, and thus, the feeble attempts that have been made are often met with confusion and frustration.

Safer and sober spaces are not about judgment or exclusion. Those of us trying to create space do so in the interest of accountability and inclusion. People should be able to go to shows without having to be afraid of running into someone who sexually assault-

ed them. They shouldn't have to be afraid that their race, gender, or sexuality might make them a target of violence. And if someone is a target of violence, people shouldn't jump to the defense of the perpetrator with such claims as, "it was a joke," or "he was drunk, so it doesn't really count."

Additionally, recovering addicts, people on parole or probation, minors, and other institutionally vulnerable folks who can't safely attend shows in non-sober spaces, are regularly excluded. I know a lot of folks who don't go to shows for these reasons. It's not about being a "PC fascist," it's about safety- our own and the safety of the people we care about. If you're not sober, no one gives a fuck. If you want to go to a sober space, drink at home, AFTER the show. Sober kids will still like you. And if you're a hetero-normative, sexist, racist piece of shit, well, in that case, fuck off and die.

So to the folks who run venues, and to folks who go to shows, at the very least let's make shows safer. Sober spaces are cool (not to say that non-sober spaces are not), but it is absolutely imperative that we hold ourselves and our loosely-constructed community accountable. Safer spaces cannot be negotiated upon.



methods right away. To be honest I don't think you could even call the Bloom Collective radical anymore. I don't mean to have a pissing contest over who is more radical, but I'm an anarchist for a reason: I think the system's solutions are bullshit. One of the posters in the infoshop's space demands that 'we' tax the rich and invest in 'our' communities. So it's basically a call to strengthen the state. Chomsky makes the same bullshit argument: 'oh the state's democratic so we should use it when we can.' Um, fuck democracy and fuck the state, last time I checked the state is an extremely anti-social and fucked up bureaucracy that locks people in cages, has the potential to murder us in the millions, and at

meeting our expectations and what could be done to make it better. Also we know these projects may not succeed or that they may become irrelevant. Rather than dump more time and energy into a failing project, we often agree to stop doing it. We may be sad that the time and energy we devoted seems to go to waste on failed projects, but we are sadder at the prospect of wasting even more of ourselves on them. The folks at the Bloom either are deluding themselves into thinking they are having some margin of success, or they are simply dumping energy into the project for its own sake.

Even if it wasn't failing, I'd still want it to go under, simply for the reason that I don't think its methods for confronting oppression are effective or relevant at all. And more importantly, as the most visible above-ground 'radical' organization in the city it attracts new people and molds them into adopting its failed

One of the reasons I like anarchists is that though we have lofty goals ('demand nothing! destroy everything!') we only do things when we feel like it's accomplishing something.

It's In the Air, And It's All Around

Hopefully, if you are reading this zine you are either convinced – or at the very least interested in the concept – that a stronger anarchist community (or even an anarchist community, not even sure we can speak in terms of “stronger” or not) is a desirable goal here in good ole G.R. After all, we're all either anarchists – or at least interested in anarchist ideas – and it would seem that if we are going to make a contribution to the anarchist revolutionary project, we need others to act with. What follows are just some quick reflections on the complex theme of this issue. Hopefully they are worthwhile.

When I think of anarchist community, I picture a large-ish (or at least solid) group of anarchists who are engaged in actual projects that are relevant. I'm not talking dying infoshops, obligatory protests, random graffiti, punk shows, rarely updated websites, small cooperative businesses (shudder), or social gatherings masquerading as something more; but rather a constellation of projects and people that constitutes some kind of social force. Ideally, an anarchist community would

be visible, accessible, able to take care of its members' needs (to at least some degree), and be able to take the initiative.

At the current moment, anarchists in Grand Rapids don't have that kind of community. Maybe I'm overly optimistic, but I believe we could – it just means that those of us who are already anarchists need to step up and get something going. I'm not too interested in trying to get everyone to join the One Big Anarchist Group (O-BAG) or anything like that (it wouldn't work anyway), but I think that if we start thinking and acting differently, we could make some strides.

We could start by seeing ourselves as anarchists and realizing that we have a distinct revolutionary project: the destruction of the state and all forms of domination. We need to keep that in mind and use it to develop our plans and strategies. How does what we do relate to that goal? At the same time, we don't all need to work together – we should where it makes sense and go our own separate ways as needed. But, we should start seeing different projects as part of a larger revolutionary project – and think about how different approaches relate to each other. In Greece, they talk about an anarchist “space” – where several different



are being raised is the first goal, how resourceful the bloom is to its patrons being the second, and how much building of friendship, support, and solidarity networks come from people meeting through the Bloom being the third. It can be demonstrated that all of these goals are failing on the simple fact that it is completely

normal for only one or even zero patrons to come into the Bloom for an entire shift. Five people would be considered a good day. So consciousness is not being raised, nobody uses the bloom as a resource, and no community has come from it, besides perhaps friendships formed from ‘working’ there. I would consider this to be a failing project.

If it was an anarchist project it would’ve stopped existing years ago. One of the reasons I like anarchists is that though we have lofty goals (‘demand nothing! destroy everything!’) we only do things when we feel like it’s accomplishing something. Our time is valuable to us so we are careful with each project, we only commit to those that we find interesting or are hopeful about. We constantly think about whether or not the project is

The Theory of Bloom...Collective

by Willow

I received an e-mail from the Bloom Collective. Apparently they are out of money and are looking for ways to keep the project running. For those that don't know, the Bloom Collective is an infoshop located within a building owned by the Catholic Church. From what I hear it started off as an anarchist project, but it definitely is not now. I know this is going to hurt some people's feelings and I wish there was some way to avoid that, but I have to be honest about my own thoughts and feelings. It's through real and critical dialogue, and not socially constructed manners and politeness that we can grow and evolve. The point of this writing is that I think it would be best for the bloom to close.

The projects' goals, from my understanding, are to raise consciousness, to act as a resource for the nearby locality, and to build community. I'm going to get into my issues with these in a bit, but first I think it's important to review where the Bloom is in relation to said goals. All three of them are measurable quantitatively. How much consciousness or how many conscious's

approaches co-exist rather than a "movement" – maybe we need to start thinking that way.

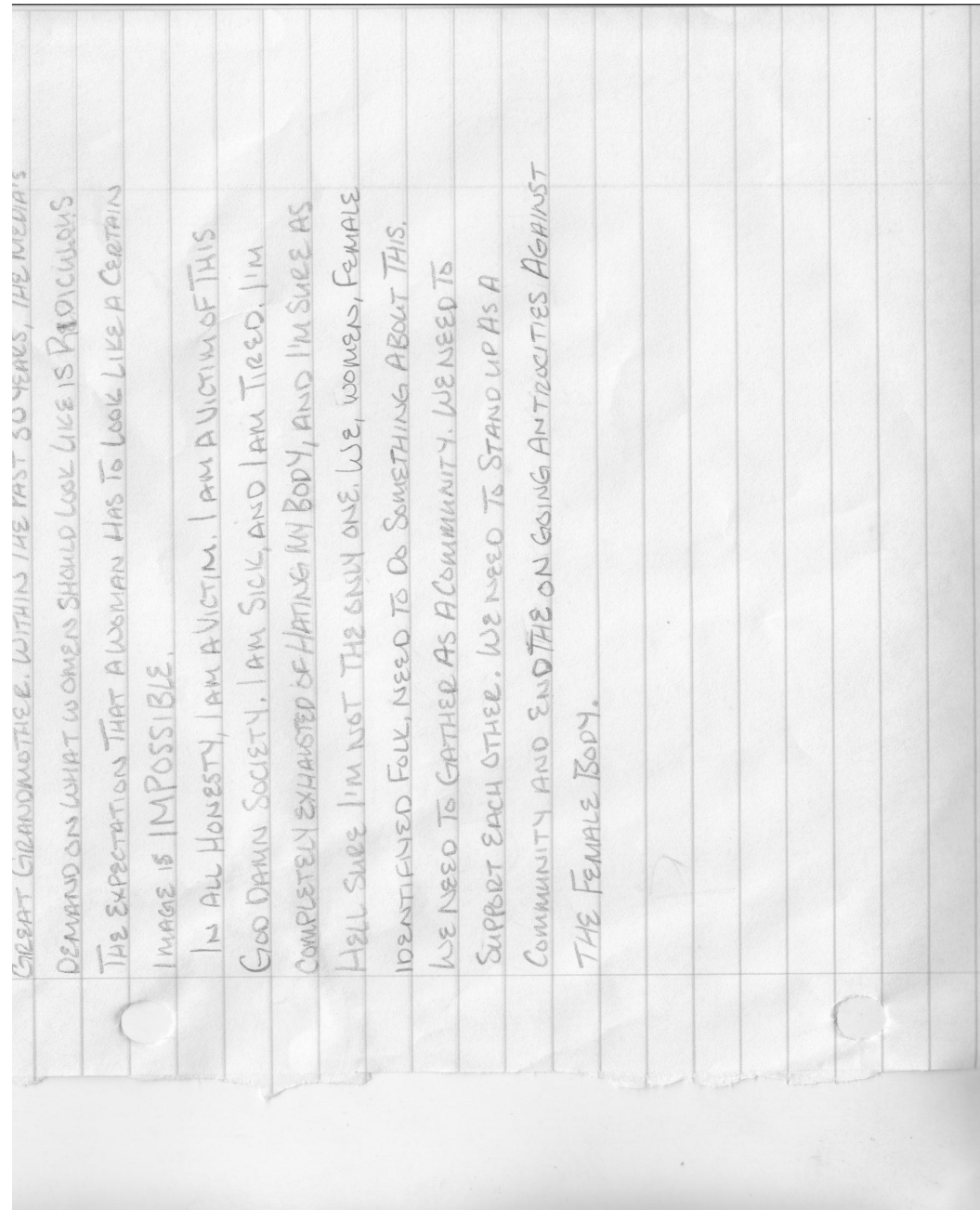
For this to work, we need to start projects and actually DO things. It's not that hard to start something – and after all – isn't the whole anarchy thing based on autonomy and initiative? It doesn't take many people to get together for a monthly letter writing night, to organize an event (like a movie showing, a potluck, skillshare, whatever), to put up posters, to start a reading group, to start a collective, etc. As anarchists,



We could start by seeing ourselves as anarchists and realizing that we have a distinct revolutionary project: the destruction of the state and all forms of domination.

we should be starting projects and undertaking initiatives that define our politics in opposition to everything else out there (such as the liberals and the left). At the same time, we should be starting projects that can involve new people and that use organizational forms that can be easily reproduced (for example, the goal shouldn't be to get everyone involved in your anarchist collective, but to spread the form of organizing to create a network of collectives working to create anarchy). We need to figure out ways to get new folks involved while also creating spaces for serious, high-level discussion where we don't have to start with "Anarchy 101: No, Everyone Won't Just Kill Each Other After The Revolution" every time. Of course, we don't need a bunch of poorly thought out projects or things that have outlived their usefulness – rather we should be striving to create and do things that fulfill specific needs. We also need to start looking seriously at the town that we live in: what are existing areas of social conflict? How can anarchists widen these spaces of conflict? Can we make worthwhile contributions in these areas?

I'd also encourage people to take a step back and look around the city. Imagine you are new to anarchy – what would your experience be? Would you see visi-



REAL TALK

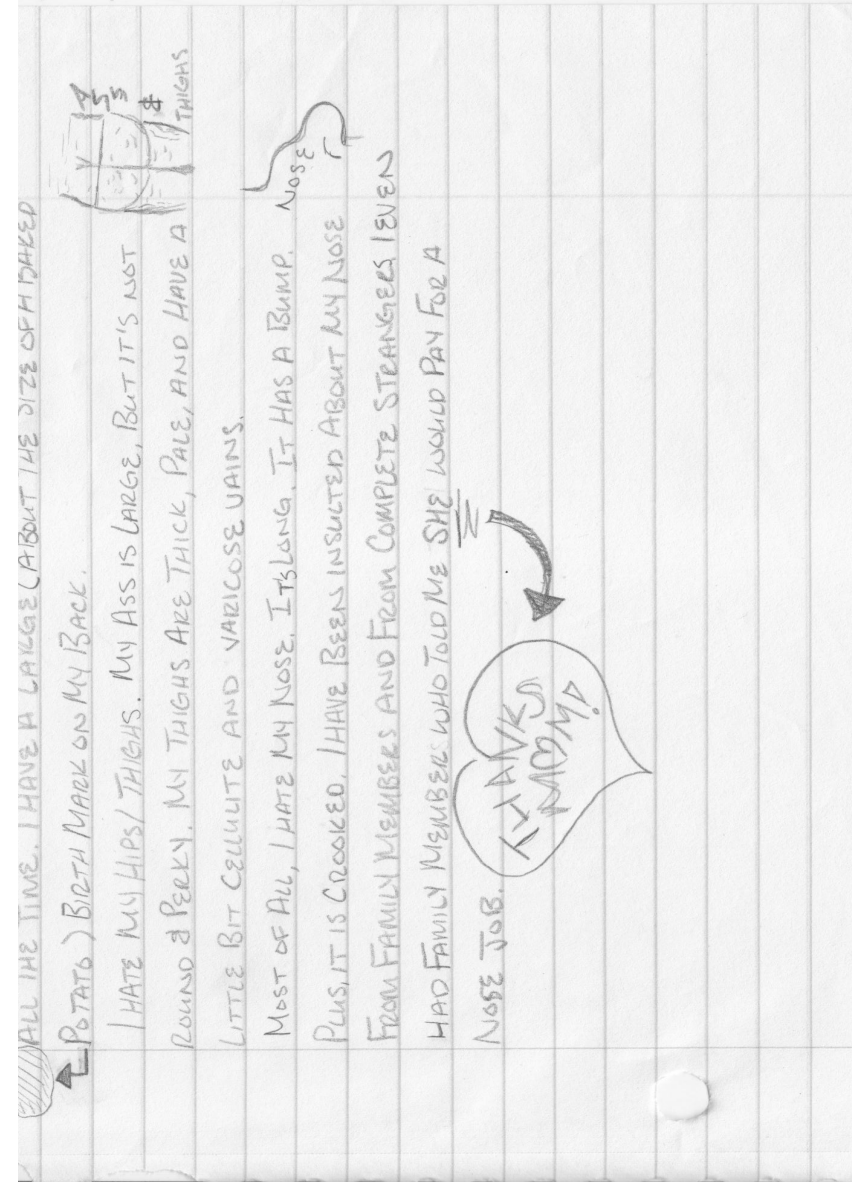
WHY AM I LIKE THAT? WHY ARE CHILDREN STARTING
DIETS IN 3RD GRADE? I HAD FRIENDS IN MIDDLE SCHOOL
SUFFERING FROM BULIMIA.
GOD, EVERY DAY I TRY TO BE BODY POSITIVE, I TRY TO LOVE
MY FLAT CHEST, OOO NIPPLES, AND STRETCH MARKS, BUT
IT'S A CHALLENGE. IF I SEE A CELEBRITY ON A MAGAZINE COVER
WHILE WAITING IN THE CHECK OUT LINE, I HAVE TO REMIND MYSELF
**THEY ARE NOT REAL. WHAT IS REAL? THE IMAGE
OF MYSELF LOOKING BACK IN MY REFLECTION.**
I AM PHYSICALLY INSECURE. THE MEDIA HAS ALWAYS AFFECTED
THE WAY WOMEN WANTED TO LOOK. IT EVEN AFFECTED MY GREAT

ble signs of anarchist activity? How would you actualize your politics? Would you be able to find other anarchists? Would there be events to go to, projects to contribute to, or publications and websites to read? I think the honest answer to all of these rhetorical questions is "no" – and I think that identifies serious shortcomings. If people can't figure out how to get involved, they won't. While it only takes one person to distribute some zines, put up posters, and what not, I doubt most people will have the initiative to do that. When anarchists who have been around the block a few times have retreated, there has not been an influx of anarchist activity. Instead, other things have filled the vacuum: progressive/lefty crap has gained strength, authoritarian socialist groups have shown their heads (we use to not have those fools!), and people have gone off the local capitalist deep end (including some who claim to be anarchists).

Taking stock of what we have currently, there isn't a whole lot. There's this zine, a distro, loose groupings of anarchists that undertake various actions and projects as needed, an infoshop, and several self-organized initiatives that have anarchist leanings (Food Not Bombs, Really Really Free Markets, and Occupy Grand Rapids). In most cases, these things aren't

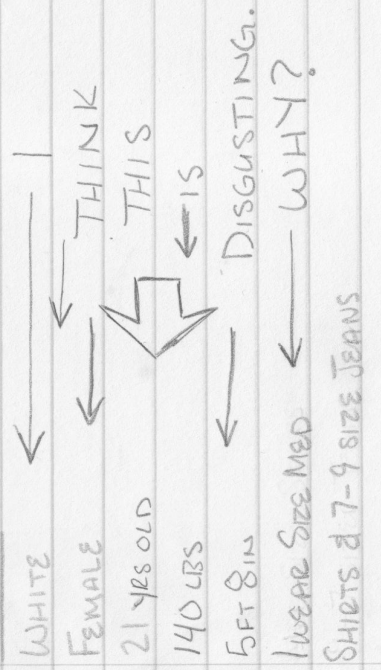
really working to create any kind of anarchist community. Many of them overlap with the “left” or “progressive” activist current in town – and don't really do anything to advance anarchist politics, tactics, or methods. Not that everything needs to be anarchist to have value, but we need to break with “the left” and create something new. Otherwise we will just be spinning in circles and having the same old conversations about corporations, violence, and how we can “all get together cuz we're really all fighting for the same thing.”

I want to end this on a positive note: there have been some good things lately. While I think we missed some opportunities with Occupy (not sure anyone is to blame, who would have guessed such a mishmash of politics would set it off in other places), overall the experience showed that we can participate in things as anarchists and that we don't have to hide our politics (a common refrain from lefties and some anarchists here in town). Moreover, when we do that – we can win folks over (not in an evangelical sense, but because so many people know that existing avenues for “change” are bankrupt). There have also been several good events lately – two benefits for Marie Mason and a discussion on the role of anarchists in Occupy. In all



THIS IS WHERE I BECAME CONFUSED. THE WOMEN IN MY FAMILY HAVE HAD THE MEDIA AFFECT THEIR LOOKS. NONE OF THEM, THOUGH, ABSOLUTELY HATED THEIR BODIES, AND I DO.

I AM:



I GREW UP LOOKING AT MY MOTHERS MAGAZINES, ADOERING CELEBRITIES, PRAISING POP STARS. I DIDN'T KNOW THERE WAS PHOTOSHOP.

\$\$\$ I HATE MY SKIN. IT'S PALE. IT BURNS. IT BREAKS OUT.

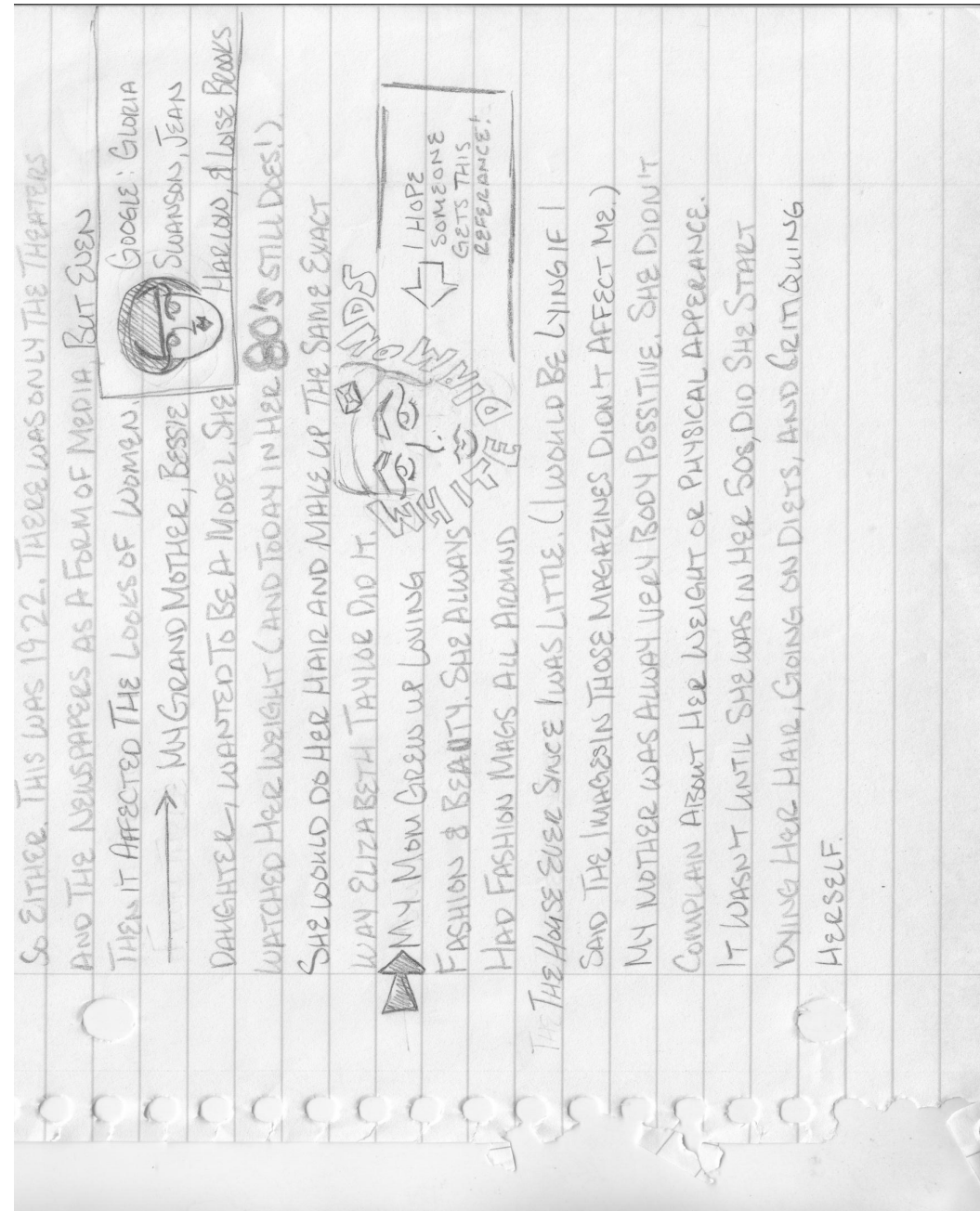
three cases, attendance has been quite good – a sign that maybe there is an anarchist community in the making. Also, after the June 11 benefit, anarchists took to the streets and held a noise demonstration in solidarity with Marie Mason and Eric McDavid. The nearly half-hour march brought a smile to many people's faces and was at the very least an enjoyable – if not empowering and/or exhilarating – public act of solidarity. Hopefully in the future we can build on these forms and create a dynamic anarchist community – one that can attack when it needs to and can take care of each other's needs.

Let's go!



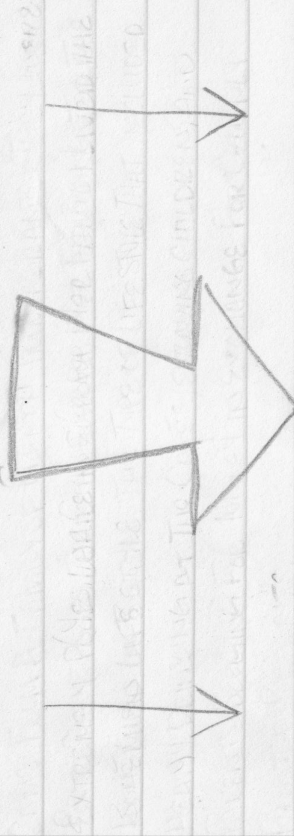
Publish a Newspaper!

I was recently in a fight on the comments section of a website (the proverbial digital pissing match of our time). My opponent stated (and this is a direct quote), "It is not the news medias job to keep power in check". While I was not surprised necessarily that this particular individual held this point of view (they had already been defending DeVos® for a while), but for him to articulate it so brazenly... I was taken aback. I came to wonder, (and not for the first time), "How did we get here? How can members of our supposed democracy say that with a straight face (even Jefferson defended a critical media)? How is that comment not immediately followed by: JK LOL!!!" And I came back to where I always come back to: The media system in this country is completely failing the population. (That is, of course, assuming you believe the role of the media is to protect democracy. If you believe the role of the media is to protect the interests of those in power, than we could say it's doing a knock up job at that.)



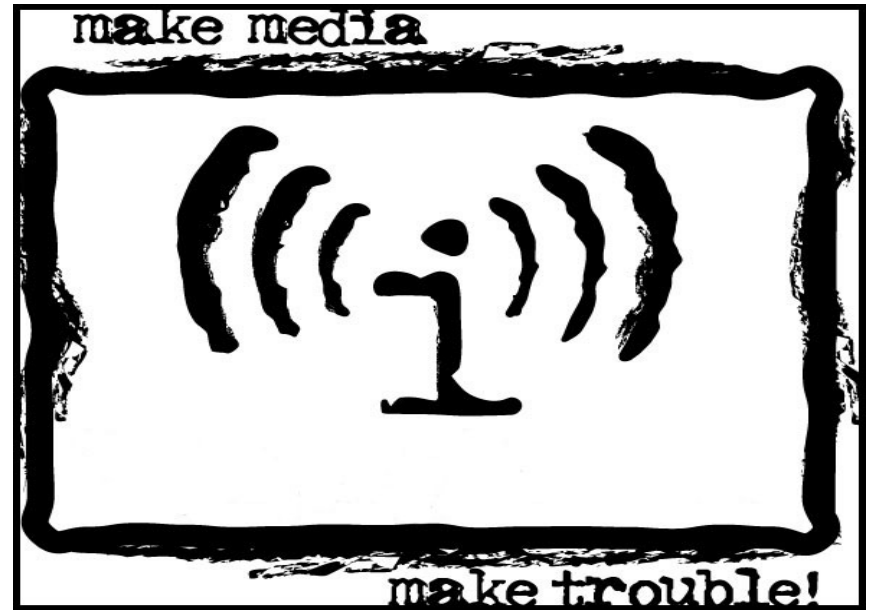
PHYSICALLY INSECURE

HERE'S A SHORT FAMILY HISTORY → LET'S START WITH
MY GREAT-GREAT GRAND MOTHER, BESSIE MONTON, WHO



WHEN BESSIE CAME TO THE U.S., SHE IMMIGRATED FROM FRANCE.
SHE ADDED SILENT FILM STARS. SHE WAS THE FIRST PERSON
IN HER SMALL TOWN TO GET A BOB HAIR CUT. SHE ALSO
BLEACHED IT BLONDE. NO ONE ELSE IN THE CITY HAD DONE

This time, however, I took that sentiment a step further, asking “What is our role in this (as “anarchists”)? What is my role in coming to a solution?” The answer, IMO (sorry, I had to do it), is independent media. I believe we have a social responsibility to publish information critical of those in power, as we cannot rely on the current institutions to do so. In regards to whether or not this information should be published in ink or in 1’s and 0’s: the internet’s full, but the print world is wide open. We need a return to radical print media. (Now I know what you’re saying, “But I already subscribe to Slingshot!” Great. That’s one paper, and it has nothing to say about Grand Rapids.)



I also happen to believe this zine is a great start. It's local, organic, and participatory. But it's just a start, it's not enough. Capitalism... nay... civilization is in crisis, its "thrashing endgame" as some have said (see Jensen), and history has shown that the response to crisis is always whatever ideas are laying around at the time (see Klein). We've seen this take it's course in Michigan (EFM, anyone?). People are struggling, many already know capitalism and electoral politics have failed them, but do they know another way is possible? Do they know that anarchism is more than a brick through a window? What have we done, personally and as a group, to inform and educate those who are looking for a new articulation of politics not available on mlive?

Again, I can already hear the criticism. Many radical folks are (understandably) fundamentally opposed to "widening circles" or anything that even remotely resembles recruitment. It's dangerous. I agree. However this does not mean we cannot provide *information* for those who may want it. It does mean that we use appropriate security when applying this strategy (as always). This is in no way impractical. More impractical, however, is the cost behind such a project. The limits on our resources, specifically finances, time, and energy, seem to be the biggest barrier to serious radical ac-

tion. That is, of course, after you account for fear.

Maybe you're already involved in such a project (there's so few around here it seems unlikely, though possible). Maybe you have access to resources. Maybe you're just a hell of a radical writer looking for an outlet. Maybe you have an outlet you can open up to radical writers. Maybe you should put those ideas into action. Or then again, it would probably be easier to just pitch this zine into the burn pile and read something about Spain in the 1930s. Ah, those were the good ol' days.

-D. Facer