

Tides of Flame

a Seattle anarchist paper

joy ~ freedom ~ rebellion

Tides of Flame is a biweekly periodical which is part of an ongoing project of anarchist analysis and practice within the Puget Sound area. As anarchists, we do not have an interest in waiting for the necessary moments to act upon our ideas. We refuse to simply dream of some far-off utopia. At any moment, an individual is capable of agitating within existing struggles and attacking capitalism and the state for their immediate destruction. We strive to live fulfilling lives of joy and freedom, and for this, we are criminals.

Long live anarchy!

issue #4 | mid august 2011

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Who will revive the violent whirlpools of flame if not us and those that we consider brothers? Come! New friends: this will please you. We will never work, oh tides of flame! This world will explode.

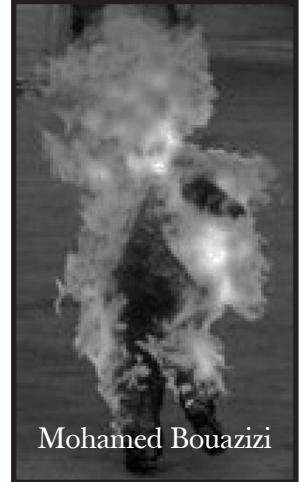


-A. Rimbaud

Into the Void...

The Queen, the Witch who lights her fire in the earthen pot will never tell us what she knows, and what we do not know.

~ ARTHUR RIMBAUD, *Illuminations*



Mohamed Bouazizi

ECONOMISTS ARE BLATHERING in the news about whether we are currently in a 'double-dip' recession or one long, downward plunge.

The reality, of course, is the latter. We are now, and have always been for as long as the economy has been a reference, in one endless recession. In the past, relatively significant numbers of people had profited off of the bubbles, booms, credit, and loans of contemporary capitalism, but those numbers are dwindling, becoming hardened and crystallized. There is now a very small group of people with all of the money, security, and capital in Seattle. Everyone else, as it is, has no future.

But this simple fact, this lack of a future, always eludes people's awareness. The myth of a promised future is quite powerful and continues to sway the minds of everyone around us who is broke, drunk, bicycling in circles, going to work, and generally having nothing to live for other than what exists. And no matter how shitty, pointless, and awful the existent is, people continue to live for

it with seemingly endless energy and enthusiasm. Despite the reality of capitalist society's collapse, far too many people continue to pretend that there is a future in this world around us. This economy, this way of life, this entropy, it's all over. Some can choose to ride it out to the bitter end, and others can jump ship, swim away, and figure something else out.

In the early months of this year, thousands of people in Cairo took over the city, burned down dozens of police stations, and torched the center of government. While this was happening, hundreds of people marched through the streets of Seattle, enraged that the police had gotten away with murder. Unlike the people in Cairo, we in Seattle did not have enough rage to attack the system that murdered a man. The rage that swept into Egypt came from another man, Mohamed Bouazizi, a young man from Tunisia.

Mohamed had taken out a loan for the equivalent of US \$200 in order to buy produce to sell on the street. It was his last gamble, having lost everything ►

◀ else. He did not have a permit to sell and had to keep his cart mobile in order to avoid police attention. The police found him, despite his efforts, and not only did they confiscate all of his produce and equipment, but a police officer spit in his face. Beyond this, they smashed all of the vegetables in public, displaying their utter contempt for him. Not knowing what to do, Mohamed went to the regional governor's office to file a complaint. Given that he was only one among many there to make a complaint, the staff refused to see him.

After this, something took place in Mohamed's mind that deserves consideration. We can never know what he felt and thought, but something powerful pushed him to find a full can of gasoline, douse himself with it, and set himself on fire in front of the local government building. When a person chooses to do this, they are choosing to have no future, and it is clear that Mohamed had nothing left to live for in a world that simply went along with endless humiliation by the police, by the capitalist market, and by the government. If the entire population of Tunisia had not felt a deep connection with Mohamed Bouazizi's singular act, they would not have proceeded to take to the streets, fight the police, topple the government, and reclaim some of their lost dignity.

The current situation in Tunisia is far from ideal. Another repressive government has taken power, with nothing truly having changed other than the previous rulers having been cast out. But the rage that swept through Tunisia and that is currently burning in Syria is absolutely vital and necessary. It is chaotic, destructive, and violent, and should always

be embraced. The fires in Cairo are a glimpse of the only future left desirable in a world completely colonized by capitalism.

Right now, the military controls Egypt, and nothing good has come from all of the blind faith and hope in democracy. All that matters, if we are

to take anything from the events in North Africa, is the fact that for a moment, the future was unknown, there was no order, and the old world was gone.

Some people choose to wait until a man is killed on the corner of Boren and Howell before they feel any rage. And when they finally do express it, they find themselves confronting the police, not knowing what to do next, realizing they have never before directly confronted authority with their bodies.

Within that singular moment, staring at either police batons in Seattle or police rifles in Cairo, exists the domain of total freedom. In the moment, freedom is chosen, not given. And to act for freedom is dangerous. As our comrades in Cairo discovered, it can be lethal, will require bravery, and has every chance of ending in defeat and frustration.

But that is the wager. Between what exists and what doesn't, between the old and

new, exists chaos, the void, uncertainty. In order to escape this perpetual tedium, we must dive into the void together. The void is the only place we will meet. The void is where everything begins. ↗

Attack on DOC Office in West Seattle

from an anonymous communique posted to pugetsoundanarchists.org on August 1st:

Last night a Department of Corrections office in West Seattle had its windows broken. "Against Prison" was written on the building as well. In solidarity with all those who face the everyday violence and repression of prison and the police.

Fire to the prisons.



Department of Corrections building on 6300 block of 35th Ave SW after the attack

Who is Detective Rick Hall?

IT IS UNDENIABLE THAT THE PUGET Sound has recently seen a surge in anarchist activity. This year anarchists have attacked banks and police stations, used black bloc tactics in public mobilizations, formed new social centers and publications, and disrupted the stifling normality of the city with graffiti, banner drops, and flash mobs. These actions have resonated with many people, inspiring more blows against capitalism and government. But it's important that anarchists also consider the increased attention we have received from our enemies.

One such enemy is Detective Rick Hall. Hall, who considers himself an expert on "ideologically-motivated crimes," has been with SPD for 15 years, and has served on the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force for several years. His concerns with anarchists date back to 1999, when he investigated incidents during the anti-WTO protests that paralyzed Seattle. As a JTTF agent, he serves as a liaison between the FBI and SPD when local law enforcement needs assistance with acts of domestic terrorism. According to Hall, anarchists fit this description whenever they commit crimes.

This would explain why, for example, Hall—an expert on terrorism—would spend his time investigating a group of people who were stopped by police in Seattle on April 8th, 2010, on suspicion of hanging up anti-police posters and spray painting slogans on a wall. And why, the next day, he led an investigation against two youth who were arrested at an anti-police protest on Capitol Hill. In July of the same year, he involved himself in a case against two anarchists accused of smashing the windows of a police substation in the Central District.

Despite Detective Hall's efforts, none of these "terrorism" investigations resulted in any significant victories for law enforcement. After being detained for about half an hour, the

alleged vandals of April 8th walked away that night with no arrests. The two arrested on April 9th originally faced multiple felony charges, including riot and assault on an officer—but the charges were ultimately dropped against both. And, although cops originally boasted that they had caught the two substation smashers with glass on their clothes and blood on their hands, and sent their clothes to an FBI headquarters in Quantico, Virginia for forensic analysis, city prosecutors balked at taking the case to trial and instead settled for a reduction of charges and a sentence of community service.

Undeterred by his poor batting average, Hall goes on swinging at anarchists. When 19 demonstrators were arrested outside of the King County Jail on July 23 of this year¹, Rick Hall was there, snooping around and bragging about his investigations, dressed more like a tourist than a cop. The cell phones of all those arrested that night are still being held by SPD, who use a computer program called Cellbrite to extract and save all data—including texts, contact information, call history, photos, and even deleted files. The program was also used on the phone of another anarchist accused recently of misdemeanor graffiti. Perusing their court documents, they noticed that the each page of the prosecutor's discovery was labeled "FOR RICK HALL."

Rick Hall is eager to have his hands in any criminal investigation of anarchists, no matter how minor. He wants to know as much as he can about anarchist activity in Seattle. However foolish he may seem to anarchists now, it's important to remember that when the FBI has been unable to make substantive progress in their investigations, they have resorted to fabrication and entrapment. For example, the recent busting of a "speakeasy ring" in Seattle was actually an infiltration

¹ See Tides of Flame #3, or <http://pugetsoundanarchists.org/node/829>

of anarchist social circles by an undercover cop searching for information on the Earth Liberation Front. When the cops failed to find the dirt they were searching for, they resorted to entrapping Rick Wilson in a drug deal that they themselves fabricated. One of the agents involved in the deception was Rick Hall.² And when documents obtained through the Freedom of Information Act recently revealed the police harassment of Olympia anarchist and activist Paul French, several missing pages apparently try to connect him to a February arson at an Olympia police station. In an interview, French reports that the documents imply that Olympia police were under pressure from Seattle detectives and "domestic terrorism people" to connect him to the fire.³

When even simple cases of vandalism are investigated by counter-terrorism agents, it is clear that the State's interest in anarchists has been inflated for ideological reasons. The values of an anarchist push her to act in the immediate present for the destruction of all repression. The state recognizes this as the most severe criminality—terrorism—not because it constitutes a grave threat to human lives, but because it is the crime that contains all other crimes: the realization of freedom. The point here is not to aid Rick Hall, the FBI, or SPD in spreading paranoia in anarchist circles, but to evaluate with clarity the strategies they are using against us and the threat they amount to, so that anarchists may stay free and on the attack. ☮

If you have more information on Detective Rick Hall or the Joint Terrorism Task Force, send it to tidesofflame@riseup.net

² See <http://pugetsoundanarchists.org/node/583>

³ For more information, read <http://pugetsoundanarchists.org/node/857>

FORGOTTEN HISTORY

The Seattle General Strike of 1919 and the Impossibility of the City

ON NOVEMBER 11TH, 1918, the United States government and the Allied nations of Europe signed an armistice agreement with Germany, ending the United States military's involvement in the First World War.

During the war effort, government programs had encouraged and subsidized the increased production of ships in the Seattle dockyards along Elliott Bay. Additionally, most of the unions had come to an agreement with the government to accept the war as an emergency situation and avoid all strikes and labor disputes as detracting from the war effort.

Once the war ended, the unions representing the shipbuilders took the opportunity to finally demand a pay increase for both skilled and unskilled workers. As was to be expected, the management refused to grant this pay increase. This small dispute, coming only three weeks after the end of the war, was to spark the first general strike in United States history.

At the time, many of the dockworkers, metal workers, and shipbuilders in Seattle had become influenced by revolutionary ideas from across the Pacific and were sympathetic to the Russian revolution. In September of 1919, the US government began to utilize Seattle docks to ship weapons to the White Army in Russia in order to help defeat the revolution. Discovering this, the dockworkers decided to block the shipment. When scabs attempted to load the weapons onto a boat, a large fight ensued between them and the union workers. Eventually, the boat was loaded, forcing the unions to try another tactic.

On January 12th, 1919, three thousand people met at the corner of

4th and Virginia to hold an outdoor rally. Speakers addressed the crowd, explaining the situation in Russia and stressing the importance of preventing US intervention in the revolution.

In the midst of the speeches, the rally was brutally attacked without provocation by Seattle police and military police.

Not wanting to allow the police to break their spirits, organizers called for another rally in the same location on January 16th to condemn the actions of the police and reaffirm their collective power. After the rally, the crowd began to march towards City Hall. On the way there, the demonstrators were attacked by mounted police and dispersed. Five days later, with the anger from these attacks in their hearts, the dockworkers made the decision to strike.

The docks management refused to negotiate with the workers, and in response the workers called on every other union in Seattle to join them in a general strike that would shut the city down. No one expected it to catch on, but within days of the request, union after union was signing on to the plan. Over 110 unions agreed to begin the strike on February 6th, 1919. There was no clear goal, only a desire to act against the system that beat, demonized, and enslaved them. Despite this lack of a goal, a General Strike Committee was formed to handle the logistics of feeding and protecting over 60,000 striking workers. Dozens of kitchens were set up, with strikers paying 25 cents for a meal and others paying 35 cents. Milk was brought in from farms by striking workers, the telephone lines were kept operative, and an weaponless police force was established.

Despite the benign nature of the

Committee and the general strike itself, the local government, the *Seattle Times*, and various other reactionary institutions began to warn the population of an impending revolution. Many rich families temporarily relocated to Portland, over a thousand UW students were given guns and badges, and the military was called in from what was then called Camp Lewis.

But when the strike began on the 6th, there were no disturbances. The streets were empty, the workers were fed, and crime dropped from 100 arrests a day to 30. The general in charge of the soldiers deployed to Seattle remarked that he had never seen "a city so quiet and orderly." In the end, its orderliness proved to be what prevented the general strike from destroying the capitalist system.

The General Strike Committee made sure that electricity and water made their way to every house. The city was still the same. The strikers found themselves struggling to keep the city functioning, despite the fact that it was the city itself that was their problem. All of the jobs they were refusing to work during the strike were jobs that gave the city life and without these jobs, there was nothing to do but eat, sleep, and talk. Caught between normality and revolution, the strikers had no clear direction to follow. They proved to themselves and the world that they could keep a city clean and orderly, but they forgot the purpose of doing this. Maintaining order and normality was what they had been conditioned to do through years of work. They did it out of instinct, not daring to push for a revolution.

A revolution in Seattle would have been a bloody | CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 ▶

Concealing Austerity

The Debt Ceiling ‘Crisis’

CRISES HAS, IN RECENT YEARS, become an indispensable part of the American political vocabulary. Looking around the country and the world, it is not hard to see why. Countries around the world are erupting in riots and revolutions, and the economic situation seems to be getting worse by the day.

The latest crisis, as reported by the media, was the tension over raising the debt ceiling. The media narrative took two similar forms, varying according to which wing of capital (left or right) one identifies with. For the right, it was a bold stand in order to force a limit on our out-of-control national debt and government spending. For the left, it was a stunt that jeopardized our economy for political gain. For both, the deal reached was an unpleasant compromise that was a lesser evil than the possibility of a US default on our loans.

The debt ceiling agreement supposedly means that disaster has been averted. However, a closer look at the agreement shows that the crisis was an entirely manufactured, political crisis. What this crisis concealed was essentially an austerity plan which serves to deepen the economic crisis that affects those without access to the levers of power or capital. Functionally, the agreement serves as a restructuring of the US economy, similar to austerity plans being implemented across Europe.

In order to understand the impact of this austerity plan, it is important to first understand what the debt ceiling is and what the debt ceiling agreement contains. The debt ceiling is the limit set by Congress on how much

money the US can borrow. If the total US debt hits this limit, then the federal government cannot borrow any more money, leaving it unable to meet its many financial obligations.

Raising the debt ceiling is usually a routine procedure. However, this time was different, as right-wing members of Congress demanded spending cuts to reduce the budget deficit. Negotiations were held, and at the last minute an agreement was reached.

The agreement raises the debt ceiling by \$2.1 trillion in exchange for deficit reductions of \$2.1 to 2.4 trillion over the next 10 years, although most cuts will not kick in until 2013.

Given the right-wing opposition to tax increases, it is safe to assume that most of this reduction will be through spending cuts. \$917 billion of these cuts will be in discretionary spending, which is basically everything except for entitlement programs (Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid). The other \$1.2-1.5 trillion in deficit reduction will be determined by a super-committee consisting of six Senators (including Washington's own Patty Murray) and six Representatives, split evenly between Republicans and Democrats.

This committee will look at everything from raising revenue by closing tax loopholes or raising taxes to reducing spending on entitlement programs. Once this committee makes a proposal, it will not be ne-

gotiated or changed by Congress as a whole, making it easier to pass. If a deal is not passed for at least \$1.2 trillion in reductions, then there will be automatic cuts of \$1.2 trillion, split equally between military spending and domestic spending (although entitlement recipients would be spared) over the next 10 years.

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economic crisis that affects those
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power or capital.*

The severity of these cuts and their main targets are evidence of the fundamental shift in the government's economic policy in response to the current crisis of capitalism gripping the world.

Since the end of the Great Depression, government spending on both social services and national defense has been a main part of economic policy. These two categories have been placed in competition before, with defense usually winning at the expense of social services, but never have they both been subject to the level of cuts that are currently aimed at them.

On a more practical level, what these cuts mean is an amplified version of the same budget cutting that has been occurring over the past couple of years on the state and federal levels. What is different about this agreement is that these are long-term, structural changes. The fact that historically protected entitlement programs such as Social Security and Medicare/Medicaid are on the discussion table for savings is unprecedented. These programs, along with military spending, | CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 ▶

Strike

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tragedy, however. The newest machine-guns, having proven themselves in the wastelands of World War I, were placed throughout downtown Seattle. Newly deputized, patriotic UW students roamed the streets, looking for any trouble to put down. Everything was stacked against the strikers, but it was their uncertainty that caused the strike to fail.

On February 11, the strike ended, having accomplished nothing other than strengthening the reactionary forces of the government. The mayor began to champion himself as having saved Seattle from a Russian-style revolution and the conservative press continued to demonize the workers.

For a moment, a force of over 60,000 people controlled Seattle, but they were confronted with the impossibility of the city. On one hand, their labor had literally built everything in the city. On the other hand, they had never learned how to use their energy to build something of their own choosing.

During the strike, they had taken over something they had built but was still not theirs. The city belonged to the capitalists who had employed them. In order for them to no longer be enslaved by work, they would have to destroy the city and create something new, preserving nothing of what their bosses had them build.

The lessons of the General Strike have been all but forgotten, and they are worth remembering. All too often, sincere and determined people attempt to reshape the reality that oppresses them only to find, in the end, that they are only lashing out with no clear goal. The goal of destroying capitalism is a bleak one, especially now that it has taken over the world. It is important to know what we want so that when we do finally act, we do not hesitate and remain caught forever between slavery and freedom. 

Terrified County Council Destroys Free Ride Zone

SEATTLE - It has been announced that the King County government council will decide on Monday, August 15th to impose a new \$20 car tab fee on drivers in order to avert a 17% cut in bus services.

The council avoided allowing the public to vote on the fee, terrified that it wouldn't pass. In addition to the fee, the council decided to get rid of the downtown Seattle free ride zone by October, 2012.

Hoping to alleviate the anger caused by these decisions, the generous council also decided to mail 8 free bus tickets to each person who renews their car tabs. These lucky automobile owners will thus be able to get a taste of what it is like to ride a clean, green, King County Metro bus for \$2.50 a trip.

Meanwhile, the economy continues to worsen, there won't be anymore free buses downtown, youth fare is set to rise by 50 cents in September, Metro has discretely announced plans to crack down on fare evasion (which is estimated at \$3.2 million yearly in free rides), and more cuts are sure to come. But hey, we all gotta tighten our belts to keep capitalism alive!

Tides of Flame suggests...

seattlewewontpay.org

We won't pay for their crisis.

Free parking, Metro, food, rent, free everything!

Upcoming Events

Wednesday, August 17th

CrimethInc. Presents: Capitalism and Resistance in the 21st Century

7 PM at Autonomia Social Center
@ 24th & Lane (Central District).

Saturday, August 20th

Day 1 of the 3rd Annual Seattle Anarchist Bookfair

11 AM - 5 PM at the Vera Project
@ 305 Harrison Street in Seattle.

www.seattleanarchistbookfair.org

Saturday, August 20th

Fuck the Police! 101

6 PM at Autonomia Social Center
@ 24th & Lane (Central District).

An introduction and discussion about strategies for fighting police abuse in our communities: Joaquin Cienfuegos of *L.A. Copwatch* presenting on Copwatch organizing in Los Angeles & Alvaro Chivas of *All Communities Against Brutality* (Houston) presenting "Fuck the Policology 101."

Sunday, August 21st

Day 2 of the 3rd Annual Seattle Anarchist Bookfair

11 AM - 5 PM at the Vera Project
@ 305 Harrison Street in Seattle.

www.seattleanarchistbookfair.org

a Tale of Two Tunnels

There are two new controversial, multi-billion dollar projects in process in Seattle—the Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement and the Combined Sewer Overflow Reduction Project. Both projects supposed aim is to improve city/county infrastructure to solve current City-identified problems, and both rely on advanced technology to do so. The urban way of life created the problems government institutions are now trying to solve in typical short-sighted fashion. The city's inherent ecological and social troubles are ignored, and the priority of those in power—maintaining Seattle as a node of capitalism—remains paramount.

poo ~ 1 ~ tunnel

•The Problem•

Whenever a big storm rolls through Seattle, the sewers, some of which combine both waste-water and street run-off, overflow into Puget Sound and its tributaries. The problem is common in urban areas. The sewer infrastructure buried beneath the streets was built long ago and without adequate capacity for today's population.

•Their Solution•

The ongoing solution has been a new network of multi-billion dollar storage tunnels which are intended to keep (most) of the sewage and other pollution from spilling over into the region's suffering waters. Fundamentally, the tunnels act as the City's constipated bowels, holding (mostly) everything inside until they can safely relieve themselves into the water treatment facilities. This year, King County began work on the \$1.8 billion Brightwater treatment plant on unincorporated Snohomish County land, despite early resistance from local residents.

•What We Think•

Obviously something needs to change in the way we dispose of our shit. But why do sewage solutions always involve using advanced technology to *bury the problem itself deeper and deeper?*

Once, combined sewers replaced open gutters running with refuse. Cities around the world solved a serious public health concern by *hiding it underground*. Only, it turned out it wasn't quite solved after all. Now the County is spending billions of dollars to again expand the sewage system. It is a temporary solution that relies on more of the same infrastructure, technology, and experts. It is reliant on existing waste-water systems, which use large quantities of poisonous chemicals such as chlorine. The pipes are bound to crack and leak eventually, and if the 'solution' to the sewage problem continues to be *expansion* rather than a total transformation of our relationship to waste and the environment, the problem will only deepen as we try to hide it away.

car ~ 2 ~ tunnel

•The Problem•

The Alaskan Way Viaduct was damaged after the 2001 Nisqually earthquake. It is now considered a hazardous roadway for motorists.

•Their Solution•

"To keep drivers safe and the economy moving," planners propose boring a 1.7 mile, \$4.2 billion tunnel beneath the city. The tunnel's south portal would be under Alaskan Way S. near Railroad Way S., and the north portal would be north of Harrison Street between Aurora Avenue and Sixth Avenue N. The project also involves replacing the southern mile of the current viaduct between S. Holgate and S. King with a side-by-side roadway that will "[improve] mobility for people and goods in the south of downtown area."

(quotations from the WSDOT website)

•What We Think•

Other publications have gone into great detail examining all the ways this project will fuck over working people, so we will not bother to do so here.

It is obvious to us that the \$4 billion tunnel is mainly designed to improve the flow of capital through Seattle. Claims that the tunnel will create new public space, reconnect downtown to the waterfront, and rejuvenate the economy play on people's desires for security and community in a time when capitalism is tanking and its attendant alienation is becoming more and more unbearable.

This is entirely unsurprising, given that governments are the experts of manipulating people into thinking that what is best for the rich is also best for them.

Tunnels

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Politicians and other paid public officials, as the democratic representatives of capitalism, must always consider how solutions will affect *the economy*. That's why they always frame problems and solutions in economic terms—the “green economy,” job growth, tourism, investment, returns, etc. The needs of human beings and the rest of nature are almost always placed secondary to the needs of the economy (and the ones who own it).

When big contracts are at stake and firms stand to make huge profits by winning public contracts, the true desires of the people

who will be affected by changes to their environment are of very little importance to the decision-makers and their buddies.

Why don't we dismantle the infrastructure that brings us and the world around us precariously close to disaster every minute of every day? Why don't we dismantle the city that shapes our lives of alienation, consumption, and boredom? There are permanent solutions to the problems of everyday life. We need only to find the bravery and forge the relationships we need to make them happen.

Austerity

◀ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

have come under attack before, but virtually guaranteed cuts are unprecedented.

To be clear: the passage of the debt ceiling agreement is a sign that those in power seek to protect their own interests and the interests of capital at the expense of everyone else. Hiding this austerity plan behind a particularly dramatic political ploy shows that they recognize growing discontent and are trying to divert it.

They want to protect capitalism, so that class so-

cietry can emerge from the present crisis intact. Those in power fear that the waves of discontent and rebellion sweeping the world will land here at their doorsteps.

The first signs have already arrived, in the form of prison resistance, anti-police actions, and anti-austerity demonstrations occurring across the country. As was written on a wall during the student revolts in France 1968: *Their nightmares are our dreams.* ☮



Anti-police demonstration passes through downtown Seattle on February 12th, 2011.