

A

PERFECTLY  
GOOD RIOT RUINED  
BY A  
BUSINESS MEETING

Blue Feathers Special Edition

a Surrealist celebration of

N30

( a favorable wind has blue feathers )

photo — Dan McComb/Visual Contact

## AS THE GREAT ABYSS YAWNS

The social fabric is worn to transparency -- no privacy for syphilitic confessionals. Religion oozes an ancient pus. Government falls in grand mal seizure. "The New Left" went up against the Wall St. and *left us* incontinent in a multi-national economic desert.

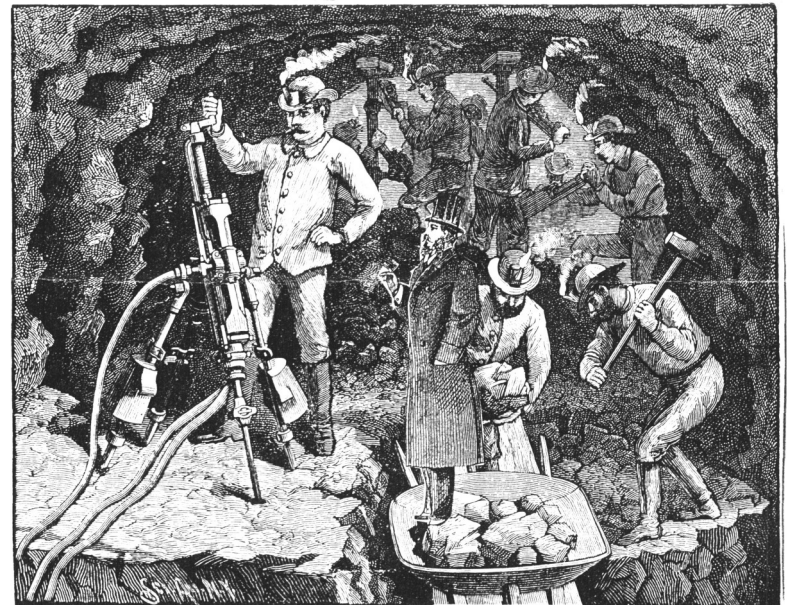
As we piss toward the millennium, skies darken with an approaching storm. Gather strength from its discharge. Plunge willingly into the unknown because it is only there that life will end with a FRAGMENT of meaning. Drag the meek as pack mules if they're afraid of heights, or stuff them into sausage casings if they're too fat to travel. Spill precious fluids. Plunder castles for the hoarded rewards of the flesh. Rape delusions without mercy and leave nothing but the stained sheets. There is a price to be paid for the stifled imagination and it cannot be put off with a "continuing resolution."

As we scan the horizon, the screams of future terror already pierce our ears.

(barrett john erickson, excerpt from a 1996 text)

## JOBS ARE JAILS!

AN OPEN LETTER FROM RONNIE BURK  
TO: REBECCA SOLNIT, MEDEA BENJAMIN OF  
GLOBAL EXCHANGE, THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY, THE SOCIALIST  
WORKERS PARTY, THE COMMUNIST PARTY, MOTHER JONES,  
PACIFICA RADIO, ETC. ETC.



December 7, 1999

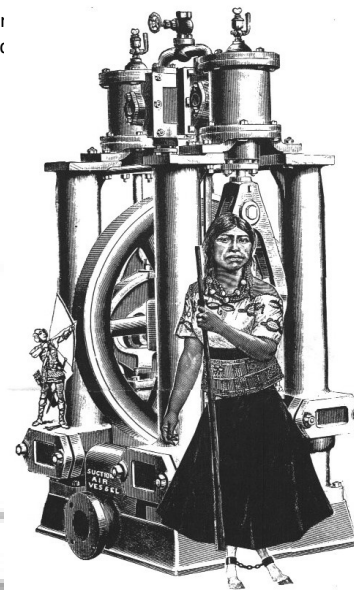
On the morning of December 6th, 1999 marching with over four hundred people protesting the presence of WTO officials at Bank of America in downtown San Francisco I found myself once again doing the cake walk with this city's bankrupt left. Following the tremendous earth shattering explosion in Seattle where some five hundred kids rocked the multinational corporations to their foundations exposing for all the world to see that U.S. capitalism is no longer safe *within its own borders* it was truly insulting to see the old guard in S.F. up to their usual theatrics. There were, of course, the innocuous hootenanny types singing god awful folksongs that always remind me of christian tent revivals, the birkenstock peaceniks, the sectarian lefties hawking their tired rags, but most unnerving were the self-promoting "spokespeople" laying claim to "The Battle of Seattle" all the while decrying the "violence". You can't have it both ways folks. Let's face it! Had the black hooded anarchists and animal rights activists not taken the initiative to trash the storefronts of corporate America there would have been no news, no headlines, no electronic media reporting across the globe as to just how fed up a sector of the American population is with "business as usual" and consequently no "Battle of Seattle". At a time when members of the emerging new generation have demonstrated their aversion to wage slavery by destroying the very edifices of bourgeois capitalism the dried up crusty rinds of what is left of the left were only able to recite their tired old litanies of "jobs not jails".

So it was with a sense of humor that I started chanting "Jobs are jails!" a turn of words my young anarchist and animal rights friends found amusing and began chanting. The knee jerk left found our message so offensive that Rebecca Solnit found it necessary to walk up to me and accuse me of "elitism". A comment I found racist and elitist coming from a white woman in a black flannel suit who likes to brag she's studied art and esthetics at the Sorbonne. "My dear," I informed her, "my mother was a campesina and worked in the fields as a child. I myself have done every shit job in the universe from washing dishes to picking up garbage and let me tell you, jobs are jails!" Her comment seemed to encapsulate everything that is wrong with the left, afraid of revolt, hoping to legitimize itself by promoting bogus "pro-union" agendas, trying not to offend the tourists and christmas shoppers, leashed in, muzzled, with blinders on, just as the union bosses and their bosses, the corporate elite, want them.

For thirty years I have protested, picketed, marched, been clubbed, tear gassed, jailed, my life threatened by Klanners and private police. I have leafleted, shouted, pleaded, argued, debated, insulted and at times physically assaulted representatives of the status quo. Suddenly I find myself talking to a generation of anarchists and animal rights activists whose moral and ethical code is one of no compromise. Who have every intention of "fucking up the system" as they say. For them all your nostalgia about the 60's, the Bolshevik Revolution, the Paris Commune, the hair splitting over the Kronstadt and the Hungarian Uprising, is just that, pure nostalgia. They are having vasectomies at the age of 19 because they don't want to bring children into a world that is stricken by what they perceive to be a biological crisis. They are vegans because they have seen their friends and relatives die of cancer. They are concerned by the massive destruction and pollution of the environment. Most amazingly they honor the lives of other species over their own and are willing to risk imprisonment and in some instances their own lives to defend them. They view both the right and left with suspicion and understand all politicians, bosses, celebrities, bureaucrats, law enforcers and most intellectuals and artists to be utterly corrupt and hold the entire social structure in contempt. And what does the

left have to offer them? Jobs? Conformity? Promises? Slogans? Lectures about nonviolence? Conferences on social change? A chance to sit at the table and negotiate with the plutocrats? Dig it! These kids don't want to sit at the table and talk they, want to turn the table upside down and unplug high finance capitalism and all I can say is that it's about time.

Medea Benjamin of Global Exchange made quite a show of herself after the initial trashing of downtown Seattle. Decrying the violence, getting out brooms, aiding the police, such activists did us all a favor by showing their true interests. In their desire to sit at the table with representatives of the corporate establishment they have sold out the very people we must support to bring on the real changes this planet so desperately needs to survive the next century. Whether it is Global Exchange, Mother Jones, The Sierra Club, the San Francisco AIDS Foundation, Pacifica Radio, or other despicable examples of the corporate left, one thing is clear, none of these organizations are interested in destroying the system they need to insure their positions as "paid staff". For those of you afraid of flying glass, who only see "elitism" in the cause of freedom, who insist now is not the right time to bring down the system, who prefer to sing rather than riot in the streets while the children of Indonesia are denied bananas and rice and millions across this nation are denied the simple pleasure of having a place to live, I say, stand clear. We are entering a new era that demands new ways of thinking. new ways of challenging the system, new ways of strimiting us is our own lack of imagination and c



#### SURREALIST PROVERB

Sweep the laundry, fold the floor, cook the window, bake the door.

Ronnie Burk  
San Francisco  
December 1999

# PREVENTING THE SLAVE REVOLT FROM BURNING THE MASTER'S HOUSE?

## THOUGHTS ON THE ANTI-WTO PROTESTS IN SEATTLE

As a kick in the eye to global corporate capitalism, and as an example of potential autonomy, the huge anti-WTO protests in Seattle were successful. People from diverse backgrounds came together in various forms of action against the common enemy--the international political-financial elite and the city routines that allow them to operate. The WTO were prevented from having a regular meeting and didn't come to an agreement. Thousands of people experienced pepper spray, tear gas and rubber bullets, while hundreds were arrested and mistreated in jail. This has led to further radicalization and awareness of the role of the police. Though they're also slaves of the commodity system, the police will eagerly punish those they see as troublemakers, despite the fact that they too will be affected by the decisions of the WTO and similar conspirators.

Aside from the damage done to the WTO's plans and corporate store windows, stopping the city can be a revolutionary act in itself, as illustrated by the mayor's complaints about loss of shopping revenue for the christmas season. When normal routines are disrupted, solidarity and a sense of purpose can emerge as people begin to collectively shape their environment. In freely and creatively using space-time as OURS, rather than as something that is foreign to us and used against us, we get an idea of what is possible. When we go against deeply ingrained slave impulses--our training to obey--we no longer hesitate to act and think in ways we have rarely experienced. In this mode of being, we are escaping and unlearning alienation, a positive, surrealist goal which contributes to the decolonization of everyday life.

When cathartic emotions break loose, it is inherently disruptive to the emotionally flattened status quo. Doesn't it make sense deep down that if property is one of the agents of our enslavement, we shouldn't hesitate to act in a material way to air our grievances? In Seattle and elsewhere there has been a schism between the protest and direct action communities on the issue of property damage and strategies for dealing with police. Some say targeted vandalism is a valid political tactic, a way of striking back financially against concrete manifestations of capitalist domination. Is there a kind of "sacredness" being violated when one actually destroys property, whose defenders mobilize guilt, shame, and good manners at all cost? Why else would both protesters and police react in an inhibiting way towards the vandalism by the black bloc and others in Seattle?

What does it mean when self-professed "nonviolent" demonstrators defend corporate property, even to the point of using violence themselves? What a strange sight it must have been to see nonviolent activists preventing damage to NikeTown! These property defenders were soon replaced by riot cops, as if to make clear the relationship between economic domination and use of space in modern cities.

A man who was in Seattle described a crowd's reaction to windows being broken as mixed extremes. Some thought it would cause heavier police repression against the whole crowd and shouted "They'll ruin everything!" Others responding differently said "I hope they get Starbucks!" In this example we can see two opposing tendencies--one of fear and hesitation, and another of joyful, insurgent excitement. The tension between those who simply protest the latest and greatest abuse of the whole system and those who want to make material alterations to our lived environment is obvious. It seems that the police had already started gassing and shooting the crowd by the time windows were broken anyway, so the police and media tactic of blaming vandals for the police response is exposed as

disinformation. Whose interests are being served by allowing capitalist architecture to remain unscathed when a rare chance to collectively attack it presents itself? And what other actions might be necessary in order to preserve the integrity of our lives and the health of the planet?

These are questions we must ask ourselves if we're to follow through on the process of changing reality entirely, and not be content with simply reforming parts of the same old system.

HOMO LUDENS! 12-99



Steve Herrick — found on independent media center website —

Private property should be distinguished from personal property. The latter is based upon use, while the former is based upon trade. The premise of personal property is that each of us has what s/he needs. The premise of private property is that each of us has something that someone else needs or wants. In a society based on private property rights, those who are able to accrue more of what others need or want have greater power. By extension, they wield greater control over what others perceive as needs and desires, usually in the interest of increasing profit to themselves.

from: **SOLIDARITY STATEMENT TO THE ANTI-WTO ANARCHIST BLACK BLOC**  
by the **INITIATIVE FOR A NORTHEASTERN FEDERATION OF ANARCHIST-COMMUNISTS (NEFAC)**  
[found on the *independent media center* website]

## WINDOWS OF OPPORTUNITY

### Something In The Air

*"There is a time when the operation of the machine becomes so odious, makes you so sick at heart, that you can't take part; you can't even passively take part, and you've got to put your bodies upon the gears and upon the wheels, upon the levers, upon all the apparatus and you've got to make it stop. And you've got to indicate to the people who run it, to the people who own it, that unless you're free, the machine will be prevented from working at all."*

...Mario Savio (1964)

Occasionally we can actually watch the walls of the existing order crack from internal stress. In such moments the gray inflexible morbidity of our culture is revealed in stark contrast to the sudden lightning of the marvelous and the full poetic potential of daily living can be briefly grasped in a spasm of orgasmic clarity.

30 November, 1999, in Seattle was such a moment.

The Black Bloc wedged their way into one of those fissures and, like the "jaws of life", spread it to liberate a rebellious energy that had been imprisoned within the twisted wreckage of dreams crushed by the weight of surrender, and walled in by a façade of falsified desire.

Even those of us who could only watch the repeated video loops of feet and crowbars attacking the safety glass of Starbucks, or read about the attempt to liberate NikeTown, even those of us too far away to feel the cop's club or be heard by our allies could still smell the teargas in the air.

One especially encouraging facet of the convergence on Seattle was the service performed by alternative media – a stark contrast to the corporate media. The internet has matured as an instrument of organization and information about the struggle against the colonization of every day life (it is therefore in great danger).

But even the stunned public relations hacks of the network "news" shows spread the scene of revolt, exposing the inherent inhumanity of POWER, everywhere they pointed their cameras.

But perhaps the greatest service they did was to reveal the hypocrisy of the "activists" who repeatedly stepped into the spotlights to speak for their "cause".

### The Poverty of Political Discourse Revealed

*What we know is that the existing order suffocates creative life. We cannot know that any new order would be better, but our options are simple: accept the limits we encounter, or refuse them and create a life more authentic. Because the*

*ultimate outcome of any act is unpredictable, the action itself must be not only consistent with, but identical to our purpose. "Authentic action" (that inspired by and in exploration of intuitive desire) is self-justifying ...*

*Pre-bifurcation (revolutionary) chaos is provoked within a given system, only when the very feedback systems which ordinarily help stabilize it, instead reinforce such potentially destabilizing perturbation.*

*What persuades us that an individual person is worthy or unworthy of trust is the characteristics of desire perceived in his/her actions. What persuades us that a (social) system is worthy or unworthy of trust is the characteristics of "desire" perceived in its processes.*

(from a 1998 text)

*The poverty of political discourse, indeed the poverty of most modern discourse, is revealed in those brilliant corners where colliding vectors of false opposition force exposure — where "antagonists" attempt differentiation and defense of nearly identical positions, or assert drastically divergent conclusions drawn from the same unchallenged presumptions."*

(from a 1998 text)

We find it easier to embrace, warmly and with more energy, those who steal and vandalize, those who physically rebel against the POWER that occupies our communities, than those sniveling few who – ostensibly representing "our" side – nightly apologize away the rudeness of the crowds, and whose sole remaining desire is to be viewed as serious and decent and open to compromise – in other words, those who wish to be allowed to sit at the same reserved table as Kissinger, Greenspan, etc. Or – their final offer! – to be able to sit at the children's table within easy earshot of that champagne of genocidal wit. Yet how quickly they seem to forget that even their vapid fifteen minutes of infamy was purchased by the joyful brick-tosser. They might otherwise be jockeying for positions at their next "strategy confab," and merely dreaming of collaboration with the enemy: for these are the wet-dreams of prison toadies! In contrast, every looter is our lover. And – like Crazy Kat – we appreciate the poetics of the artfully thrown brick.

The one diamond left in the display case is not to be sold so cheaply – we demand that the riots proliferate until they form a new atmosphere in which "business for the sake of business" cannot breathe. Break windows to release old gases, to make room for new creatures. And steal (or rather *reclaim*) all that was stolen from us in broad daylight.

May the next riot be without reason, lacking any opportunity for apology. We sanction all "robbery" in those "zones of opportunity" and we celebrate broken storefront glass as the only appropriate poetics in this situation: walk upon these stars stolen back from Niketown, McDonalds, and Santa Village. We buck against the burden of Starbucks. And we expect them all to "pay up or shut up!"

No more post-game interviews – no more pallid apologists – no more reasoned "debate" with those who would only edit our liberations for family viewing, and to fit the viewing screen.

We would rather not "communicate" with the Rathers, break bread with the Brokaws, or any of the endless rows of overrated anchors that would hold us in place: we want to piss in their morning coffee, and undigest their pre-digested news.

*If communism is dead, capitalism is undead.*

### Be Careful What You Ask For

*"The Department of Labor wishes to report that the workers of Freedonia are demanding shorter hours."*

"Very well, we'll give them shorter hours. We'll start by cutting their lunch hour to twenty minutes."

...Duck Soup (1933)

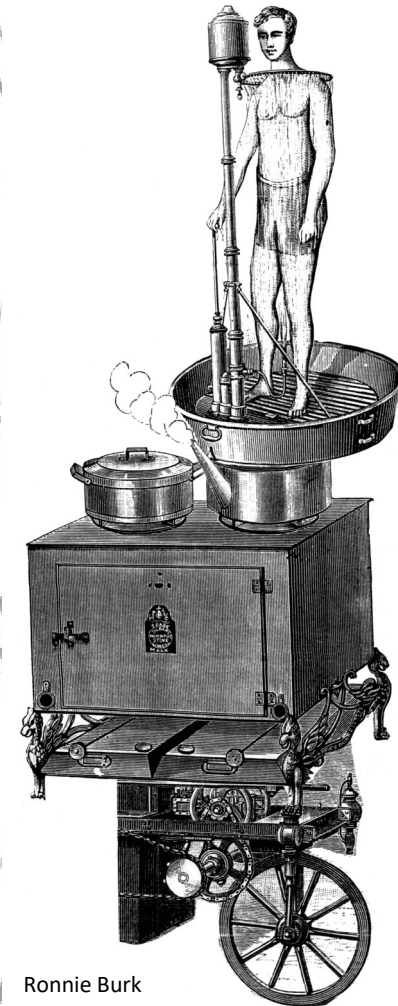
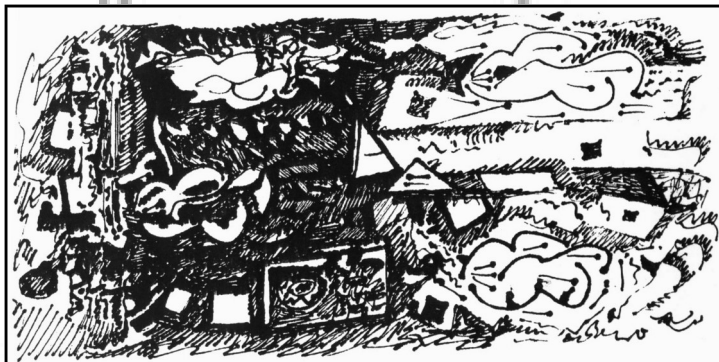
There are issues — repeated to death at every union rally, or in academic liberalist hives, or in political quilting circles — that, as valid as they might have been in an atmosphere of relative or perceived equivalence vis-à-vis The Company, fail to either engage the emergent rage of the moment, or to ask quite enough of their Masters. It is maybe not enough to say clearly "we do not want your stench of jobs!" when so many are convinced (through economic duress created for exactly this purpose) that their lives depend upon reaching that "suspension" between Dream and servitude represented by such offal as "decent jobs for decent wages."

This anemia of desire may be difficult to treat, as it involves revealing that world behind the broken windows, and in overcoming a rather "natural" (given the bad advertising of late!) distrust or disregard of socialism or collective action, or alternatives of *any* kind. The people feel "mired" in vain displays of sumptuousness, and promises of a strangely immaterial materiality — for what is Wall Street but a bridge of fog in the fog? Through every shattered storefront shines a lighthouse!

We cannot — at this late date — merely beg for a coat of paint on the old prison, and for the dubious *honor of* and *right to* work for those who would turn our dreams to salt. Such tender requests are now past their expiration dates. We wish to no longer be petitioning corporate charity for the right to sell ourselves to the arbitrary demands of a 40 or 50 or 60 hour work week. We no longer want our limp 3% of the dream they are busy proportioning between themselves; it is already dirtied by many hands. We don't want to buy their crap, but we most of all don't want to see anyone begging to manufacture and distribute their crap. It is not that we — as workers, students, artists, or surrealists — are politely requesting some "equal" position at the burning table, we are insisting upon our already *superior* role. The corporate day-dream has had its run in the local theaters, and now we wish to reclaim our projector. We shall no longer settle for a mere job, or for arthritic folk chants, tired transparent signs and drooping liberal invocations. We shall not stare into the storefront windows, or dress them for the holiday shoppers, or clean them with our rags...

We will break them, and reclaim our own!

barrett john erickson — Dale Michael Houstman



Ronnie Burk

## CENSORSHIP IMMINENT

The forces of suppression are obvious. Complicitous governments, absurdly practicing ritual self-castration, are being displaced by mega-multi-national corporations coagulating over an obsession with maximizing profit. We now have as much to fear from their blatant pursuit of economic control, as we ever had from the oppressive paranoid-psychotic forces of government, now slipping into seemingly inevitable catatonic stupor.

The dark imperative of our marvelous technological opportunity is that a revolutionary struggle is necessary to attain and maintain universal access to unhomogenized creative expression.

Ultimately, a war of resistance may be necessary against those who broker economic power, forcing us into deep cover under layers of camouflage and covert subterranean infiltrations. It may even be necessary to strategically and temporarily retreat to more primitive means, but the one "law" of technology is that it cannot be undone. Any *who can connect to unfiltered information* will be empowered. What has been unleashed is a means of communication which can connect people across all artificial borders, allowing us to organize against any attempts to smother free expression.

## THE MOTIVATING HEAT

Passion is the heat: a passion for experiment; a passion for exploration; a passion for growth; a passion for the revelation that comes from confronting our limits and challenging those of others; a passion for defiance; a passion for new ideas; a passion for liberty and poetry and art and sex which are all the same passion for passion.

(barrett john erickson, excerpt from a 1996 text)

## A MOLOTOV TOAST TO MAD LOVE

A toast to mad love polymorphously flowing thru the air of a riot to interrupt the vacuous death-dance of modern despair!

A toast to the impossible "old mole's" new clothes, as expansive darkness opens the door to the Marvelous in the midst of light-signs no longer handcuffing chance, snaketail's mouth full of criminal rubies glistening with lust and sweat!

A toast to eye contact fibers of wondrous, tingling nerves connecting with ease across the fleeing fog!

A toast to sabotage, monkeywrenching, the conscious withdrawal of efficiency! A toast to real communication, freed from normalizing repression and repetition's habit-apparatus! A toast to seizing the day AND the night, with mind-pores inhaling sweet fumes of alchemizing disruptions!

A toast to a universal general strike, the re-emergence of primitive communism, the blossoming of multiple creativity's autonomous lifeways in a garden no longer restrained by the ubiquitous prison-codes of miserabilist reality!

MKS 12-99

Dedicated to the opening provided by events in Seattle.

general distribution

---

## MagneticFields.org

*seeking the total integration of the liberated imagination  
with everyday living*

**www.MagneticFields.org**

send comments/submissions/contributions via e-mail  
or post with SASE

MagneticFields.org

p.o. box 50476  
minneapolis, mn 55405

**publications@MagneticFields.org**

in association with  
***ARTlab***  
*(a loose alliance of artists and writers  
of surrealist genealogy)*

---

Blue Feathers is an irregular publication.

[\$10.00 / 4 issue subscription]

**ISSN 1524-7279**

December 1999

(no unauthorized commercial reuse permitted.)