Dissonant Times

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one day we will all be free

To grow
To gather
To tend
To the land, ourselves and one another

by: mica serotinousart@protonmail.com

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EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Empowered Lactation is now in network with United Healthcare via the Lactation Network. Contact Empowered Lactation to schedule an appointment!

What: Bethel Community Safety Townhall and Skill Up
When: November 11 from 6pm-8pm
Where: Shasta Middle School Gymnasium
Presented by: Willamette Valley Crisis Care w/ co-host Bethel Community Neighborhood Association

In these difficult times, we are skilling up our capacity to care for each other with tools for crisis intervention, boundaries, and scene safety.

Protesters Take Over State Capitol Lobby to Resist Lithium Mining in the McDermitt Caldera

By: Quinn Kelly

Two protesters were detained and trespassed from the Oregon State Capitol on September 8th after dropping a 20 ft hand-painted banner in the capitol rotunda, demanding that Tina Kotek stop the lithium mining proposals planned for the McDermitt Caldera in Southern Oregon.

About 15 people gathered from Portland, Eugene and Southern Oregon during legislative days to bring the problem of this mine right into Tina Kotek's lap. For over 5 years, People of Red Mountain, a group of Paiute, Shoshone and Bannock people from the Fort McDermitt area, have been organizing to stop lithium mines on their land. The McDermitt Caldera is a place of cultural, ecological and spiritual significance to them, containing important wildlife habitat, ancestral food and medicine as well as sacred sites where they honor ancestors. The state of Oregon has ignored them every step of the way, even going so far as to approve the permits for exploratory drilling at the proposed mine site in August, despite widespread dissent from tribal and environmentalist communities.

"Tina Kotek, you are ignoring tribal communities who are speaking out about the harm and danger of these mines. We are bringing this struggle to Salem to your doorstep in solidarity with people who are impacted by these proposals," Portland resident and Portland Rising Tide member Jesse Hammond said in a statement. "We need you to pay attention to the danger lithium mines will cause to people, water and land who need protection and are being excluded from these vital decisions about their lives and well-being."

The protesters sang, chanted, handed out leaflets and dropped a 20 ft banner from the rotunda balcony. The Oregon State Trooper presence was immediate, as they attempted several times to rip the banner out of protester hands, and gave repeated trespassing orders. Despite this, the protesters remained strong and united, refused to obey and held the space of the rotunda for 30 minutes before they were finally detained, trespassed and walked out of the building chanting. Their banner was taken by police and returned to them outside.

The lithium mines in Southern Oregon follow similar projects on the Nevada side of the McDermitt Caldera, which are much farther along. The Nevada mining project is projected to use 1.7 billion gallons of water each year. The Oregon mining project was developed in December 2025, allowing HiTech Minerals Inc., a subsidiary of Australia's Jindalee Resources, to drill for lithium at up to 168 sites on 7200 acres of federal land. Demand for lithium is increasing to power electric vehicles, batteries, data centers and military equipment; meaning that more wild lands and their human, plant and animal inhabitants will be threatened.

"From hyper-scale data centers to lithium and uranium mines, Big Tech's plans for Oregon are an attack on our precious water resources, Indigenous lands, and the climate," said Allie Rosenbluth, a community organizer from Jackson County. "We need to come together and stand up to this."

A Tree Falls, and Seeds of Resistance Are Carried Far Beyond the Border Wall Camp

By: Vi Lina

Since the last Dissonant Times reportback, the 200 year-old Cottonwood tree that anchored the border wall resistance camp in Lochiel, AZ has been slain and replaced with a 30ft tall steel wall, separating communities, wildlife, and terrain that has never before been divided with such a foreboding physical barrier. Surely, many will grieve the death of this tree and the disbandment of this 75-days-long camp (affectionately called Camp "O:Shad", the word for jaguar in the O'odham language). Yet to see the death of Grandmother tree and the end of Camp O:Shad as an end to border wall resistance is naive to the centuries-long resistance on this land against colonialism, privatization, and capitalist extraction. The international attention it attracted and the hundreds of people mobilized have re-energized and strengthened the movement that many are now calling "Tierra Libre" (Free Land).

This transition, in preparation for the continued fight ahead, necessitates a pause to document and reflect on the final climactic week of Camp O:Shad. The following reportback is compiled by first-hand accounts of people on the ground:

October 4th: Camp O:Shad hosts a Day of Action, during which many people travel to witness and celebrate the Grandmother tree with music, dancing, parading, intricate puppets, stilts, and more. The crowd celebrates the 70th consecutive day of a tree sitter remaining in the tree, and stopping the construction of the double border wall.

Photo taken Oct. 4th, showing a painted banner reading "All Walls Will Fall / Todos Los Muros Se Caen", hung on a barbed wire fence bordering a grassy field and a dirt road. Two bikes are lying on the edge of the road. Large Cottonwood trees are visible in the background.

October 5th: A group gathers in prayer around the Grandmother tree for their daily sunrise ceremony. Protesters report 50+ border patrol agents (BP), including BORTAC (BP technical units), stretching "as far as the eye could see". BP swarms the tree and protesters in a show of unprecedented force. Some protesters position themselves between oncoming construction equipment and the tree, locking arms, but BP force them back, unlawfully entering private property without a warrant and cutting through a private fence in the process. BP tramples tents, forces protesters to the ground and kneels on or beats them, and arrests 12. One freed protester reports a broken toe and a torn ligament in their knee as a result of brutal handling by BP. Ultimately, BP uses a cherry-picker to extract the treesitter and cuts down the Grandmother tree. As soon as she falls, border wall construction begins at a rapid rate, with vehicles running, music blaring, and fluorescent lights shining around the clock. Some construction workers report they are expected to pull double shifts for the week, meaning they are driving huge trucks loaded with panels of border wall for most of each day, getting only a few hours of sleep each night.

October 6th: The next day dawns with a protester high up in the "Abuela" tree, another large Cottonwood that stands on the edge of the road that is being leveled for wall construction, on the Mexican side of the imaginary border. In mid-August, a treesitter ascended into a platform in this tree, initiating the first-documented bi-national tree sit. The treesitter had been forced out after one day, and the tree sat empty for about five weeks. On this morning, a treesitter once again occupies the platform, and a group of protesters block the roadway in front of the tree. This is an attempt to stop construction vehicles rumbling beneath the tree, shaking the ground, damaging the Abuela's roots, and endangering the treesitter. In response, BP arrest 6 people, throwing one violently to the ground and kneeling on their neck. As the day continues, protesters continue documenting and live-streaming the ways BP threatens the treesitter and endangers crowds of people by rushing through construction. BP uses various tactics to force protesters farther back into private property and create space for the unlawful construction of the wall, including by dragging protesters through a barbed wire fence, blatantly punching them in the face and beating them to the ground, and pepper spraying multiple protesters while they are handcuffed in an enclosed vehicle. Another protester throws their body in front of a large drill as it is about to penetrate the earth, interrupting construction until they are arrested and dragged away. Five of the people arrested this day are held overnight in crowded detention facilities, sharing cells with families who had been hunted down, captured, separated, and held for deportation to Mexico the next morning. Some of the protesters are verbally threatened with felonies including assaults of officers, but all are released in Tucson in a McDonalds parking lot, without paperwork or any clear understanding of their charges or legal futures.

October 7th: A protester locks down on a cement truck that is filling trenches with cement for panel installation. This lockdown effectively blocks the road and halts construction for the rest of the day. BP attempts to force the protester to unlock herself by using pain compliance, driving the cement truck with the protester precariously locked on the back, and constructing a makeshift gas chamber with a mylar sheet, enclosing her and the exhaust pipe, forcing her to inhale carbon monoxide. After about five hours, BP cuts the protester out of the lockbox and takes her into custody. Throughout the afternoon and evening, BP holds unarmed protesters at gunpoint and deploys tear gas and pepperballs at protesters who are standing behind barbed wire on private property. Other lockdown attempts are made, but those protesters are quickly extracted and arrested.

October 8th: BP sits or kneels on, arrests, and drags away multiple protesters, some of whom remain sitting or lying on private property while interrupting border wall construction. Using a cherry-picker parked on the US side of border, Mexican state police ascend and approach the Abuela tree in an attempt to remove the treesitter, but she climbs out of reach of the cherry-picker. Mexican state police cut down the treesitter's platform and steal all her supplies, possibly damaging the life-safety climbing rope in the process. The treesitter is stranded in the Abuela tree without a platform, food or water. At this point the treesitter has already been without adequate water for over 24 hours due to BP and Mexican State Police preventing resupply.

October 9th: After the treesitter endured 58 hours of the desert heat without water and began showing signs of late-stage dehydration, strong advocacy on the ground and widespread public pressure via a phonezap convince BP to bring her limited water and electrolytes. Later in the afternoon, after 20 hours perched in a tree without a platform, the treesitter chooses to descend safely to the ground. BP evaluate her for dehydration and injuries, arrest her, and then take her directly to detention (where she will be held for 5 days) after she declines a trip to the hospital. This night, camp celebrates the treesitter's safe descent with song and communion and maintains a ceremonial fire for her protection until she is home.

October 10th: Camp O:Shad receives notice that due to significant pressure from various law enforcement agencies, one of the landowners who had been hosting Camp O:Shad asks the campers to leave. Lochiel's sheriff repeatedly refuses BP requests for aid in removal of protesters, and states that "the only violent physical encounters in the area involved large numbers of mask-clad federal officers gassing and dragging protesters away". In an open letter published October 9th, sheriffs in the surrounding area make it clear they will step in to support BP and suppress protesters as needed. Camp O:Shad packs up and evacuates under threats

of raids and evictions.

Photo taken Oct. 9th, showing 30ft steel bollard border wall erected alongside Camp O:Shad, with bright construction lights and a row of four border patrol vehicles behind it. The branches of Cottonwood trees are illuminated on both sides of the wall

Camp O:Shad and all who participated from near and far successfully halted border wall construction in Lochiel for 75 consecutive days. The total impact of these 75 days will never be fully known. What plans and dreams were inspired by this struggle and are being formulated right now? How many opportunities did this delay create, to prepare the resistance of border wall construction in neighboring areas? What was possible elsewhere in the desert in BP's absence, while their attention was fixated on this camp?

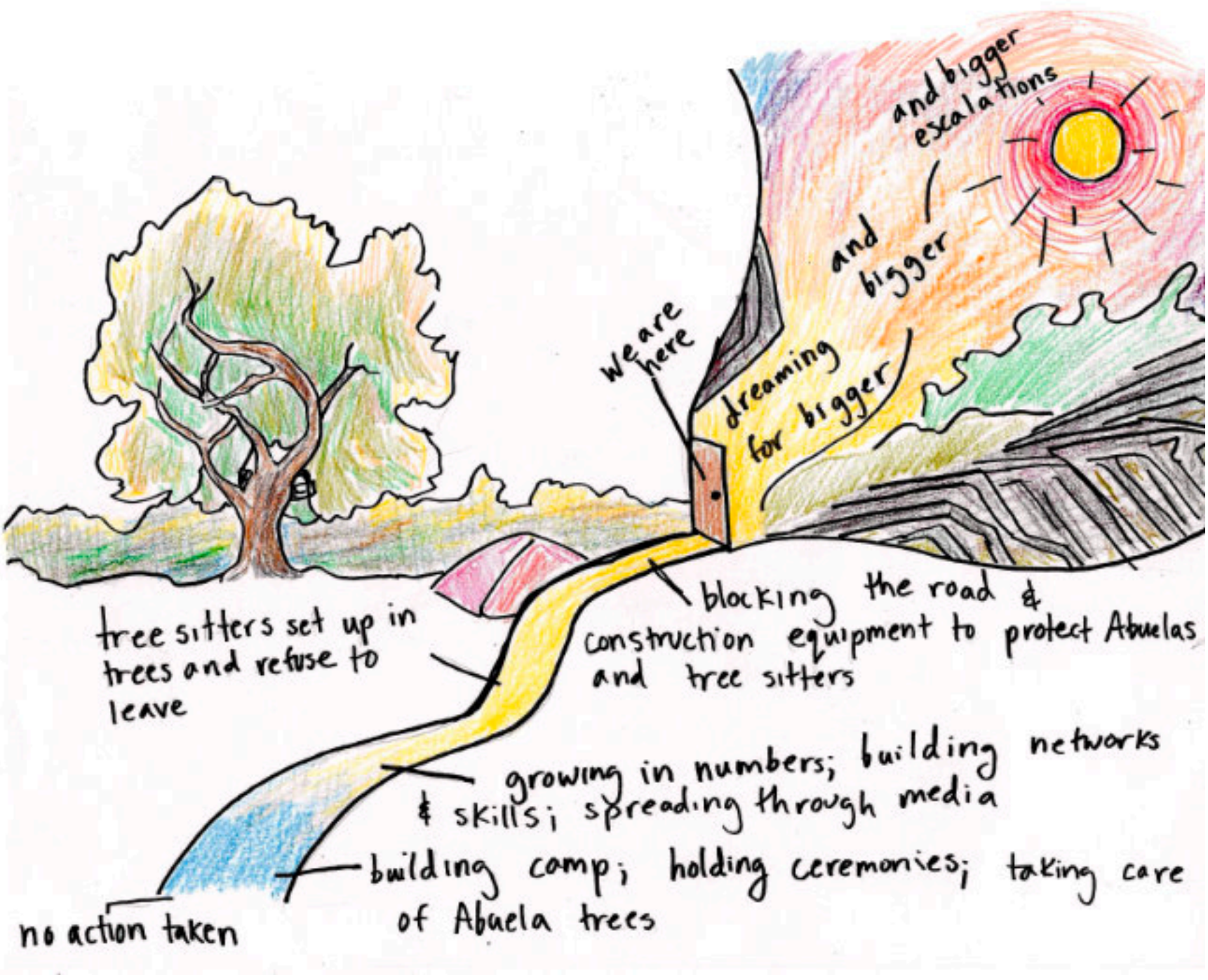
Border violence continues everywhere – in the kidnappings and murders by ICE and BP, in the escalation of surveillance, and in the wall construction progressing just 70 miles west of Lochiel on Tohono O'odham land. Camp O:Shad has provided a variety of tools to aid anyone, anywhere, in participating in border resistance, such as this power map of the contractors and other actors constructing the border wall and this calendar of events. There is also an ongoing need for donations to the legal fund for the 36 protesters who now face charges due to their resistance at the wall, and a call for lawyers who are willing to take on cases.

Currently, construction is rapidly approaching Tadai Mei, a prayer camp that is resisting the construction of the border wall on sovereign Tohono O'odham land. In June, the Tohono O'odham tribal government filed a lawsuit against the US government for taking its land and water to construct a border wall that would sever over 3,000 enrolled nation members from their schools, clinics, families, ancestral sites and ceremonies. Portions of the wall that were constructed nearby have already damaged the culturally sacred and environmentally protected Quitobaquito Springs, and many more sacred sites and vulnerable species are in danger. See the Tohono O'odham website and Tadai Mei instagram page for more information about this resistance and ideas on how to support.

Finally, for anyone able to travel, Tierra Libre organizers are inviting all compelled by border wall resistance to come to southern Arizona November 11th-17th for continued skill-sharing and dreaming. The week ends with an international call to action on Tuesday, November 17th, and people everywhere are encouraged to take action in the communities and places they call home. Truly, the potential for action and escalation extends far beyond where the movement currently is!

In the tougher moments at Camp O:Shad, people reminded each other of a parable that originated with the Quechuan people and has been passed along through many places of resistance. The parable tells the story of a forest full of life, that is one day threatened by a raging forest fire. While all the forest animals are frozen by fear, a tiny hummingbird fills her beak with a single drop of water and drops it on the forest fire. She returns again and again, each time depositing another drop of water on the fire. The other animals question her, insisting on the futility of her efforts. But as the hummingbird continues her mission, she tells them, "I'm doing what I can do." Camp O:Shad and the legacy of the Grandmother trees is a call for all of us to summon the will of the hummingbird in our respective corners of this earth, and act fully in our power.

All walls will fall! ¡Libera la tierra y liberas el pueblo!



‘Dreaming Audaciously’: *How the University of Oregon Phucked Itself*

By: Valentine Bentz and Robin Bailey

The University of Oregon is looking down the barrel of a $63.3 million budget deficit this Fall. Phil Knight recently donated a record breaking $1 billion to finance a new engineering college, and none of his money will go toward the structural deficit—which is the bulwark to a sinking ship of layoffs, program consolidations and overall fiscal chaos at the university.

Though seemingly contradictory, this moment has been decades in the making.

Tax Revolt and Neoliberal Dreams

Conservative and corporate interests advanced wealth accumulation in the early 1990s, marking the start of the university’s “neoliberal turn.” Put simply, neoliberalism refers to a “free-market” capitalism—turning assets away from public funding and toward private backing— disempowering democratic systems subject (in theory) to checks and balances

By the turn of the century, new property tax laws won through Ballot Measure 5 by conservative, anti-tax political actors limited UO’s state funding to less than a quarter of its general budget—a nearly 40 percent reduction from years previous.

Tuition rose 72 percent at UO, forced by five years of Measure 5 cuts. It increased sharply each year, tripling the cost of attendance from 1990 to 2026: instate students went from paying $5,400 to $14,500, and $15,500 to $44,500 for students out of state.

While students suffered the reality of higher education’s public-to-private cost burden—where, today, U.S. student loan debt totals over $1.7 trillion—wealthy Oregonians enjoyed some two dozen different tax breaks in the following decades, shifting student demographics toward those with the means to pay out-of-pocket..

Tuition increases accounted for general funding withdrawn by the state, but UO still needed funding for capital projects like remodelling and expanding campus buildings. University administrators began emphasizing the need for “strategic partnerships” with industry and wealthy alumni to keep the school afloat.

Uncle Phil Steps onto the Court

One businessman and UO alum in particular—Nike co-founder Phil Knight—seemed like a prime donor to court. In a sea of chaos, Nike rode the highest wave, surpassing $2 billion in annual sales.

Knight’s first major donation to the school came in 1994: making the lead gift in a $27.2 million renovation and expansion of the rechristened “Knight” Library. Students protested the removal of old growth trees to make way for the renovation, but were unsuccessful.

In the following decade, the university removed a number of family housing units occupied by low-income students from the East Campus area. When MacArthur Court started to show its age, the UO further cleared the area for a new indoor sports arena—and in exchange for $100 million, they named it after the Knight family, too.

In 2022, nearly half of the school’s Urban Farm was destroyed against student and community wishes in order to make room for the Knight Campus for Accelerating Scientific Impact, which was bankrolled by two $500 million gifts from Penny and Phil Knight.

Knight’s gradual creep into university finances eventually coheres a clear pattern: administration courts a large “gift” from Knight to fund a project that, on its face, may be a welcome improvement for the institution, but on the ground, is at odds with interests of the students, workers and community with actual stake in the institution.

But all that is just what UO signed up for in their solution to pulled state funding; relying on private interests means you have to carry out their will once they’ve signed the check—without any built-in accountability apparatus.

Even more, you have to deal with the donor's strange and often wicked behavior.

In early 2000, a student encampment pressured UO President Dave Frohnmayer to sign the university into an agreement with an organization that would monitor the working conditions of the university’s apparel supply chain… including Nike. Knight was incensed—his empire, threatened by his own charity project! He retracted a $30 million pledge for a renovation to Autzen stadium, but that wasn’t enough. He needed to play dirty.

President Frohnmayer’s three daughters suffered from Fanconi Anemia—a terminal genetic disorder without a cure—and he operated a research foundation as his best shot at extending their lives. Knight was an annual donor of $1 million, but in his rage, he informed Frohnmayer he would not be making his contribution when Christmas came around that year.

This inspired Frohnmayer to quickly find a legal pathway out of affiliation with the more radical Workers Rights Consortium, and Knight reinstated both the $30 million pledge and upped his donation to $2 million for the Fanconi Fund. Frohnmayer's daughters all died from the disease before reaching the age of 30.

In 2011, Knight formalized his spot in the chain of command, teaming up with other billionaires to dismantle the state’s higher education governance system. Their pitch to create more localized control for each of the state’s seven public universities was a smoke screen for a vicious and exclusionary structure: the Board of Trustees.

Each school now has its own board that makes its own rules instead of relying on a statewide body that is subject to state law. However, members are not democratically appointed, but nominated by the university president—who is hired by the board: a circular system without meaningful input from students, workers or community. Today, UO’s board includes career executives, hedge fund managers and a billionaire with heavy ties to the fossil fuel industry.

Knight’s philanthropy at the UO has earned him an estimated hundreds of millions dollars in tax breaks, incessant positive media exposure and many an exclusive brand deal for Nike.

And now—this September, Knight made his biggest move yet, donating a $1 billion sum to establish a new college of engineering that will operate out of the Knight Campus. Deemed the largest donation ever to a comprehensive public university, Knight’s gift shapes the school’s academic direction towards a “Silicon Forest”: The Knight School of Engineering will offer elite scientific education for “high demand disciplines,” including AI development, finite resource extraction, semiconductors and geoengineering.

Knight’s long con at UO is paying off in full grandeur. Yes, the school will certainly train students who make contributions to less sinister ends, but its development aligns with the technofascist takeover underscored by local struggles against data centers, surveillance technologies and environmental destruction.

Above– People’s Trial: “Students find Administrators, Board Members and the UO Foundation guilty—with blood on their hands— at a People’s Trial in May 2024. Robert Scherle.”

Enter: the For-Profit Public University

Last week, UO's revised proposal to address the $63.3 million structural deficit placed cuts to academics at $25.8 million, over 40 percent of the total deficit.

If the proposal goes through, UO will join three other states without a doctorate history program and kill "one of North America's few graduate (folklore) programs"—among countless other compounding ramifications in the humanities, education, music, design and journalism departments.

Graduate employees will suffer the brunt of workforce reductions, although faculty's uproar last year seems to have saved tenure track positions from elimination—for now. What's for certain is that undergraduate students will be without the support of brilliant graduate students, and the next generation of scholars in these fields will be thinner.

Many students, organizations and outlets have pointed out the obvious irony between the timing of Knight's latest donation and the proposed cuts: why can't a small portion of the gift be used to balance the deficit? It would only take 6.5 percent of the donation to do so.

They're right, and pointing to a larger issue: the "cross-subsidy economy" in which public education has long been a participant is incompatible with the private philosophy that's captured the school.

Public education has existed under the assumption that it's in the public's interest to subsidize fields of study that are not profitable but are essential—such as history. Under the profit driven model, these programs are out if they can't support themselves; they're "liabilities" to the new vision of the school ushered in by Knight's gift.

What is subsidized are the donor initiatives themselves. Gifts like Knight's aren't given in full, but doled out over time.

For the "College of Engineering," the gift is to fund new building construction, operational expenses and faculty and staff hires, and will be given over 10 years (at a rate, presumably, of $100 million/year). It's not unlikely the school may find itself needing more money for the complex initiative in a given year than they receive, forcing them to find it elsewhere in the school and funnel it over. Public records requests revealed similar budget transfers in 2014 to subsidize the school's Law Program.

Donor propelled projects can also run into costs that the school has no choice but to address, as was the case when the UO needed to acquire the former William's Bakery property in 2004 to develop what would become Matthew Knight Area—an acquisition that took $24.7 million in state-backed bonds which are still being paid off by the university today.

Moreover, long-term recurring costs of donor initiated assets can outpace the money committed to them upfront. Facilities such as the Knight Campus and the rebuilt Hayward Field (financed by Knight at $270 million) eat up extensive energy for lighting and labs and rack up massive utility bills—and the money has to come from somewhere!

'Our people are—and will remain—our biggest investment'... but which ones?

Of course, these claims are difficult to substantiate, thanks to UO refusing to disclose detailed financial reports. Last summer, faculty on the University's Senate Budget Committee requested a 10 year longitudinal study of the structural budget deficit to better understand how decisions around cuts were being informed. In response, the administrative delegates on the committee cancelled the rest of the summer meetings, as told to Dissonant Times by a source close to the matter.

The current generation of administrators that Knight and the board have employed—including 14-year CFO Jamie Moffit, a former athletic department financial director, and President Karl Scholz, past economic advisor to George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton—are intent on abandoning the tradition of a public mission for the vision of donors like Knight.

They may have little choice. Certainly, it's why these administrators were hired—because they advance the neoliberal dream without asking questions or creating a fuss (unlike Frohnmayer).

A white paper released earlier this year by the Service Employees International Union local 503, representing non-instructional staff at UO, shows exactly who these administrators think deserves top dollar: themselves!

Since 2015, UO has spent nearly double on administrative raises that they have on staff raises, while adding twice as many admin positions as compared to staff positions in the same window.

At the top, President Karl Scholz enjoys a guaranteed salary increase of $725,000 to $816,000—a $91,000 increase—by 2027-28, regardless of the university's financial condition. Other perks include a $150,000 annual retirement contribution, two possible $100,000 retention bonuses, room and board at the publicly owned, million-dollar McMorran House and a $1,200 monthly vehicle stipend.

In the same breath, we see the four campus unions pushed, always, to strike: SEIU got a tentative agreement just six hours before go time, and the Graduate Teaching Fellows Federation (GTFF) set to follow suit by Nov. 9, locked in a contract fight with an administration they argue is engaging in illegal "surface bargaining." (In 2024, the faculty-representing United Academics were close to a strike of their own, and the UO Student Workers bargaining their first contract in 2025 went on a historically militant 10-day strike).

Conclusion: From Here It's Up to Us

The particulars of state legislation, billion dollar donations and budget cuts may be complex, but the bottomline is quite simple: the ruling class, best represented by Phil Knight, has dominated the University of Oregon to the point that they dictate both its internal operations and how it relates to the broader world around it.

The public university has become another tool for the ruling class to shape the future for themselves, ruthlessly exploiting anyone seeking to learn or work. And the administrators, for their part, have paid themselves as much as possible while delivering on elite wishes to hollow out the liberal arts and deny workers fair pay.

Above– 2026 GTFF Picket: "A Graduate Employee faces down the donor boner (Hayward Field's Torch) at GTFF's October 28th Practice Picket. Ian Sterling."

We might take this account and say the neoliberal university is in crisis. But truly, to echo Shana Redmond, the neoliberal university is the crisis

Within the spiraling of its history, different forces have acted upon the university for different interests, but the wreckage they've accumulated is stacked upon the same truth: capitalism continues to find new frontiers to exploit, and we are the collateral.

But, as we've learned from the people who have—at times—shown a capacity to resist these advances, Phil Knight's future does not have to be our own. An analysis shared by those inside and around the institution is a step towards breaking it open, tearing it down and building something new.

Tabling at No Kings brings new opportunities for connection

By: A Friend

On Saturday October 17th, I brought my usual anarchist Distro set up to the “No Kings” part 4 rally at Alton Baker Park. The overall message of the rally was to encourage people to vote early, and often, as they say. So, I thought to myself - Why not get in on the fun? Now to be clear, I was not formally invited, and would not make contact with the No Kings organizers on my own anyhow. But, in Eugene you can pretty much set up a zine table at any event and it’s usually welcomed, and if anyone has a problem with it, you can bet they won’t do anything about it anyway. With this as my prior experience, myself and a couple of others went to go hand out the latest and most colorful anarchist zines to a crowd of boomer liberals, Democrat Gen X’ers who still live in the 90s, some enterprising non affiliated people, and leftists who want to consider some other ideas.

At the rally, near the pond usually filled with ducks, there were about a dozen different organizations tabling. The groups included Neighborhood Anarchist Collective (NAC) which is a Eugene-based social anarchist organization, Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), Civil Liberties Defense Center (CLDC), and some climate justice groups asking people to sign a petition. A real hodgepodge of the Eugene left! We set our tables up, put out our spread, and before we could get fully set up, we already had people coming up to take literature.

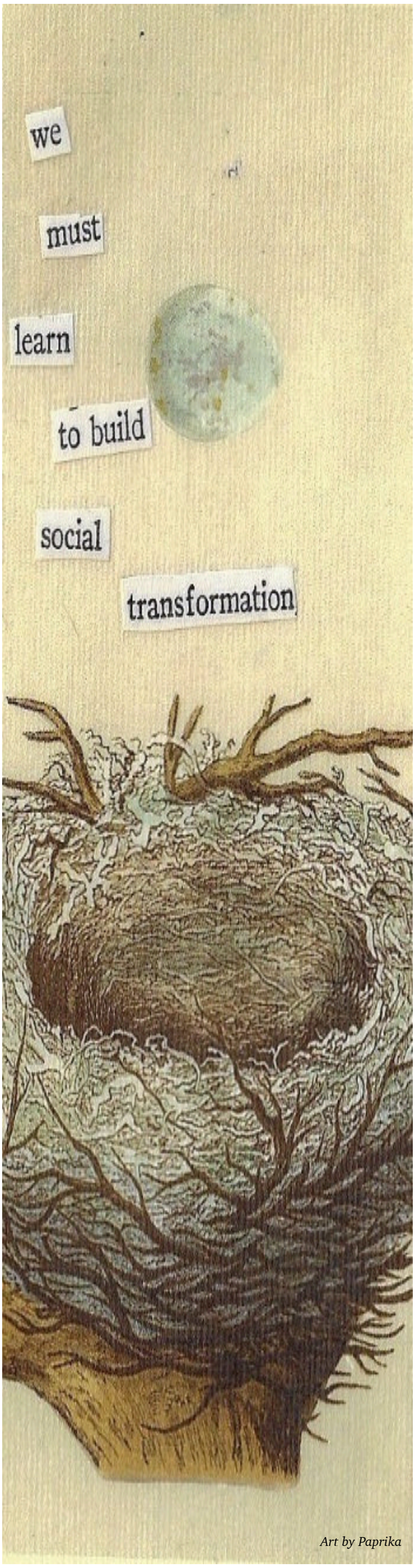
Now, when you are tabling at these kinds of things, where you can be sure the majority of people will not be anarchists, and may not be receptive, you don’t want to come out swinging so hard that you alienate them upfront. You need to have some tact! For that, I printed a bunch of “Soft Ball” Zines, aka primers about what anarchism is, some DIY guides about how to set up burner phones, pieces about local history, etc. I tend to keep the more spicy stuff with me, but not put it out if I think my audience is not at that level.

With that said, you don’t want to give the impression that your politics are watered down, either. For example, I wouldn’t print something about anarchism which wasn’t revolutionary, or implied that all we need to do is set up community gardens and have weekly dinners and that somehow will get us to revolution - there has to be some teeth! And in conversation, when someone asks about my politics, I am uncompromising and will tell them exactly what I think, but you want to be able to get to the point of having conversations rather than closing that avenue off. I think that people value honesty and can tell when you are underselling yourself, or trying to obfuscate your true motives.

Anyway, I’d call the day a success. We distroed a couple hundred zines, made some contacts (some we had met before, further building rapport) and had a lot of good conversations, even though we weren’t on the same page with most of the attendees. That’s not to say everyone felt that way though, because a lot of people straight up agreed with us. My most memorable was an older liberal man who came up to me to ask what policy decision I would make if I could make any, and I hit him with “Repeal the Patriot act, end the 25 year long state of emergency” and he was really into it. Though I don’t believe in using state policy as I am an anarchist, I think that there are some positions you can take on issues that would undermine the states ability to govern the way that they want to.

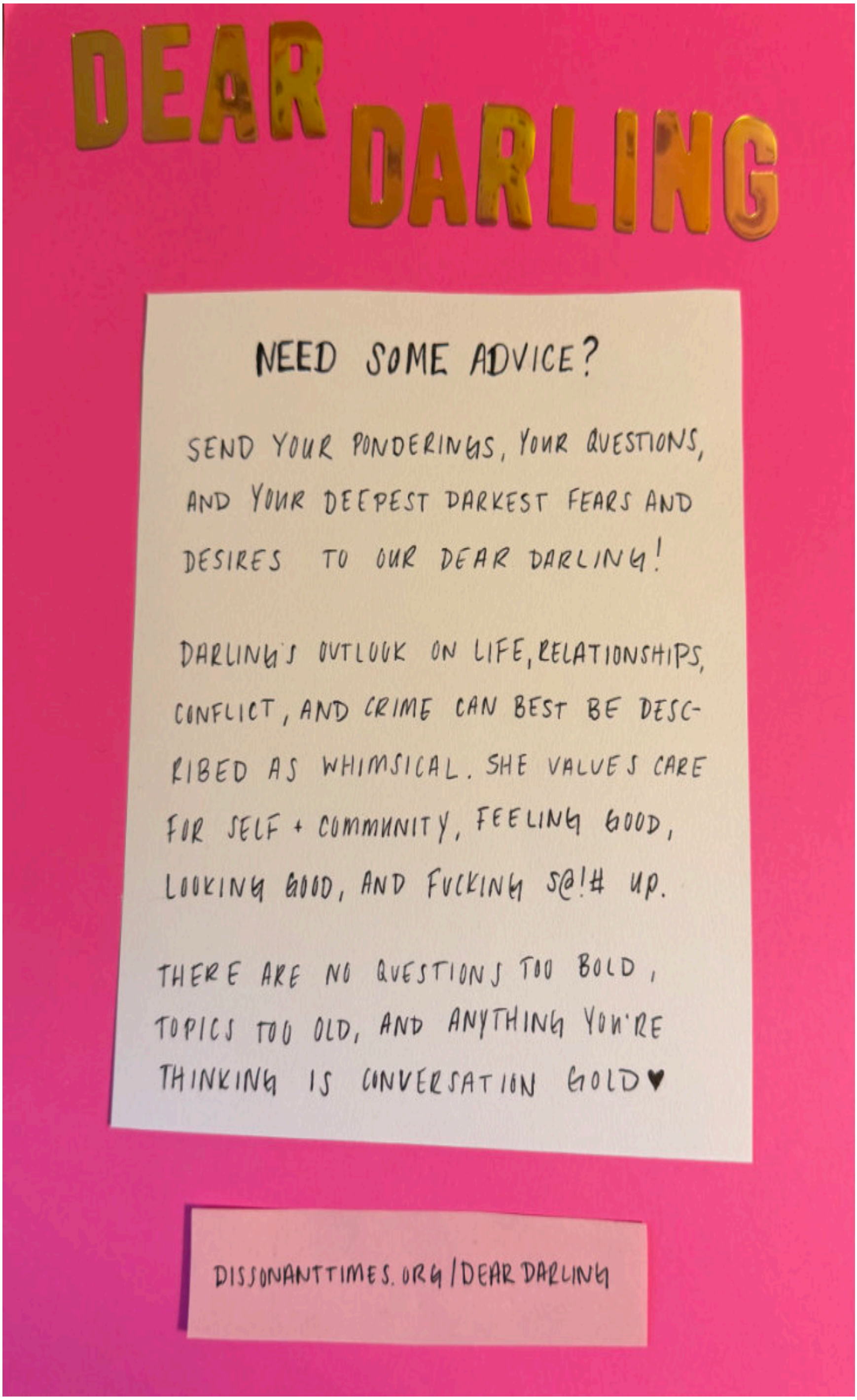
So, for all of you who say things like, “I don’t want to go to No Kings and table, it’s going to be full of liberals!” Well, yes it sure is, but it also has a bunch of opportunities for us to get our message out, and to meet people we never would have encountered otherwise. It also helps to demystify anarchists from people on the internet, hidden away in their dark bedrooms, to being people in the real world. I also don’t think there is any harm in getting out anarchist propaganda, and you know it probably all adds up to something in the end and definitely has a non zero impact. Besides, it’s not like we are hosting our own events where people are coming to explicitly meet anarchists, so there is always going to be a level of compromise anyhow.

Get out and table, long live distroism!



Art by Paprika

JUSTICE 4 HAKIYM RALLY!
BRING HAKIYM HOME
PROTECT OUR FIREFIGHTERS
JUSTICE FOR HAKIYM IS JUSTICE FOR EVERYONE
FIREFIGHTERS + STUDENTS + COMMUNITY
SATURDAY, NOV 7, 2026 • 12 NOON
SALEM, OR • STATE CAPITOL STEPS

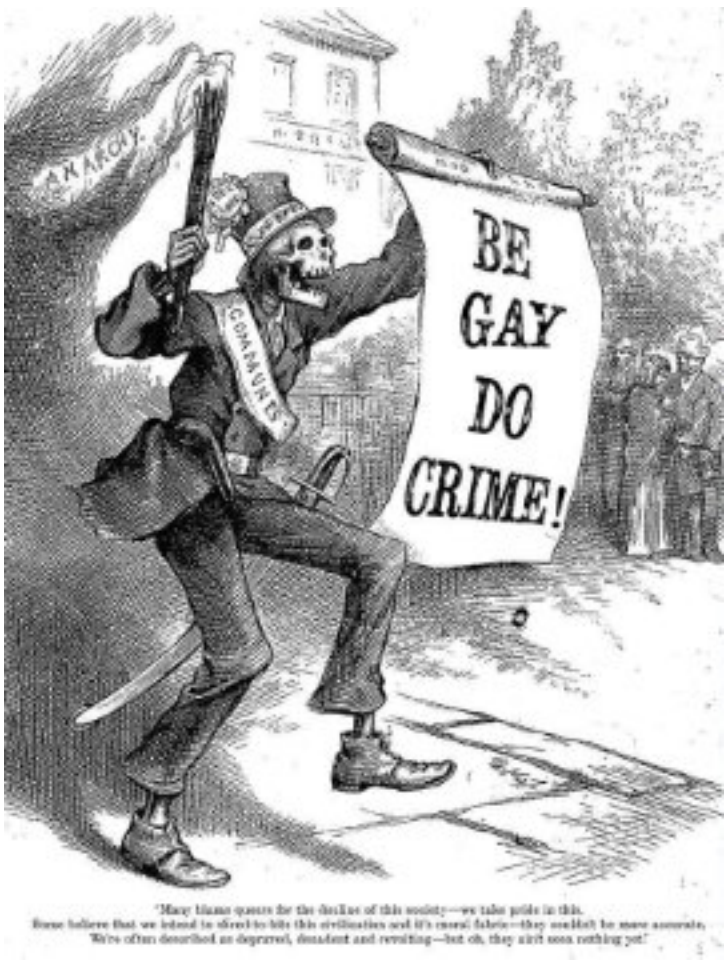

DEAR DARLING
NEED SOME ADVICE?
SEND YOUR PONDERINGS, YOUR QUESTIONS, AND YOUR DEEPEST DARKEST FEARS AND DESIRES TO OUR DEAR DARLING!
DARLING'S OUTLOOK ON LIFE, RELATIONSHIPS, CONFLICT, AND CRIME CAN BEST BE DESCRIBED AS WHIMSICAL. SHE VALUES CARE FOR SELF + COMMUNITY, FEELING GOOD, LOOKING GOOD, AND FUCKING S@!# UP.
THERE ARE NO QUESTIONS TOO BOLD, TOPICS TOO OLD, AND ANYTHING YOU'RE THINKING IS CONVERSATION GOLD♥
DISSONANTTIMES.ORG/DEARDARLING

Anarchic Reflections– Be Gay Do Crime: A Legacy of Criminal Intimacy

By: Lilia Folt

Lilia Folt is a transsexual anarchist enamored with cycles of death and rebirth, creation and destruction, and convinced that strategic thinking requires limitless, amoral compassion. She's excited to explore these ideas and more in her column, Anarchic Reflections.

BE GAY DO CRIME. The mantra resounds through time and space, but I remember this phrase being an oft- repeated feature of gay culture a few years ago, both online in meme form and irl (1). In itself, it requires little explanation: we're gay (or queer or trans or whatever), and sometimes the things we want to do are illegal, and sometimes the government makes us or our bodies or our relationships themselves illegal.



"Many blame queers for the decline of this society—we take pride in this. Some believe that we intend to shred-to-bits this civilization and its moral fabric—they couldn't be more accurate. We're often described as depraved, decadent, and revolting—but oh, they ain't seen nothing yet."

This meme, however, carries connections that might be missed by many observers. One of the early manifestations of this meme was a skeleton carrying a banner emblazoned with those iconic words, wearing a sash reading "COMMUNES," and carrying a torch labeled "ANARCHY." At the bottom of the image:

> "Many blame queers for the decline of this society—we take pride in this. Some believe that we intend to shred-to-bits this civilization and its moral fabric—they couldn't be more accurate. We're often described as depraved, decadent, and revolting—but oh, they ain't seen nothing yet." (2)

These searing sentences come from the essay Criminal Intimacy, written by the Mary Nardini Gang. They were an informal group of criminal queers involved with the Bash Back! network—and Bash Back! were the faggots being gay and doing crime long before it was cool.

A Brief History of Bash Back!

Bash Back! was a queer insurrectionary anarchist network that existed from 2007-2011. It was initially formed to organize a queer anarchist presence at the protests against the Democratic National Convention and Republican National Convention in the summer of 2008, both of which involved anarchists and others from around the country. The network quickly grew afterwards, as it provided a previously-lacking organizational framework to connect queer anarchists at a national level. There were two subsequent national Bash Back! convergences, in 2009 and 2010, with some participants already declaring the death of Bash Back! in advance of the 2010 convergence. (3) After that it petered out, but the beautiful damage was done. Queer excess oozed into many facets of the anarchist scene and beyond.

It's difficult to make sweeping statements about what exactly Bash Back! did, since each local chapter was fully autonomous, and there was no centrally-decided strategy or even ideology beyond some brief points of unity regarding diversity of tactics and opposition to assimilation into hetero-capitalist society. (3) Some of the most spirited communiqués submitted under the Bash Back! name mention attacking gaybashers, fighting Nazis, protesting corporate Pride events, disrupting service at homophobic churches via many tactics including queer making out, vandalizing said homophobic churches, vandalizing police cars, taking part in riots, and hosting illegal gay dance parties. (4) In addition to those dramatic examples, Bash Back! made lasting cultural shifts in both the North American anarchist space and, I would argue, society at large.

I talked with some older comrades who were around then, one a participant in Bash Back!, the other an admirer from afar and a participant in other queer struggles at the time, who provided some perspective. Anarchism before Bash Back! was patriarchal, stuffy, and stiff. Bash Back! forced the issue of queerness, of addressing misogyny and rape culture, of engaging in conflictual street action as a matter of passionate desire rather than sad duty. By the time I entered anarchist spaces, it was already the case that the majority of comrades were queer. That was not always the case. Bash Back! was a huge reason why things shifted. The social landscape when Bash Back! existed had a more omnipresent, but at the same time less openly genocidal, form of homo- and transphobia, compared to what we deal with today. (5) One comrade tells me of queer friends expressing a fear of weirding-out straight comrades, like "I don't want them to think I'm hitting on them." Something unthinkable today, at least in my experience—if anything, I think anarchists might tend to fear not being queer enough! Bash Back! pushed an intense, in-your-face, publicly affectionate and joyfully militant form of queerness in a time where, more than today, any visible queerness could lead to some very real social consequences.

Bash Back! also anticipated, even prefigured, the wider acceptance of queerness in broader society, exemplified by the "transgender tipping point" of 2014 (6) and gay marriage's legalization in 2015. This is a little sacrilegious to say, because the last thing Bash Back! wanted was acceptance into mainstream society. God forbid! These were the fags and dykes who explicitly protested against queer struggle being confined to advocacy for the legalization of gay marriage and the repealment of Don't Ask, Don't Tell. (7) Not because they didn't desire freedoms for gay people, but because they desired freedoms far more profound than inclusion in the traditional institution of marriage and complicity with American empire. But something we forget is that even woefully insufficient rights and milquetoast societal acceptance are won through struggle. LGBTQ+ politicians, pronouns in corporate email signatures, the vast proliferation of commodities marketed towards queers, more and more people knowing what "transgender" even is, for better or worse—none of these is liberation, but neither are they evidence of unequivocal defeat. The line between cooptation—the phenomenon of the dominant society absorbing characteristics of or partially satisfying the demands of a radical social movement in order to ward off deeper societal transformation—and the partial victory of a real cultural shift, is not as clear-cut as some might claim (8).

It is true that if in the 2010's we reached a "transgender tipping point" and mainstreaming of gay culture, the weight has once again shifted and plunged us into the slowly boiling pot of social cleansing. As I would imagine most Bash Back! faggots already knew then, and anyone else can see clearly with hindsight, visibility is a trap. Still, Bash Back! contributed to a wave of forceful queer self-assertion, of queers carving out a place in society. The most visionary of them were carving to cleave this society apart entirely—we're not there yet, but the cuts are going deeper and deeper.

The Mary Nardini Gang

Throughout Bash Back!'s existence, the Midwest held a particularly high density of active chapters, and from this region hailed the Milwaukee-based Mary Nardini Gang. They were named after Italian-American anarchist Mary Nardini, who lived in Milwaukee in the early 20th century. Milwaukee had a vibrant Italian anarchist community at the time, who were largely influenced by the legendary proponent of propaganda by the deed, Luigi Galleani; Nardini was said to be their "guiding light." She received life in prison after being blamed both for inciting a riot that resulted in a shootout between anarchists and police, and for a later bombing that left 9 Milwaukee police officers dead—a bombing which

happened when she was already in jail for the aforementioned riot. (9)

I'll end with some sections from Criminal Intimacy, the text of theirs that adorned the meme at the beginning, because I feel that its words have something to offer us in the escalating repressive climate of 2026. They expand on what is gestured at in the slogan "be gay do crime," that when we have criminality ascribed to us, there is freedom in embracing it, rather than grasping for respectability:

> "The machinery of control has rendered our very existence illegal. We've endured the criminalization and crucifixion of our bodies, our sex, our unruly genders. Raids, witch-hunts, burnings at the stake. We've occupied the space of deviants, of whores, of perverts, and abominations. This culture has rendered us criminal, and of course, in turn, we've committed our lives to crime. In the criminalization of our pleasures, we've found the pleasure to be had in crime! In being outlawed for who we are, we've discovered that we are indeed fucking outlaws! [...]
>
> We queers and other insurgents have developed what good folks might call a criminal intimacy. We are exploring the material and affective solidarity fostered between outlaws and rebels. In our obstruction of law, we've illegally discovered the beauty in one another. In revealing our desire to our partners in crime, we've come to know each other more intimately than legality could ever allow. In desire, we produce conflict. And in conflict with capital, we may have found an escape route from the deadening of our lives. Our gang's discourse is conflict."

However, they point out that embracing a criminal intimacy with one another isn't merely a reaction against our circumstances, but a way of creating relationships that is both a means to intensify the struggle for liberation, and an end in itself:

> "The real power expressed in our crimes isn't in the damage caused to our enemies or even in the various improvements of our material conditions (though we take pleasure in both). The power we express is in the empowerments and relationships we're creating. In our sex and our attack—when we pull down our masks and share our cache of bricks—we are expanding the possibilities of our affinity. In our crime, we create dynamic new relationships of criminal intimacies. In these possibilities, we are learning how we might, together, reduce this world to rubble."

1. https:// knowyourmeme.com/sensitive/memes/be-gay-do-crime

2. a gang of criminal queers [Mary Nardini Gang]. 2009. "Criminal Intimacy." In *Queer Ultraviolence*, edited by Fray Baroque and Tegan Eanelli, 53-57.

3. *Pink and Black Attack*. 2010. "Reflections on the Demise of Bash Back!." In *Queer Ultraviolence*, edited by Fray Baroque and Tegan Eanelli, 156-162.

4. See various communiqués in the aforementioned *Queer Ultraviolence* anthology.

5. "Less openly genocidal" homophobia and transphobia precisely because these institutions were *stronger* at that time, not yet weakened by 15 years of insurrection, capitalist crisis, and open gender fuckery.

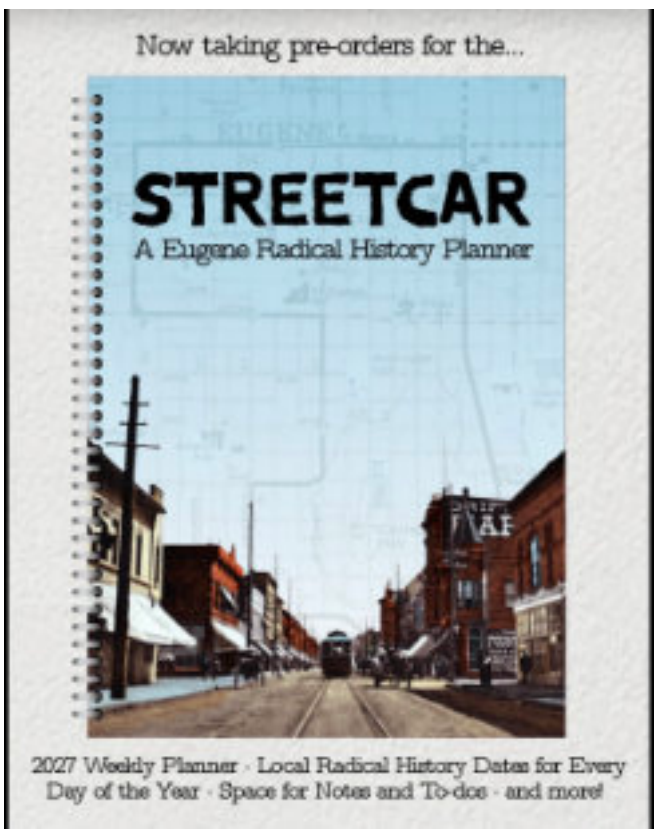
6. "Transgender Tipping Point," Wikipedia, October 4, 2026, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ Transgender_tipping_point.

7. Anonymous. 2009. "Washington, DC: Communiqué from the Forgotten, Human Rights Campaign HQ Glamdalized." In *Queer Ultraviolence*, edited by Fray Baroque and Tegan Eanelli, 95-96.

8. On cooptation as simultaneously a defeat and a partial victory, David Graeber has this to say in "The Shock of Victory," his classic post-mortem essay regarding the Anti-Globalization Movement of the late 90's and early 2000's: "Revolutionaries hear this line continually. If capitalism is left standing, if it begins to market revolutionaries' once-subversive ideas, it shows that the capitalists really won. The revolutionaries have lost; they've been coopted. To me this entire line of reasoning is absurd. Feminism was surely a revolutionary force: what could be more radical than reversing thousands of years of gender oppressing lying at the very heart of what we think we are and can be and should be as human beings? Can we say that feminism lost, that it achieved nothing, just because corporate culture felt obliged to pay lip service to condemning sexism and capitalist firms began marketing feminist books, movies, and other products? Of course not. Unless you've managed to destroy capitalism and patriarchy in one fell blow, this is one of the clearest signs that you've gotten somewhere. Presumably any effective road to revolution will involve endless moments of cooptation, endless victorious campaigns, endless little insurrectionary moments or moments of flight and covert autonomy."

9. "Mary Nardini." The Anarchist Library. Accessed October 31, 2026. https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/ mary-nardini-gang-mary-nardini.

Now Presenting... Streetcar: A Eugene Radical History Planner!



Sometimes you need to hold a planner in your hand and not rely on phones to organize your life. But what if your planner also helped you learn more about the history of the place you live, and had built-in resources for when you want to make things happen in your community?

We are pleased to announce the launch of The Eugene Streetcar for 2027 to help you out. Reminiscent of the Slingshot Organizer, the Streetcar is part planner and part informational guide. It contains Eugene (and wider Lane County) radical history dates for every day of the year, space to write notes, doodles, and to-dos, a contact list of radical groups and spaces around town, and info on police repression, community defense, and much much more.

Born out of a shared passion for local radical history and a commitment to our collective futures, this planner is a collaboration between Solidarity News and A People's Guide to the University of Oregon. We hope that this planner illuminates the connection between the struggles that shaped our home here in the Willamette Valley, and the community-led resistance movements we continue to build today. Rooted in decades of local movement history and filled with resources that will help us stand together in defense of our local and global communities, The Streetcar is both a reflection on the movements that came before us and a tool for the struggles ahead. We hope you'll pick up a planner and join us in carrying forward this work.

The planner is spiral bound with a heavy duty laminated cover to help it survive the year, and a full 5.5x8.5 size to help you fit all the information you need.

Local radical history dates include movements for: labor solidarity (and strikes), international solidarity, environmental justice, anti-fascism, anti-war, Black liberation, economic justice, housing justice, community defense, campus reform, education, mutual aid, public services, LGBTQAI communities, third spaces, radical media, and more!

We are now accepting pre-orders for the 2027 planner, which will ship/be ready for pick up in mid-late December. Head to need to add a link and fill out our form to secure one for yourself and your loved ones. Since this is our first year, we will be beginning with a limited print run of 150 organizers. Should we exceed our fundraising goals, we may be able to print more.

In Solidarity,

The Eugene Streetcar Team

Tongue Bone

By: Thomomys bulbivorus

I notice how my body is
not my pain -
even grammatically. My body is
in pain. Not pain.

My body has opinions; and
opinions move over pain,
their environment.

How each food has a taste.
And that taste moves over
their environment.

Pain, as a tongue of opinions:
How does this thought taste?
When I notice this...? Does
this thought taste interesting?
What does interesting taste
like? Not sweet - interesting.

Not spicy. A hot take is spicy.
This is strange; it builds, folds.
This thought has actual taste,
not in a pathologistic, clinical
synaesthesia way. A non-spicy,
non-sweet, other, interesting
way neither boarder patrol sees
(or under both, perhaps). And
becomes its own, third thing,
currently quarentined in the
qualifier "interesting". And
moving through, from there,
to intergration, and into an
awakening of flavor: meaty.
I might recreate the taste of
this thought by biting down
on the fat of my tongueas it
sits between my molars,
which gives my tongue a hug
with my teeth! In pain, meaty.
At times, I ask myself questions
and invite opinion to spill open,
to swim around in open waters.
Does discomfort taste like being
in pain? Discomfort tastes a bit
different. But it can feel similar;
discomfort is not sweet. And it
doesn't quite make it to spicy.

It's a brine-y, acrid taste, a
spirit
might tast like discomfort, or
tobacco. Must. Describing my
pain in this way takes the sting
out of it. How having language
for what hurts takes the hurt
and puts it somewhere else.
In pain. In relationship. Being
uncomfortable, left to its own
devices, can cascade; can make
it a moral failure, turning it into
a sweet-rot taste that no herbal
blend can salvage. To swallow
a discomfort is insult to injury.

So I spit it out. Fuck! Ew! Ugh!
Why! What is going on? When
will it go away? I don't like it!
It
tastes like swamp water, which. I
grew up in a swamp; an hour from
the ocean. Swamps have opinions
that went on

Art by Paprika

Kites for Gaza

By: Shxr

The kite making event [on October 4th] pulled together $228, mainly going toward families in Gaza, for school supplies in particular, as this is the start of the school year. Thank you to everyone who contributed and to everyone who's heart cries and screams for Gaza.

Below is a poem I wrote for the event.

The Kite in My Stomach

Nothing to eat,
No shoes on my feet,
But the kite in my stomach
Transcend this cruel world,
Flying faster than an apache helicopter,
More devastating than a drone,
My kite that soars
And enchants,
Distracts and maneuvers around snipers,
Protects my imagination,
For the birds have fled
And must live in my head.

Nothing is left,
Nothing but souls filling the skies
Maybe it's my kite,
Maybe it's me above the pain,
The human stain,
The rubble and the bones,
The memories and martyrs,
Still,
What string will tether me here,
What knot, what power
Hold me down,
Not to wither but to burst into color
So bright, that to witness is to die,
A little
Or a lot
It matters not.
All that does remains engraved
In the space between your heart
And a child who only
Ever wanted
To be enchanted by the weightlessness
Of the wind,
And the promise of a universe whose laws
Still hold true.

Images by M5 Photography

Humble Pie

By: Terah Van Dusen

I try to make my world so small, neat and tidy that there's little chance of failure. I practice minimalism. Track my spending. Vet my relationships so carefully I've effectively alienated myself completely. An ex-addict, I don't drink or mess around with drugs. Not anymore. Yet failure still finds a way in. Life keeps lifeing. The other shoe keeps dropping.

Last night before bed, my cellphone screen went dark and wouldn't light back up. My eight-year-old daughter and I stared at it together, our round faces reflected in the black mirror. Luckily, I'd already set our alarm for the morning and at 6:00 a.m. it lit up on schedule, before going dark again for good.

After school drop off instead of working from home (my internet accessibility requires my cellphone) I headed for the Verizon store. An image of my alarmingly low bank account flashed in my mind. It was close to payday. Too close to payday. I was running on empty.

On route to Verizon, I arrived at one of Eugene's busiest four-way intersections. As the light turned red, I slowed to a stop. Even though it was Monday morning, it ended up just me and a houseless man standing on the corner. No other traffic. Just me and him. I recognized the man's shock of shoulder length blonde hair and his handlebar mustache. Despite that I was two lanes away from him, he gestured to me. I wasn't surprised. This was Earth School stuff. The words Life will humble you, let it, had been rolling around in my head the past few days. And here the universe was: serving me up more humble pie.

"I don't have anything," I mouthed back at the man, both hands in an open gesture. It was a true statement. If I'd have been on the street I might have turned my pockets inside out for emphasis. I needed him to know that it wasn't personal. I was headed to Verizon with, by my estimate, no more than thirty dollars in my account to buy a new cellphone. I hoped they could either resurrect my phone or bill me later. The thirty dollars remaining was from an acoustic guitar I pawned to make rent. I didn't imagine the man could read my lips when I'd mouthed "I don't have anything." Nor would he be likely to believe me, given that I was driving a red Prius in excellent condition. I'd recently been considering trading the car in for an older model. An attempt to pocket some cash for emergencies which, as a single mom with an elderly parent, seemed to happen a lot.

Before the light turned green, tears welled in my eyes. It was the second time in two weeks I'd been directly asked for money from a houseless person and had to say no. It wasn't usually like this. Typically, I had something to give. A dollar or two. More than a frown and a peace sign.

I arrived at Verizon thirty minutes early. Adjacent to a coffee shop, I opted to spend $2.50 (but who's counting?) on an eight-ounce house coffee for the benefit of using their internet. I could check emails, work towards my deadline, and hopefully figure out what was going on with my phone. Upon sitting down and logging onto the Wi-Fi, I quickly learned my phone was experiencing a black screen of death. I followed instructions on a YouTube video to fix it. No luck.

I needed to focus on the positive. Eight-ounce coffees were still a thing. Two-dollar coffees were still a thing. There was kindness emanating from everyone I'd encountered all day. First, at school drop off, the handsome PE teacher who could wiggle his ears walked by our car at the exact moment my daughter was tumbling out, "Good morning!" he'd welcomed her.

Then there was the mustachioed fellow on the corner, the one who'd simply shrugged and nodded when I mouthed, "I don't have anything!"

And after that, the barista who'd assured me that there were still eight-ounce coffees—that I wouldn't be forced to drink more than I could afford. I'd been in close enough proximity to the barista to see that her eyes were red-rimmed. She'd clearly been recently crying, like I had been. The cheerful music playing in the background couldn't disguise it. I wondered, had she been crying about lack of money, too?

We don't often remember the days we spend struggling. Like bouncing back after illness, there's a natural instinct to forget all about it. We just want to revel in feeling good again. To keep the momentum. That's probably by design. A survival strategy. Like our brains can't handle the remembering. Can no longer manage the pain of struggle. The torture of poverty. The shocks to our system. The hits to our psyches. It's agonizing recalling the months I spent unhoused at fourteen. That was the epitome of powerlessness. It's why I try so hard to remain in control today. Why I spiral so quickly when I'm not. Why I isolate so hard. Why I romanticize my rent. I'm afraid of coming home to an eviction notice on the locked door, like happened back in 1999.

I want to look into the eyes of someone who has less than me and vividly remember when I was there. I want to reach out and touch them, same skin to same skin, and remember that we are one. The fellow on the corner. The barista. Me. We are all the same.

Life will humble you, let it.

A few days later, after narrowly leaving Verizon with a new cellphone, a friend sends me an essay referencing a parable I'd never heard before, reading:

> *A person dies and is given a tour of heaven and hell, with the option to choose the world they'd like to inhabit. At first glance, they both look exactly the same: people sitting around tables with bowls full of food and some very large spoons with which to eat the food. The difference in the two options is in the fact that in hell, everyone is trying to feed themselves with these long spoons, and failing, remaining in a state of perpetual starvation, while those in heaven are feeding one another, so everyone is nourished.*

Some people make it look so easy. Holding down their well-paying jobs. Providing for their families. Even vacations! And the truth is, for some it does come easy. But for most of us, it doesn't. Especially in these times. We fall down. We bounce back. We fall down again. On and on. There may be a hidden village of support for some folks. There may be a secret sauce that I don't know about, didn't get the recipe for. I know many people have it harder than me, carrying heavy loads that I cannot see. There's even the chance that I'm making it look easy, too. But today, I'm dropping the mask completely. I'm dreaming of a world with abundant spoonfuls of food, where we don't just have our humble pie, but we remember to share it, too.

Disabled Love

What happens when we tell the whole truth about the parts of us we've been taught to pretend don't exist?

Strawberry (they ki he she) is a queer disabled art witch who lives in community. Find berry at listeningtothenoiseuntilitmakessense.com.

Where do you keep your gender?

Not in my genitals, my costuming,

my pronouns, or medical file.

I keep my gender in my perception.

My eyes look at the world.

My gender is excitement to be alive:

light sparkling on the surface of the water.

My gender is low clouds and fog,

the green-on-green

of the rainforest jungle

where part of me comes from.

My gender glows in my chest.

It has no checkbox.

My gender is the power that

continually re-makes me.

Where do you keep your race?

Not in my language, my job,

my name, or my title Mx.

I keep my race in my mitochondria.

My mom's love is part of my body.

My mom's hair, my own hair.

The way I take care of people,

worshipping Parent Earth,

pulling you into my family.

I keep my race in my plump body,

my hips, and my defiance.

I keep my race in a mixture.

I keep my race on my altar.

The candle is glowing.

My race smells like onions, eucalyptus,

wild fennel, fire roasting poblanos,

oak leaf litter, chicken BBQ,

the steam from tamales, corn husks,

night summer rain storm,

copal on the electric stove burner.

Pale lilac lightning is reflected

in my first pair of reading glasses.

I keep my race in an umbilical cord

which is buried under a tree

I no longer have physical access to.

But I have unlimited access

to the force that birthed me

because those stars stir

everything I do.

Where do you keep your sexuality?

Not in what I buy, what entertainer I defend,

an acronym, flag, or pin.

I keep my sexuality in my inner life

where I meet the moon.

Jaguar is my lover,

and I learn how never to abandon myself

when others decide

I'm too much pancake.

I keep my sexuality as a desire

which animates my whole life with appetite.

I keep my sexuality in my Shadow,

hidden with pain-violation

as its spark.

I keep my sexuality also in my ass,

which you can see clearly,

huge in my pants.

My sexuality is liquid, whether I orgasm

or just look at you.

I keep my sexuality for the dear ones

who respect me.

No one else is welcome to worship at that temple,

although some slobber at the gate.

Where do you keep your disability?

Not in an assistive device, a label,

a parking placard, or social security.

I keep my disability in physical pain

and a clear pool of wisdom

about shared suffering and unmet needs.

I keep my disability in understanding

ableism, which is loneliness,

including how shut down my neighbors

get when asked

to behave with compassion.

My disability is a difference

that breaks "can do" into "no, cannot do"

with crystalline crumbs

of fractured longing.

It makes me more outsider

by eliminating possibility.

I keep my disability in an intention,

because whatever I'm looking for

isn't going to happen on accident.

Ornate planning

conveys me to the action,

where I last a short time

before returning home for collapse.

I'll write you a letter about it,

if that…

Where do you keep your identity?

My identity is assumed by the least-creative based on outside markers, but the closer you get to the Center, to the truth– Ask the right questions, and I'll unfold. All the cards on the table tell a story that might shock you.

I'm not eager to show you. The miracle can be a secret right in front of you, a jewel-glint wrapped tight you never witness. Or you could glimpse the Mystery immediately. It's up to you.

My voice, my marriages. My identity smells like dew. The large dragonfly was right the whole time: this is a blessing for my birthday.

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