

wise, has absolutely no place within politics or the economy, and any attempts to integrate us into these machines of exploitation, oppression, and humiliation are scandalous and offensive. A look at CAPCAR, which shares some members with OBS, reveals the details of this plan to incorporate us into the controls of the misery machine. The organization's pet project is the Civilian Oversight Board (COB), essentially a replacement for the Police Department's Internal Affairs. Proposed is a group of 7 individuals (ultimately all approved by the Board of Alderman), being either elected or appointed by the Mayor, Police Commissioners, and the chair of the Aldermanic Committee of Public Safety (with one being active in a police watchdog organization). Thus "insuring diversity, so that all parts of the community are represented" in insuring a fully repressed community. No need for any more snappy remarks, their own words illustrate the absurdity of the project better than we ever could; "The COB will improve community cooperation and police effectiveness. We hope that this newly created process will operate in such a fashion that the community will have some faith in its decisions and a more peaceful relationship between community and police will result."

¹³ On October 22, 2002, CAPCAR started a boycott against the city, specifically targeting conventions. The aim was to force city leaders to adopt the COB by way of economic coercion: implement the COB or we will keep encouraging organizations to move their conventions elsewhere. A good tactic used to achieve a terrible goal.

¹⁴ Jerome was 16 and unarmed in 2001 when the pigs fired 7 bullets into him. Then, after somehow surviving, they proceeded the following year to put him on trial as an adult for first-degree assault on a law enforcement officer. Marchers' thoughts were also on the recent murders of Ronald Beasley, Earl Murray, Julius Thurman, Jerome Ruffin, and Torrence Mull, and the many more unreported deaths, shootings, assaults, and harassments at the hands of St. Louis police.

¹⁵ The organizers held Slay, Mokwa, Civic Progress (a shadowy collection of St. Louis' elite, mostly white and very influential) and all 15 white Alderpeople responsible for police crimes and repression. Organizers, no doubt eyeing their next move up the political ladder, spared the 13 black Alderpeople under the excuse that they had voted for the COB.

¹⁶ Known as Black Bloc, this, at the time, popular worldwide tactic offered a level of protection against being singled out or identified by police, informants, and surveillance, and therefore allowing engagement in more militant actions. In this instance, participants carried 2 large, heavy defensive banners; one with a ninja-figure kicking the words "Police State!" and another exclaiming, "One single act of defiance is worth more than a thousand angry words." Black flags and inverted American flags abounded.

¹⁷ "Some Notes on Where to Point Our Guns," recognized that police are in the service of a larger enemy and exist to maintain class divisions, defended revolt against everything cop-like, and recognized race as a powerful tool of the ruling class. The flyer also critiqued attempts to reform the police department and extended solidarity to grocery strikers, public school workers, parents, and students, and people trapped in the court and prison systems.

¹⁸ As the flames caught, a particularly obnoxious anti-war opportunist, a leader of the reformist Instead of War Coalition, Bill Ramsey, biked up, slowed to take in the scene, then made a U-turn and rode off towards safety.

¹⁹ Outside the Creepy Crawl club, a band member, giving up on unloading his equipment, joined the march sincerely declaring "This is fucking great, I hate cops too!"

²⁰ Other officers include Bailey, Ennibach, and Tabens.

²¹ The ambush was the last step in a series of altercations in 2004. It began with McEntee, Nelson, and a few

other cops harassing a group of 20 kids (including Kevin and his older brother, Marcus) in the street listening to music. They ordered the music turned down, and the kids complied. Then the cops demanded that they go home. The kids refused, knowing they still had a half-hour before curfew. McEntee then attempted to grab a 16 year-old, who dodged. Another kid stepped in between the two. McEntee grabbed him by the throat, he struggled to get away, and McEntee responded with a slap and blast of mace. Kevin and his friends then surrounded the officers. Nelson pulled a gun, pointing it directly at a 15 year-old. McEntee swung on a 19 year-old and took him to the ground in a flurry of blows. The kids pushed the cops off, allowing the 19 year-old to run. Outnumbered and fearful, the cops retreated. The next day they charged the 19 year-old with assaulting an officer, threatening to void his scholarship. The cops also began interrogating Marcus, trying to get him to snitch out drug dealers. When he refused to cooperate they attempted to tow his car. Another stand-off occurred, this time with even more Meacham Park residents involved. Again, the crowd forced police to back down, and again police responded by issuing warrants for disorderly conduct the next day. The cops managed to get Marcus' car and took out some aggression on it. That night, a group of residents, anticipating the return of police, prepared an ambush. When the police arrived they were met with rocks and bricks; the outnumbered police called other departments for back-up. Shots were fired on both sides nearly sparking a full-scale riot. For more details on social conflicts in Meacham Park see "An Interview with Kevin" <http://blog.myspace.com/freekevinjohnson> and "Monster in the Media, Hero in the Streets; The Struggle of Kevin Johnson" in the Autumn 2007 issue of *Confluence*.

²² Despite what the many defenders of law and order claimed, the deejays were far from being anti-police. The conversation started off by saying the issue isn't just with white police, calling the 80% of cops, those who hide behind guns and badges, "punks", and congratulating and paying respect to cops who would take off their weapons and titles and fight hand-to-hand. Then they pondered, if in such a situation, what to go for first: their gun or walkie-talkie? Of course, their communication: "Take out their back-up!" They refrained from judging Kevin's actions, saying they couldn't know his mind-frame at the time, declaring that "nobody deserves death," and offering condolences to both families. The show then held a worst police department contest where the winner- the most-hated department- paradoxically got the deejay's respect for "doing your job". The Fraternal Order of Police (national and local) and other law enforcement groups called for the deejays to be fired and the station boycotted. On July 17, Clear Channel suspended them, and on August 3, General Manager Lee Clear fired them, claiming the station has utmost respect for law enforcement. Kaos was promised his job back if he agreed to a one month suspension and to donate part of his paycheck to a group that supports the police. Additionally, both deejays had to go on 2 days of police ride-alongs. This wasn't hard for Kaos as he is friends with many cops, does frequent ride-alongs, and is seen as a snitch to many. In the past, Mokwa had made an appearance on the show talking about racial tensions, and there were plans to host a roundtable with officers to talk about racial profiling and police brutality.

²³ Ratted out by a friend and charged with second-degree property damage, the State jailed Jeremy for 45 days and gave him 2 years probation.

²⁴ The State responded to each with 3 counts of tampering with a witness, a class C felony punishable by up to 7 years with no parole.

²⁵ www.myspace.com/freekevinjohnson

²⁶ Titled "Kevin Johnson" available at www.myspace.com/panchorucker

WAR ON MISERY #3
ST. LOUIS
Summer 2008

FREE

Invitation For Conflict

A Magnifying Glass to Three Anti-Police Initiatives

Neutered, individualized, and wholly smashed into a two-dimensional bit of passing information; this is how we hear about instances of fellow rabble acting against the police. Angered, grieving family member holds press conference demanding justice, solitary gunman settles score, organization calls (begs) for shorter leash for their police department...

The one thing the media gets right is that St. Louis is a dangerous city for police. With regularity we act with shootings, physical assaults, and threats on officers; we vandalize their stations, computer systems, cars, speed trap trailers, memorials, and even their houses; we steal from their cars and donation jars. Symbolically we contest them with demonstrations, art, and literature. When people aren't acting against cops they surely aren't cooperating with them- a general antagonism and entrenched "stop-snitching" culture prevails here. Contrary to the media's accounts however, these acts are not always individual, about specific grievances or specific cops, or reformist in demand.

In the past few years there have been three instances of actions against the police which are close to our hearts exactly because they shatter the media's conclusions and show just how dangerous we can be. Rather than merely stitch together elements of the stories, we want to pick them apart constructively and determine what works and what doesn't, what we like and what we don't, and what the demands are of those acting. We also want to approach how attacking the police can serve as a distraction from the broader conflict.

POLICE, continued on page 7

Against the drudgery of daily life and for a holiday without beginning or end.



DARLIN' THERE'S A PLACE FOR US... CAN WE GO BEFORE I TURN TO DUST?

In lieu of an introduction

We want to encourage people to do what we sometimes find difficult to do ourselves*: talk frankly with one another about our lives, dream publicly of how they could be different, and act together to do so against those who make their livelihood stunting such dreams with handcuffs, money, tradition, queues, or cultural nonsense.
war_on_misery@hotmail.com * in no particular order...

CHRONICLES

"That's what it's all about, ain't it? The bogey-men in the banks create credit, inflate it, sell it, deflate it, buy it, buy and sell wars and nations, buy and sell you and me!... And the 'paper' nothing but paper printed green by banks that owned the printing presses as well as the rest of the world, lock stock and bunghole, and all done with mirrors, with green paper they themselves invented in the first place."

-'Duke' McIntyre in Lawrence Ferlinghetti's, *Love in the Days of Rage*

With great pleasure, we watch St. Louisans take no pity on a wounded banking system. The robberies, averaging over \$4000 each, continue: by our count, more than 60 in the metro area in the last 15 months- *too many to carry on listing*. Our fear of inciting sleepiness outweighs the importance of emphasizing, through reporting the frequent and widespread heists, the susceptibility of the vile institution of banking- one that is currently convulsing from its internal contradictions. And if history can be trusted, this institution will serve as the terrain of ambush in a future time of social upheaval. In publishing details of successful bank robberies, we had hoped to reveal patterns (time of day, time of year, disguises, getaway methods, note messages, lack of weapons, parts of town, best banks, etc.) for folks like yourself to consider. In the future, we'll include only the more remarkable appropriations such as the rash of teenage homeless girls robbing Belleville banks last spring, the suave, well-dressed, North County bank robber's five bank spree in autumn 2006, the West County bank bandit known as an "everyday grandpa," the Lemay bank robber sporting his "Shut Up and Play" T-shirt, and the Kansas City thieves who pilfered an entire ATM with a commandeered Bobcat from across the street.

But most robberies are strategically dull. *And* the routine of robbing banks is no replacement for the carnival of storming them en masse. Something that holds true for many "survival" acts: better to loot than shoplift, to ambush than to snipe, to walk out than to phone in a bomb threat, to strike than to call in sick, to riot than to vandalize... Increasingly collective and coordinated acts against this world of coercion and isolation aren't solely a matter of effectivity, but equally a matter of sociality- of community and fun.

2006

December 5, St. Louis City - A man with a knife sneaks up on a Greek Orthodox priest getting into his car on Hampton Ave. "Who do you think you are? Fucking Nelly?" he says as he takes the large \$500 gold crucifix from the priest's neck. The priest, unharmed but shaken, sits in his car for 15 minutes before calling the police.

2007

January 9, St. Louis City - At a large northside funeral for 15 year-old Jeremy Robinson, unarmed and shot dead by police 11 days earlier, friends of his, wearing clothes with pictures of him and various anti-cop slogans, are described by a former teacher as "ready to go to war." Clergy and other older attendees successfully urge them to remain calm.

January 10, Hematite - Officials from Westinghouse Electric Co.'s closed nuclear fuel processing plant off Highway P near Festus announce that since July 2004 saboteurs have caused thousands of dollars in damages at the Hematite Radioactive Site. Tools and other equipment have been continu-

ally stolen and monitoring wells, drill rigs, and other equipment has been damaged or destroyed by vandalism and gunfire.

January 23, St. Louis City - Students and teachers of Shepard Elementary School arrive to find the school's large American flag has been slashed and hangs in tatters. At morning assembly, the principal lectures students: "This represents your country. There are people dying in other countries for you, losing arms and legs. This is a hate crime. This means you hate your country." Kids cover their faces to hide snickers.

February 19, Spanish Lake - A teenager serving time at the Missouri Hills treatment center for juvenile offenders is liberated from the premises by two men with ski masks, gloves, and a gun who shoved their way in a door behind an employee arriving for the midnight shift. After locating the teen, the three then escape into nearby woods.

March 1, St. Louis City - Someone fires shots at two plainclothes members of the police's new Crime Suppression Unit as they drive an unmarked car on Labadie Ave. near Clara Ave. Two hours later, a policeman is ambushed in his

marked squad car at Lee Ave. and N. Taylor Ave. Someone there fires 14 shots at him - hitting his shoulder and chin - before escaping into the early morning darkness.

March 10, Columbia - Angry residents physically attack a neo-Nazi march with eggs, signs, and fists and steal their flags, signs, and hats. The march, organized by the Minneapolis-based National Socialist Movement and escorted by dozens of riot police, is successfully blocked despite the largest police operation in Columbia since the 1985 riots in the Douglas Park neighborhood.

March 14, Kirkwood - Kirkwood police arrest a white youth, Jeremy Proctor, for allegedly pouring paint on slain Officer William McEntee's memorial last July. The trial for the accused killer, a black youth, Kevin Johnson, is less than two weeks away.

March 15, St. Clair - More than a dozen illegal immigrants escape on foot into nearby woods after the truck they were riding in is pulled over by local police.

March 16, St. Louis City - In disgust at the impending State takeover of city schools, pissed-off students walk out
CHRONICLES, continued on page 7

A Tedium of Endnotes

¹ The international shit-list that constitutes this forum: representatives from the World Trade Organization (WTO), the EU, Cargill, Monsanto, Dow Chemical, Dupont, IGA, Norvis, Bunge, Boeing, Anheuser-Bush, Emerson Electric, Edward Jones, the Missouri Botanical Garden, the St. Louis Regional Chamber of Growth Association, St. Louis Univ., Washington Univ., Univ. of Missouri, Senator Bond, Senator Danforth, Congressman Gephardt, and agricultural officers from Peru, Indonesia, Belgium, Australia, Morocco, India, the US, and everywhere in-between. As well as many more capitalists, corporations, academics, politicians, bureaucrats, and NGOs (yes, those courageous do-gooders dedicated to Africa, women, rainforests, wildlife, ending poverty, spurring development, and ensuring a smoother, kinder capitalist exploitation). All gathered together to "reach positive action plans that will effect change, alleviate, and eventually solve many of the economical and agricultural problems that face many developing nations and people around the world," by way of exploiting workers, opening markets, privatizing water, expanding Genetically Modified Organisms, patenting life forms, eliminating trade barriers, and cutting environmental protections, price supports, and labor protection.

² The St. Louis region, known by some as the Biobelt (a pet project of Slay's), has become a center of plant and medical sciences, investment, and business. In 2001, a collection of civic and academic leaders formed the Coalition for Plant and Life Sciences, committing themselves to the Biobelt project. Aside from the WAF, the city is home to the Washington Univ. School of Medicine, St. Louis Univ. School of Medicine, Monsanto, Sigma-Aldrich, the Missouri Botanical Garden, Bunge North America, Centocor Biologics, Express Scripts, and Tyco Healthcare/Mallinckrodt. Many of those universities, corporations, and politicians have recently joined forces on the \$36 million (\$15 million of which the State provided) CORTEX building in mid-town, in an attempt to cement St. Louis' standing in the industry.

³ Widely considered the igniter of the so-called international anti-globalization movement, a movement with which WAF opponents identified, these Seattle riots/demonstrations successfully canceled negotiations at the WTO Ministerial Conference.

⁴ St. Louis Coptalk, an internet message board for police and their supporters, hosted discussions ranging from typical sadistic threats (often racist, sexist, and homophobic), to posting housing information of some demonstrators, to a debate over what their new 220-volt tasers (bought just for this event) would make victims do first: shit their pants or blow their teeth out. The opposition caught wind of this and re-posted the discussions on the St. Louis Independent Media Center website (www.stlimc.org), the local branch of the global Indymedia network of open publishing websites created during the upsurge of the anti-globalization movement. Coptalk web-administration, knowing bad PR when they saw it, removed the posts, but the damage had been done.

⁵ What was suspected at first was later verified when Freedom of Information Act documents uncovered two confidential sources (one went by the name "Six"). It is unclear who planted these informants, local cops, the FBI, or Allied. Allied has admitted to hiring private contractors for investigation with regards to the WAF protest. They also hinted at who these spies might have been: mall security officers with access to recording equipment and college kids short on cash.

⁶ A caravan of 3 police vans, 6 cars, a larger cargo van, and a board-up crew approached Bolozone first. Under the pretext of searching for violations, they suddenly appeared at both the

front and back doors. Sensing a raid, those inside slammed and locked the doors in the face of the police. Then, claiming they didn't need a warrant, police kicked in doors, cleared the house, trashed it (stealing many belongings, and oddly enough planted sponges with candles inserted into them), and then, identifying occupants as anarchists, cuffed and loaded them into vans headed to jail. Next, the building was boarded up and condemned. At CAMP, police were denied entry until they threatened to board it up too. Later, they presented a warrant for "items of crime for use during protest." Again, the building was trashed and belongings were stolen. At the rehearsal space, the cops claimed they were searching for squatters before entering and giving the place the same treatment, this time inexplicably leaving behind bottles of bleach. All told, they destroyed drumheads, slashed bike tires, pissed on clothes, filled a toilet with personal items then shit in it, smashed a video and a still camera, drew on personal photos, cut holes in sleeping bags, tore posters, and smashed picture frames. The 15 arrested were charged with "occupying a condemned building."

⁷ A police van blocked the path of 9 cyclists, mostly members of the eclectic Flying Rutabaga Circus Review, before officers demanded their bicycle licenses (which don't exist), and subsequently arrested them and confiscated their bikes, later to be returned with slashed tires. When it became obvious that the first charge didn't exist, the crime was changed to "obstructing the flow of traffic." Passengers in a van, returning from a rally at the Regional Commerce and Growth Assistance Office, were stopped and questioned. The van was searched turning up drug paraphernalia in the form of vitamin C. Three separate groups (uniformed cops, plain clothed detectives with badges, and plain clothed individuals without badges), with a list of targets, interrogated the passengers. The passengers were then ordered to hold their IDs next to their faces as the cops videotaped them. The driver was arrested for possession, failure to signal, a seatbelt violation, and an outstanding traffic ticket, and her van was impounded. Elsewhere, two pedestrians were stopped, questioned, and searched before being jailed for "public demonstration."

⁸ The "arsenal" included a box of roofing nails, a bag of stones, 3 circus whips, a slingshot, circus batons, butane, PVC pipes, and an empty beer-bottle with a dry rag in it- materials found in almost any house's basement. Other items confiscated that didn't make the prime-time cut included sponge balls, puppets, stilts, duffel bags, a kazoo, bikes, clay, a pottery kiln, various computer equipment, cell phone bills, journals, flags, books, climbing gear, DVDs, clown makeup, mirrors, respirators, and medication.

⁹ Police tactics included detaining, isolating, infiltrating, video-taping, threatening with weapons, assaulting, pulling off masks, following people out of town, and flaunting their latest weapons and riot-gear.

¹⁰ These are the same heroes that came to the aid of the local chapters of the Council of Conservative Citizens and the National Socialist Movement when their white supremacist free speech rights were violated.

¹¹ The day of protest was initiated in 1996 by the October 22nd Coalition to Stop Police... you know the rest. The coalition, which includes some questionable organizations (i.e. the Revolutionary Communist Party), seems to have little to no role in protests outside of their New York City-base beyond authorizing them.

¹² OBS is interested in the "creation of a society free of all forms of exploitation and oppression." Sign us up! Wait. They plan to accomplish this by "building a movement that fights for political empowerment and economic justice and the cultural dignity of the African American community, especially the black working class." The working class, black and other-

neighborhood “do everything they can to support the police.”

Kevin’s trial was well attended by family, friends, and supporters including a number of anarchists. On a few occasions, the tense, even antagonistic mood of the proceedings had to be paused to ensure handbills defending Kevin had not reached jurors and at the request of pro-McEntee people, to kick people out for wearing shirts in solidarity with Kevin or remembering Bam-Bam. Pro-Kevin and anti-police banners were hung from highway overpasses during rush-hour throughout the ordeal and graffiti continued. Kevin’s first trial ended in a hung jury, his second ended November 9, 2007, with a verdict of guilty for first-degree murder and a sentence of death. The day of the sentencing, the Prosecution’s office received threats in the mail on the lives of Judge Weisman, the jury, the prosecutors, and the Kirkwood police, and a similar note appeared in Kirkwood. Support for Kevin continues today on all the same fronts: high school students in Kirkwood recently started a “Free Kevin” Facebook page and local hip-hop artist Pancho Rucker, who performs wearing a shirt claiming “The State is the Real Monster,” recorded a song for Kevin²⁶.

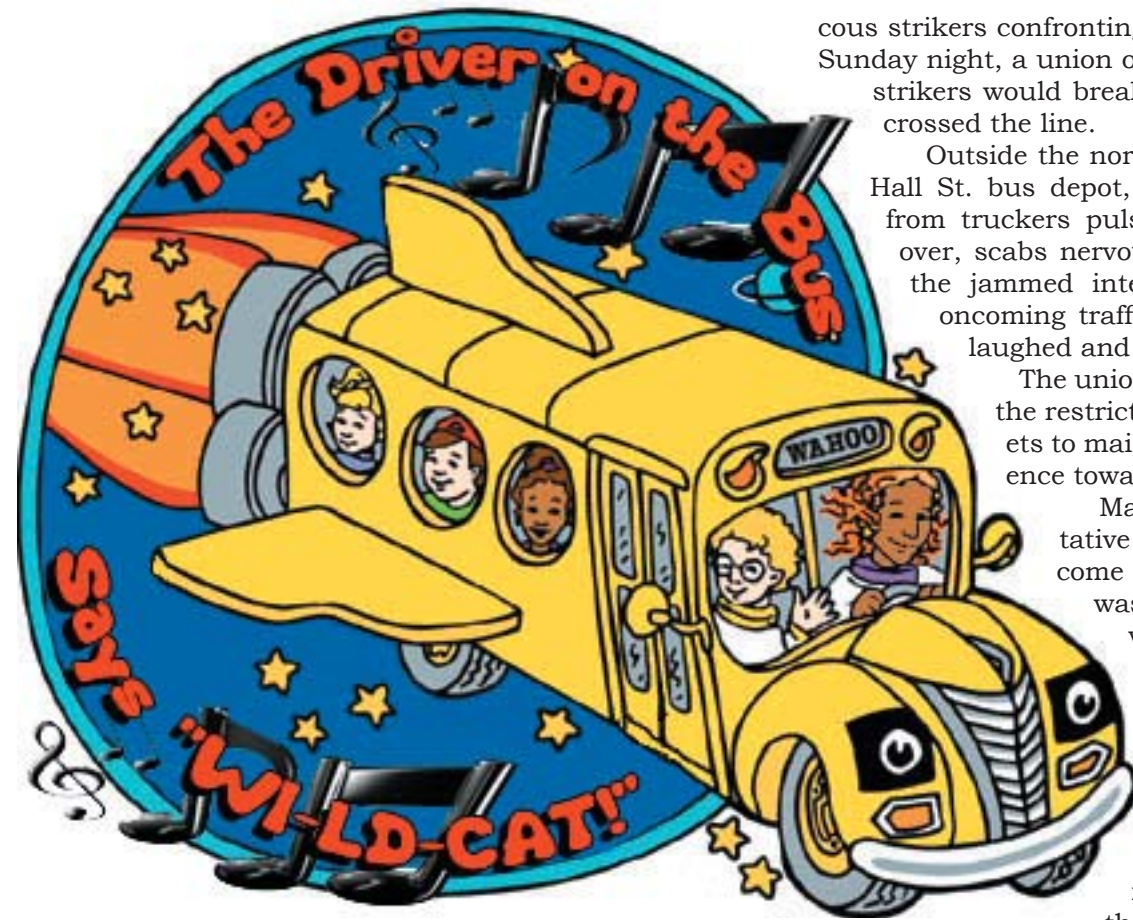
Kevin is an ordinary person who shares our problems with cops and the desire to be rid of them. The extraordinary fierceness with which he expressed those common emotions is what draws so many of us to the struggle. It’s also what has kept the usual liberal opportunists, searching for the next case of victimhood, at a safe distance. Unfortunately, Kevin didn’t have time to enlist the help of his neighborhood friends in his most recent attack, as he had in the past with marvelous results. Nevertheless, some amount of collectivity has occurred, with supporters defending Kevin and his action, expanding in piecemeal and irregular fashion their broader meaning. Coordination, in any significant way, has yet to occur, but the situation is ripe for it. This is a thrilling reality given the makeup of those entering into the struggle, coming from a diversity of locations, ages, races, and genders- thus possessing the capacity to bury those divisions alongside McEntee. The media has gone to unheard of lengths to blur that reality, grasping at any possible way to present the story that would not lead to a contagion of social conflict. The result has been a shocking failure. They have spun it as a story of race and revenge, and one between residents of Meacham Park and residents of Kirkwood. They have portrayed divisions within the neighborhood as being between white residents and black, between young and old, between drug dealers and their pro-police opponents. Ignoring, trivializing, or **18** misrepresenting all facts that point to the existence of different divisions, real ones:

those between rich and poor, and the equally irrefutable division amongst the poor between those who have made it their career to maintain class division (cops and community leaders) and those who seek to destroy it. Perhaps the most concrete, positive result of the struggle is that police today launch fewer incursions into Meacham Park. With more activity we could restrict their activities further, and maybe render them totally irrelevant.

RSVP



We dismiss the idea that there is a template for social struggle. With that said, the three stories presented contain three ingredients we see as essential to success; without them we would end up with either the same situation or worse. If we are to be successful, we will surely need the deep critique of the anti-WAF movement, the collectivity of the anti-police march, and the conflictuality of Kevin Johnson. It is up to us to add missing ingredients. Killing police without a critique of their role in society is as much of a dead-end as challenging the police with symbolic protest. And the same can be said for opposing the State and Capital, no matter how concerted the effort, if it lacks ferocity. There is no flawless current in which we can enlist to lead us out of the desert. We need to join struggles in the most participatory and active way possible, being critical but not dismissive, moving beyond both offers of sympathy and outsider critiques. We cannot measure how far we have come by counting friends on the “Free Kevin Johnson!” Myspace page, dollars paid by the Police Department for compensation, or even dead cops. In the deceptively simple act of calling “bullshit” at the media and the reformists, the recognition of action as invitation, and the resulting contagion, we find hope. These stories also reveal our power, both in opposing cops and delegitimizing mediators. They show us that the police are not invincible, that they can be put on the defensive, and that they can be made to back down. Also, that when we are on the offensive and fighting on our own terms, we are strong. Our actions are not dead news stories; they are part of a struggle in which our momentum can grow, actions synergistically impacting other actions. Being aggressive and expanding and generalizing conflict can keep us safe, bind the hands of the rich and powerful, and muzzle their guard-dogs (or don them in ridiculous clothing leaving them impotent).



Oddly enough, the TV stations took an interest in a gang of fed-up bus drivers who decided not to take the kids to school one Monday morning.

Each reporter prefaced their story of this wildcat strike by explaining just exactly what was meant by “wildcat.”

It had been a while.

Picketers held raggedy cardboard signs that flashed on the news too quickly to read. Dark, early morning video showed blurred images and muffled shouts of rau-

cous strikers confronting a scab bus leaving the lot. On Sunday night, a union official told the media she feared strikers would break the windows of her car if she crossed the line.

Outside the normally desolate landscape of the Hall St. bus depot, unremitting honks of support from truckers pulsed through the air. Over and over, scabs nervously sped past the pickets into the jammed intersection nearly colliding with oncoming traffic. And each time, the strikers laughed and cheered.

The union was absent, and thus, so were the restrictions normally imposed on pickets to maintain order; unchecked belligerence toward the company flourished.

Management, having no representative to speak with¹, was forced to come to the picket to figure out what was going on. A picketer exchanged words with him: “How much do they pay you to come here to lie to us?” “That offends me.” “It was intended to.”

In an extremely compromising position, management played the caring, but firm, parent: “No one will get fired as long as no one blocks the buses and no Laidlaw property

is damaged or vandalized.” Anyone who pauses long enough to think knows the more accurate statement: “No one will get fired as long as no one returns to work.” The festival of disabling the buses and stopping scab traffic are hardly a job threat as long as everyone participates or defends those who do.

An equal amount of hostility greeted union officials who dared come to the line. The reason was simple. Drivers endure exhausting 6-hour workdays punctuated by 3am alarm clocks, abusive school kids, and unpaid 4-hour breaks between drop-off and pick-up, with

When Wildcats Stalked the Region...

The following is a slice of recent history of area wildcat strikes particular to the workplace. As can be seen in previous *Chronicles* listings, unauthorized strikes like these also happen in other locales where people spend most of their time- schools, prisons, neighborhoods, etc.- all bypassing their respective unions. And for now we’ll only present workplace situations in which there *are* union representatives present which are actively ignored, subverted, and often attacked just as fiercely as those who manage and own their workplace. With this admittedly incomplete collection, we hope to re-inject the wildcat’s amphetamine legacy back into the rabble’s veins of possibility.

November 1965 - Machinists at McDonnell in St. Louis stage a 16-day wildcat strike forcing company approval of a new contract.

1970 - Freight truckers cause \$5.6 million in losses for St. Louis area trucking companies after a 6-week wildcat strike that turns violent at times and ultimately wins a significant wage gain.

1977 - Associated Wholesale Grocers warehouse workers stage an unauthorized walkout in Kansas City, KS.

May 2, 1979 - Just south of Marissa, IL, all 518 miners of Baldwin mine no. 1 walk out without union approval. Later that day, in a show of solidarity, all 70 miners at River King underground mine no. 1 in Freeburg, IL, do the same.

June 21 - July 16, 1989 - All 8,500 miners of Illinois’ 40 coal mines (including, but not limited to, mines in Pawnee, Albers, DuQuoin, Freeburg, Benton, and Keensburg) stage an industry-wide wildcat for nearly a

pay that's not enough to get by and too much to qualify for food-stamps or Medicaid. One driver described the technical intricacies of the situation: "They got us bent over, up against the wall with super glue and shit on our lips." Their contract expired, the union, yet again, didn't negotiate better pay and healthcare, and off the job they walked.

"If anyone talks to [the union official], I'm gonna smack you in the mouth," announced one of the defiant strikers as the official exited his car and approached. Others snickered about how his fancy car wouldn't last a night in their neighborhood. And still others chanted, "60 more days! 60 more days!" reminding the bureaucrat how long until they could legally drop their union. And when he finally found room to talk and asked for everyone's name to sign a document, one woman yelled at him, "You don't need to know my name! All you need to know is that I'm that black bitch!"

The lack of material and monetary support normally supplied by union funds was quickly and seamlessly filled by the self-organization of strikers and their supporters. At one end of the picket line: a make-shift kitchen stocked with bought and donated food. At the other: a tent serving as a gathering point- a sort of living room filled with lively discussions between drivers finally able to slow down and talk to one another, interrupting both the speed and isolation that anyone who has worked in the transportation industry knows all too well².

Without the normal union script of how strikers must formally relate to "outsiders," a friendly atmosphere between strikers and visitors/supporters persisted. A refreshing sight indeed for anyone who has ever visited a picket line and, like clockwork, been hurriedly met by a union representative eager to ensure divisions remain and everyone play their tireless roles³. The strikers and supporters didn't know where to start, how to talk - though most were willing and felt it important; to many, this situation had come without warning and was just too new.

In the face of such newness and its potential to paralyze, "outsiders" publicly burnt the union's latest contract offer together with the strikers, shared food

and signs with them, and stumbled awkwardly, though not embarrassingly, around the picket line- something a longer strike may have rounded out.

Seems like we all forgot what to do, how to talk to each other, how to strike, how to win. It's allowed for years of cutbacks and collective amnesia. But it's also allowed us to start fresh, un-haunted by blueprints.

"Scab!" yelled a striker as a bus lurched across the picket line.

"What's a scab?"

"Scabbin's like snitchin'."

A new language for a new time. But the relearning wasn't all that smooth. One husband-wife bus driver duo's strategy of one works, while the other strikes would have been seen as traitorous just 20 years ago by most fellow workers, but here it was seen more as a curious coping mechanism. And an early proposed banner slogan of "We're Not Immigrants, We're Americans," begged to ask if, during this decade or more of little strike activity, rebellious workers could actually forget the difference between a friend and enemy. But a little discussion and a little time later, the large banner fluttering in the wind proclaimed: "Laidlaw Unfair - Puts Workers Against One Another." Another went even further: "Shut the City Down! Drivers, Chrysler, Teachers- STRIKE!"

...Hardly unrealistic considering the unruly drivers' fearless propensity to act on their own, the upcoming contract deadline for irked Chrysler workers in Fenton, and the St. Louis City public school teachers' perpetual creep toward an illegal walkout. Such a scenario would have shamed the unsuccessful 1994 call for a city-wide general strike in nearby Decatur, IL, after workers at the 3 large plants of A.E. Staley, Caterpillar, and Bridgestone/Firestone struck or were locked out.

GM workers in Wentzville had, in mid-September, defiantly rejected a contract offer and walked the picket lines for several days. And with Chrysler's similar offer on the table for their workers, a rejection was likely, and would have been all the more likely if they knew of the bus drivers' intentions to extend their struggle.

month, ignoring repeated union officials' pleas to return to work. They join 52,000 other miners east of the Mississippi who had likewise walked out on their own in solidarity with striking miners in Pittston, Virginia. Miners there struck over cuts in pensions and mandatory Sunday work and overtime. A few weeks into their sometimes violent strike against the Pittston Coal Group, several miners were threatened with heavy fines and jail time which set off the string of solidarity wildcats across the country. Some haulers of coal (barge workers, rail workers, and truckers) in Illinois also don't show up for work after their workload disappears. Additionally, the miners in DuQuoin organize a caravan to join the picket lines in Pittston, where miners from throughout the eastern half of the U.S. converge to jam up many of the scab coal truck routes in the Virginia mountains.

February 6-8, 1990 - Seven months after walking out in solidarity with the Pittston miners, 500 coal miners of the Monterey Coal Company in Albers, IL again act without their union and down their tools - this time because the company picked on a fellow worker by ordering him to take a drug test.

May 4-11, 1990 - 2,000 TWA maintenance workers at Kansas City International Airport stage a week-long wildcat slowdown. The action is provoked by disciplinary action against a machinist for low productivity. One worker said the whole TWA system came very close to a system-wide wildcat and shutting everything down. Another worker described the slowdown: "It's very calm, everybody was there, but we just didn't do much." Company officials report they are 4 days behind work schedules as a result.

November 4, 1991 - Wildcat strikes (over, among other things, union inactivity) where pickets block the

hunting for Kevin and collecting any witnesses or evidence they could use to convict and kill him. The siege lasted days. Over 20 people witnessed the bloody ordeal but few cooperated. In the face of overwhelming force and coercion, these brave people protected Kevin- their friend and neighbor. Kevin safely escaped to North County, but thinking it was only a matter of time, he turned himself in a few days after the shooting.

The following year saw little else but attempts by the police and their media to portray the case as open-and-shut: McEntee as a hero and saint, and Kevin as a vengeful thug, a violent gangster, and a monster (a hard sell for the few paying attention). There was one small slip-up however. July 13, 2005. KATZ's morning show deejay's Kaos and Sylli Asz along with a slew of callers gave a more nuanced analysis of the situation. The deejays stopped short of defending Kevin's action, but callers from Meacham Park and Kirkwood talked openly about harassment, declaring, "McEntee had it coming, he got what he deserved." Both callers and deejays agreed that the media was never going to show sympathy for Kevin, deviate from supporting police, or get the perspective of the streets²².

July 12, 2006. One year after the death of McEntee, Kirkwood police, in an effort to put closure on the conflict and reaffirm their control over the city, dedicated a memorial to their former Sgt. Hours later, a man "unconnected" to the events (white and neither witness, friend, or family) busts the wound wide open. Unwilling to let the cops get away with reducing challenges to them and the system they maintain to an individual, Jeremy Proctor, armed with a can of paint, widens the struggle²³. Thanks to Jeremy, the police department spent the next day in a position Meacham Park residents are so accustomed to, on their knees, scrubbing the granite marker with toothbrushes.

October 2006. The State's Prosecuting Attorney, Robert McCulloch, building a case to kill Kevin in the upcoming murder trial, needed the help of eye-witnesses. Three people set out to make sure he couldn't get more information and kill their friend. Christopher Ward (Kevin's uncle), Anthony Davis, and one other, all from Meacham Park, descended on McCulloch's very office in the St. Louis County Courthouse on the 25th. There, they discovered 3 rats waiting to aid the State with their depositions. The collaborators were delivered a clear message: if solidarity isn't enough to convince you to keep your mouths shut, the threat of violence will have to suffice²⁴.

As Kevin's early 2007 trial approached, individuals and groups began to openly defend Kevin. T-shirts began popping up around the St. Louis area, claiming Kevin as a hero and mourning the loss of Bam-Bam. A group called "Free Kevin Johnson!" began printing shirts, stickers, and literature adding to the struggle a critique of the State and the role of police. Identifying with Kevin and his action, the group dismissed the notion of guilt and innocence (steering the conversation towards how to get Kevin back), and labeled the cops traitors to their class, who enforce laws that preserve class hierarchy. They also maintained (and still do) a website²⁵ that provides updates and analysis on Kevin's situation, ways to contact him, interviews with him, and invitations to attend court dates.

March 27, 2007. The morning the jury selection began, Kevin's supporters peppered South City with 2 large pieces of graffiti reading, "No Tears for McEntee" and "All Cops Are Bastards (ACAB)." Disturbed (in more ways than one) Block Captains and the media assured us, in Orwellian fashion, that people in their

mate at the county jail lowers a bed sheet out his window so his mother and girlfriend can send him up two screwdrivers and several hacksaw blades. Once in possession of the tools, he rips out a bench in his cell, tosses it through a window, and tries to dig his way through the wall using the screwdrivers, but not before guards can prevent his escape.

March 25, St. Peters - City officials report that its red light cameras, which rely on capturing images of drivers' faces to validate the tickets, have failed to generate expected revenue because of "duckers"- drivers who shield their faces as the camera snaps their photo. Furthermore, of those successfully photographed, 20% refuse to pay the fine.

March 28, Creve Coeur - A St. Louis County police speed radar trailer is rendered inoperable after being riddled with dents overnight.

April 2, St. Louis County - Truckers, driving three abreast at 40 mph, force I-270 to a crawl. The action, in protest of skyrocketing fuel prices, is part of an independent truckers' week-long, nationwide strike self-organized through CB radios and websites and using truck-stops as gathering points. Around the country, slow moving convoys clog the nation's arteries, sometimes facing tickets and arrests. Some commercial truckers also strike as a show of solidarity. Hauling companies delay shipments of freight out of fear the materials will be sabotaged. One local trucker explains, "You're getting screwed out of every cent you're trying to bring into your home because it all has to go into the pump... The upper-class oil men are making billions and we are struggling to put hotdogs on the table because we are so busy working our butts off trying to line their pockets." Similar area slowdowns occur through early May.

April 4-5, Belleville (IL) - Dozens of teens march through downtown outraged that the city shut down Illegal Tones, a popular youth hang-out and the only all-ages music venue in the city. Demonstrators' signs read, "Music Sees No Age!" "The City is at War," and "Is It Safe Yet? Can We Come Out and Play?" The following day, 50 teens and some parents jam the city council meeting in protest over the space's sudden closure.

April 18, Webster Groves - Webster University sophomore Alvaro "Covi" Coronel is caught shoplifting from a campus eatery for the second time in as many weeks. University officials subsequently fire him from his job as a resident assistant, evict him, and terminate his meal plan. Three days later, dozens of students respond with a rowdy protest outside the residence hall chanting "Covi, Covi!" and "We want justice!" and threaten more demonstrations. Backed into a corner, the university grants Covi free housing, pays him the rest of his RA stipend, and reactivates his meal plan at their own expense.

April 25, St. Joseph - In the early morning hours, vandals attack two of the city's three military recruiting centers, leaving behind 10 broken plate-glass windows and five shattered windshields of nearby government vehicles.

Jail during a nightly lock-down and escape through a gate leading to the courthouse.

December 16, Lawrence (KS) - The acting supervisor of U.S. Naval recruitment for the Kansas and Missouri area reports that over the last 4 years, the Lawrence recruitment center has been vandalized at least once a month, people have come inside the center and vandalized it in front of them, they have shut down on more than one occasion because of people blocking their doors, and they have installed bomb-proof glass, security alarms, panic buttons, and internal security cameras and have habitually replaced locks. Furthermore, he has personally had his tires slashed and car painted on *and* nearly their entire recruitment budget for 2007 has gone to security.

December 23, St. Louis City - 27th Ward Alderman Gregory Carter is assaulted and knocked out while pumping gas in his neighborhood. The gas station clerk does not call police because he is "too busy."

December 29, St. Louis City - An early morning arson fire destroys Copia Urban Winery in the swank Washington Ave. Loft District. Police suspect workers may have been involved, including a fired busboy who is still owed money that the owner has refused to pay.

2008

February 7, Kirkwood - Meacham Park resident Charles "Cookie" Thornton shoots and kills Kirkwood cop William Biggs across from the police station and takes the cop's gun before entering the City Council meeting in City Hall. There, he conceals his weapons with a protest sign before assassinating another Kirkwood cop, Tom Ballman, two city council members, Connie Karr and Michael H.T. Lynch, and Public Works Director Ken Yost. Mayor Mike Swaboda also gets a couple bullets in his head, but somehow survives. Shouting "All we want is justice!" throughout the ordeal, Cookie himself is shot to death by responding police. The next day his brother proclaims, "This was an act of war by my brother. He had people that he was in battle with." Years of Cookie's animated protests against continual racist harassment and fines by Kirkwood authorities had gone unanswered. At a town hall meeting in the Meacham Park neighborhood in the following days, many openly sympathize with Cookie's actions, some even calling him a "hero." In light of these killings and the 2005 killing of Kirkwood cop William McEntee, Kirkwood Police Chief, Jack Plummer concedes, "I'm real tired of burying policemen. I can tell you that."

February 19, Wentzville - At 2am, police, collecting evidence inside a VFW Hall from a burglary earlier that night, are scared but unharmed by a molotov cocktail hurled at them through a nearby window.

March 6, Spanish Lake - Three youths en route from Hillsboro to the Missouri Hills juvenile detention facility outwit a guard and jump off their bus to freedom.

March 17, St. Charles - A 17 year-old in-

tation to demonstrate both their love for Kevin and hatred for cops and for the order they maintain. Crossing real but arbitrary (and always in the service of the State and Capital) divides of race, family, location, gender, and culture with ease, they identified with Kevin and entered the struggle, expanding its depth and scope.

Meacham Park is a small working-class predominantly black neighborhood where conflict with the forces of law is as familiar as the struggle with economic forces. In 1991, the neighboring upper middle-class city of Kirkwood curiously annexed the area. A short time later the motivation became clear as the State seized half of Meacham Park via Eminent Domain, before turning it over to OPUS Corporation for redevelopment. The State granted \$17 million in Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to their partners at OPUS (taken over in 1995 by DESCO Group) for the "Meacham Park Redevelopment Plan." In the end, 62 tenants and homeowners were relocated, their houses destroyed and lives disrupted. On the 55-acre ruins they built 2 soul-sucking shopping centers.

In the late '90s a 12 year-old Kevin Johnson moved to Meacham Park and discovered it to be a punching bag for Kirkwood police. To relieve stress and boredom cops would routinely invade the area, keeping residents in their place and targeting kids. Kevin found his way onto their crowded list of prey. Of the many violent police, two had a special vendetta against Kevin, Officers McEntee and Chris Nelson²⁰. They threatened his life, hit him with cars, chased him down like an animal, and shoved guns in his face, but they couldn't break him. Kevin, not content to remain a victim, began to fight back: running from police whenever they came searching, not cooperating with them when they pressed for information, physically stopping them from arresting friends, and even participating in a successful ambush armed with rocks and bricks²¹. As the conflict escalated Kevin got a gun for protection.

Summer 2005. After months of unsuccessful attempts to nail Kevin for a probation violation, police spotted his car at his grandmother's house. From a neighboring house Kevin watched the ensuing tragedy unfold. Kevin's grandmother ran outside, pleading for the police to call an ambulance. Inside laid Kevin's 12 year-old brother Joseph (aka Bam-Bam), collapsed on the floor due to his heart condition. After running the rest of the car's information the police radioed for an ambulance, but did nothing more to help the boy, not even check his pulse or turn him face-up. Paramedics arrived 20 minutes later and attempted to resuscitate Bam-Bam as the cops, under orders from McEntee, searched the house for Kevin, stepping over the boy in the process. Kevin's mother, overcome with grief, entered the scene and was callously and violently removed from her dying son by McEntee. Out of options, paramedics loaded Bam-Bam into an ambulance, and the cops exited the house empty-handed. On their way out, McEntee and Nelson noticed Kevin in the neighboring window and greeted him with a grin. Hours later, unwilling to let routine be disrupted, McEntee was out in the streets of Meacham Park harassing a group of kids. A mere 15 feet away stood Kevin. Overwhelmed and emotionally exhausted with news of his brother's death, he decided to walk away from the situation. When McEntee noticed Kevin he shot him that same snide grin. A torrent of abuse at the hands of police flashed in Kevin's mind, and he returned the Sergeant's gesture with a rain of hellfire, 8 deadly rounds worth.

Immediately after the shooting, helicopters, rolling swat teams, and an army of police in full riot gear with search dogs invaded Meacham Park. They went door-to-door, weapons drawn,

All it would have taken was (along with just reading the newspaper to know *when* they were threatening to walk out) some people to drive out to Fenton to communicate this.

The teachers have been flirting with strike action for years now, plagued by Missouri state law making it illegal for public education workers to do anything but work. At the time of the Laidlaw strike, a group of teachers was in fact agitating for a concurrent sympathy wildcat strike. But teachers' union officials' claims of "paid, outside agitators attempting to derail the union," quashed that one immediately apparent hope for the prolongment and extension of the Laidlaw strike. Unfortunately, news of all this didn't surface until weeks later.

It was all happening too fast. How to convince the teachers to strike? Much less the Chrysler workers. These were two days of accelerated fervor and as a result, mistakes were of course made. On Tuesday night, 50 people from the pickets flooded what they thought was a teachers' union meeting in a dicey stab to convince teachers to join them and extend the strike. Instead, it was the meeting of the *defunct* school board- the renegade board who has hollowly insisted its legitimacy since the state takeover of the city schools. Barring the unlikely possibility that there was in fact a room full of teachers at a union meeting somewhere in the city that night, a clumsier, simpler, more direct way would have been to send pickets outside the schools the next morning to talk with teachers or even the kids, who've shown a bit more willingness to strike recently. (In this case, the tension between drivers and kids would have had to be overcome- but hey, what



better time than then?) Or the 50 picketers could have hijacked the bureaucratic formalities of the meeting and called for any teachers present to discuss with them the possibilities of formulating more steps to, in fact, shut the city down.

Instead what happened was the important people spoke- professional activists, school board members, and even the union leaders- and the strikers just responded rowdily. (Though they were finally able to say "Fuck Laidlaw and our union!" publicly and smile and not fear the consequences.) So much energy and collective power though not a clue where to channel it. But such statements can only be made with the clear head that time allows- a testament to holding out as long as possible to open up new avenues of struggle.

The initial impulse to strike for *one* day as a show of rampant dissatisfaction with union leadership proved too enjoyable and heartening to neglect a day two. And within the course of those two days, new activities and ideas to extend and make the strike more potent began to emerge. By Tuesday, large banners replaced cardboard signs, supporters heckled scabs and even stoned their buses across town in South City, Laidlaw drivers in Kansas were contacted with the hopes of a sympathy walkout there, and new ideas of squirting scab buses with water guns and extending the strike to teachers and auto workers were considered⁴.

The antagonism was there. The collective power was there. The fun was even there. "We're gonna stay out until we get what we want," a driver said Tuesday morning. Twenty-four hours and no concessions later, everyone was back behind the wheel, startled by their own initiative and banking on the promise of

gates with their fire barrels, at Caterpillar plants in East Peoria and Decatur, eventually spread from those 2,400 workers to all of the company's 14,000 workers, after the union (UAW), realizing its growing irrelevance, quickly approves strike activity, which lasts 163 days.

September 1993 - June 1994 - In this time, nine wildcat strikes occur at Caterpillar's plant in Mapleton, IL. The conflict is punctuated by the workers' continuous antagonism toward the company. When not striking, they march into work chanting anti-Caterpillar slogans and sporting "No contract, No peace!" T-shirts. Photos of executives defaced with crosshairs appear regularly around the plant.

November 12, 1993 - Following September's rolling truck blockades in Indiana and Ohio, half a million independent truckers, outraged at the latest fuel hike, stage a nationwide wildcat strike. Organization of the strike is carried out through CB radios, anonymous flyers at truck-stops, and messages on toll-free hotlines. Scab trucks are attacked with rocks and gunfire in Ohio and scab tires are slashed around the country. Missouri Highway Patrol responds by blanketing the I-70 corridor between St. Louis and Kansas City with unmarked cars to escort scab drivers.

October 8, 1997 - One thousand Kansas City Southern Railway conductors, brakemen, and railway workers shutdown the 2,900-mile rail system between Kansas City and Shreveport, LA, with a spontaneous walkout after the company president singles out, harasses, and threatens 7 black workers, before eliminating their jobs.

switching unions in 60 days. It's easy to ask, "What do you need a legal union for when you can organize yourselves to get what you want?"- but quite another thing to answer. Escaping from the shadows of representation, the strikers needed validation for their sparkling acts and ideas- to not feel isolated and crazy⁵. They pushed to generalize the strike- to spread their "craziness"- to end this isolation.

A couple dozen more supporters, some pro-strike graffiti, a sympathy walkout, or knowing a *Wednesday* strike at Chrysler was brewing could have prolonged such hope and thrust the strike into new territory. With no rules of engagement, the school bus picketers' actions were limited only by the ever-present city cop car camped out nearby. An extended refusal to return to work would have presented the opportunity for growing militancy. The gates could have been blockaded. Roving pickets could have confronted scab drivers at schools and at key intersections. On city streets, more buses could have been damaged as happened during a city bus drivers' strike in Poland a couple months prior and in Barcelona a month later. Buses could have been pushed into the river or, to take a lesson from Lohr drivers, burned. And most importantly, the strike could have spread.

Two days was not enough time to uncover the answers to larger questions of what work we are doing, how to transform that into work *we want to be doing*, and *why* the company, the union, the school board, and the media pled for the workers to dialogue through a mediator. And seemingly, only the persistence of acting for ourselves can promise that possibility of completely transforming our dominant social activity. For the drivers, questions of what work they are doing only reached the point of complaining about violent kids - not why the kids are violent and their relationship with forced schooling. If the teachers had wildcatted, schools would have been shut down completely. Kids, teachers, drivers, and custodians would be forced to find new ways to spend their time, talk excitedly, and question everything.

But such potentials were deliberately undercut by

the company, union bureaucrats, and even some charismatic workers (perhaps aspiring union bureaucrats themselves) who all said: "Back to work, it's better to work things out from there." ...And by those certain teachers (and their union) who silenced the others of them who wanted to wildcat. The time was now. Not later. Those who wish to wait until later only do so to bide time to set up their own agenda. Those who act now act for themselves- beneath and against the wishes of the bosses and the mediators- and spur the rest of us to do the same. If we seem incapable of doing so, it's not because we are not *able* to, but because we have forgotten how.

The slumbering wildcat must relearn its power after a decade or more of hibernation. And must rediscover the joys of reproduction.

¹ One striker said repeatedly, "This is my third union job... You can't just send one person in there [to negotiate the contract]. If one person goes, we all gotta go." Throughout the strike, the drivers never sent anyone as a representative in to negotiate, neither a union official nor one of their own.

² These weren't restaurant workers who see each other continually at work. These were workers who only see each other at the time-clock, and who spend most of their workday alone in their bus. Incredibly, it is they who have taken the boldest collective workplace action this city has seen in quite a while- and even more so, considering the previous two bus driver wildcat strikes at Laidlaw and Durham in the last 10 years.

³ Several months prior, locked-out airline refuelers had picketed outside Lambert. When offered a large food donation in the chance absence of a union official, they immediately remarked, "We aren't allowed to have food out here." Discouragingly, this age of incapacitation and defeat has seeped so deeply into the heads of some workers that the union's presence is no longer necessary to enforce its own rules.

⁴ The most exciting idea that never saw fruition was a supporter being hired as a scab only to, on their first day of work, abandon and disable their vehicle right outside the company gate, thereby stopping the flow of scab traffic.

⁵ For, shouldn't forcing people to wake at 4am, *not* acting for ourselves, be the index for madness?

Final Note: Laidlaw is now known as "First Student."

September 16-18, 1998 - 260 of 300 Laidlaw International school bus drivers in St. Louis City stage a 3-day strike against stalled contract talks and poor wages and benefits. About half of the city's students are absent from school.

January 7, 2000 - 1,100 Daimler-Chrysler second-shift workers walk out and force the shutdown of their Fenton plant.

September 12, 2003 - 90 of 100 wallpaper and flooring printing workers at Decorative Surfaces International in Dupo, IL, storm out after a fellow worker is demoted rather than given health insurance. Workers are also upset over continual denials of sick leave and vacation pay.

February 16, 2006 - Amidst disputes over pay, reduced hours and routes, and health insurance, 30 Durham School Services school bus drivers stage an unauthorized strike affecting 11 St. Louis County school districts.

October 8-9, 2007 - In St. Louis City, 500 of 870 Laidlaw International bus drivers and monitors walk out over low wages, lack of benefits, and disgust with their union. More than half the bus routes are abandoned.

April 2, 2008 - Independent truckers slow traffic to a crawl on I-270 as part of week-long nationwide strike against rising fuel costs. The activity is carried out with "no central coordination" and both Teamsters union officials and the independent truck drivers group (Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association) distance themselves from the protests.

run at a door that the security has not yet reached. The police finally step in. Over the push and pull, the organizers' calls for de-escalation are sadly granted. Mediation wins. The march returns to the park, followed by police not even attempting to direct or contain it. The march has successfully policed itself. Nothing more to see here¹⁹.

That's not entirely true. The most important element of the march is something difficult to convey in words and impossible to relate with a play-by-play: *collectivity*. Despite the varied and conflicting demands and perspectives, from COB supporters to anarchists, from victims of racist police brutality to white people initially uncomfortable with the reality of white supremacy, once feet hit the asphalt those divisions waned. Efforts by CAPCAR and OBS to declare ownership over *our* rage against the police and efforts to stifle and manage *our* opposition undoubtedly failed, and we hope one day their meddling in our fire proves fatal. People won a glimpse at the only way out of this mess- collective action against the common enemy. Judging by the number of people with smiles on their faces and tears of joy running down their cheeks, more than a few learned something about who their allies truly are. The reformist managers of the protest succeeded in eking out the victory, but to some, their attempts to divide us tactically fell just short of irrelevant. Compared to other actions highlighted in this publication, this may seem just a trivial story of untapped potential and, at most, a small victory. The march, however, contains within it exactly that precious element which is absent from nearly all of those other actions, its deficiency rendering those actions weak and contained; in an arson this element is referred to as the accelerant. Paradoxically, we even remember a leader grinning ear-to-ear during the scuffle at the America's Center, just before, remembering his role, he managed to restrain himself. But for the rest of us who have tasted such potential, returning to the boring dead-ends of politics based on reform and identity have become impossible.

Part 3:



July 5, 2005, Meacham Park, Kirkwood. Summoning up a lifetime's worth of rage against humiliation and assaults at the hands of police, Kevin Johnson demanded the life of Sgt. William McEntee. In the following years, others saw this action as an invi-

September 23, St. Louis City - Surrealist saboteurs toss bricks and rocks through 3 large windows of "phd," a new art gallery on Cherokee St.'s Antique Row. They leave behind a message "saying that the building was condemned for violating the poetic spirit of the universe." Phd owner, Philip Hitchcock, who pays Hi-Tech Security to patrol the area during his art exhibitions, concludes, "The people around here are animals."

October 8-9, St. Louis City - School bus drivers at Laidlaw stage a rowdy 2-day wildcat strike after their contract expired over the weekend. Frustrated with their union's failure to negotiate health insurance and higher pay, workers take matters into their own hands and, refusing to drive, instead picket the 2 bus depots with homemade signs. Participation is widespread as only 20 buses of the normal 300 leave the lots. The night before, the union president, when asked if the union would honor the unsanctioned picket line said, "If I get there and can't get across the line, I'm not gonna try to cross it... because I can't let them break the windows out of my car." Throughout the strike, the main union official is jeered and proposals he brings to the line are ripped up or burned.

October 20, St. Louis City - Nine youngsters overpower a guard, grab her keys, unlock an outside door, and jump a chain-link fence to successfully escape their imprisonment at the Hogan Street Regional Youth Center, just north of downtown.

November 5, Cape Girardeau - A weekend graffiti spree by "Ninja" and "Renegade" covers the city in messages reading "Killing our own for oil," "Vanity is not a commodity," and many others, some of which taunt local police.

November 9, Kirkwood - St. Louis County courts sentence Kevin Johnson to death in the murder of cop William McEntee. The St. Louis County Prosecutor's Office receives a letter in the mail containing death threats for the prosecutors, the judge, the jury, and Kirkwood police. Johnson's Kirkwood neighborhood of Meacham Park broils with anger at the verdict and sentence. Journalists report residents openly insulting police and otherwise refusing to speak to the press which has vilified Johnson for the past 2 years. "McEntee, c'est la vie," some say. Police themselves hardly patrol the neighborhood since this second trial began.

November 12, De Soto - Vandals cause the cancellation of elementary and middle school in this small town by inflicting \$3000 worth of damages to school buses- stealing two-way radios, breaking windows and mirrors, and emptying fire extinguishers in 5 of the district's 9 buses.

November 16, Madison County (IL) - A guard at the county jail catches an inmate tunneling (with a metal soap tray) under his bed and beneath the jail's wall in a quest for freedom.

December 6, Belleville (IL) - Six cashiers at Target are accused of working together to steal from the store by under-ringing thousands of dollars worth of merchandise for each other.

December 15, Quincy (IL) - Two inmates overpower guards at the Adams County

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intervene in his arrest.

June 10, St. Louis City - Two cellmates at the St. Louis Justice Center pour piss, shit, and lotion on the floor inside and outside their cell and then yell threats at the guards. Responding to the commotion, the guards are met with a slippery floor and blows to the head from a sharp metal object.

June 12, St. Charles - Officials at the St. Charles County Sheriff's training center discover people had broken in and stolen large amounts of C4, dynamite, igniters, and safety fuses.

June 13, St. Louis City - An early morning arson fire at the corner on Lindell Blvd. and Vandeventer Ave. in Midtown destroys an under-construction \$32 million 200-unit luxury apartment and retail space development and a nearby Arby's. Officials suspect worker grumbings over the hiring of non-union labor may be to blame. The union chief goes out of his way to condemn the fire and vows to help developers and police find those responsible for the \$12 million fire. Local semi-celebrity Thomas Crone even goes so far as to worriedly hand over copies of *War on Misery* #2, which featured an article defending a rash of arsons against similar developments, to his friends in the police department! This arson, in addition to the previous ones, have managed to push the sales of these condominiums deep into the housing crisis, far enough to lose buyers and significantly devalue what has been rebuilt.

June 19, St. Louis City - In the 4200 block of North 11th St., a man fires a shot into a police officer's cruiser who had ordered him to stop because he was "lurking." A foot chase and more gunshots from both parties ensue but the man eventually escapes into thick brush despite the use of police dogs.

July 19, St. Louis City - Police catch two of three suspected graffiti artists painting the new Tamm Ave./I-64 overpass in the early morning hours. In the weeks following the media vilification of the two suspects, including a Fox news on-the-scene video of their arrests, stickers and graffiti pop up city-wide city calling for the graffiti bombing of Tamm Ave. The proceeding weeks see the overpass hit with more and more graffiti.

July 23, Cape Girardeau - Letters are stolen from the city's yet-to-be-opened new federal courthouse's two large signs. The signs are left cryptically proclaiming, "UNITE STATE CUT-HOUSE."

August 15, St. Louis City - In the late night hours, police officer Norvelle Brown, patrolling solo near Kingshighway Blvd. and Martin Luther King Jr. Dr., is shot dead after getting out of his squad car to question several youths. The St. Louis NAACP President publicly urges killer to turn himself in. The 22 year-old cop was widely known to have snatched on many of his high school friends just after his Police Academy graduation.

September 14, Sullivan - Police, responding to a vandalism complaint at a vacant rental home, locate a burglary suspect taking a bath in the home.

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the raids on the opponents of the WAF happened that May. Many saw this march as an opportunity to score a victory after attacks on themselves and their movements. Additionally, fresh in the marchers' minds was the police shooting of Jerome Johnson and his subsequent trial¹⁴. Not to say that only "bad cops" committing atrocities got reacted to, or that action against the police must be reactive, because, to many marchers, the very existence of the police warranted direct confrontation. Still, we cannot overlook the role these events played in informing zeitgeist.

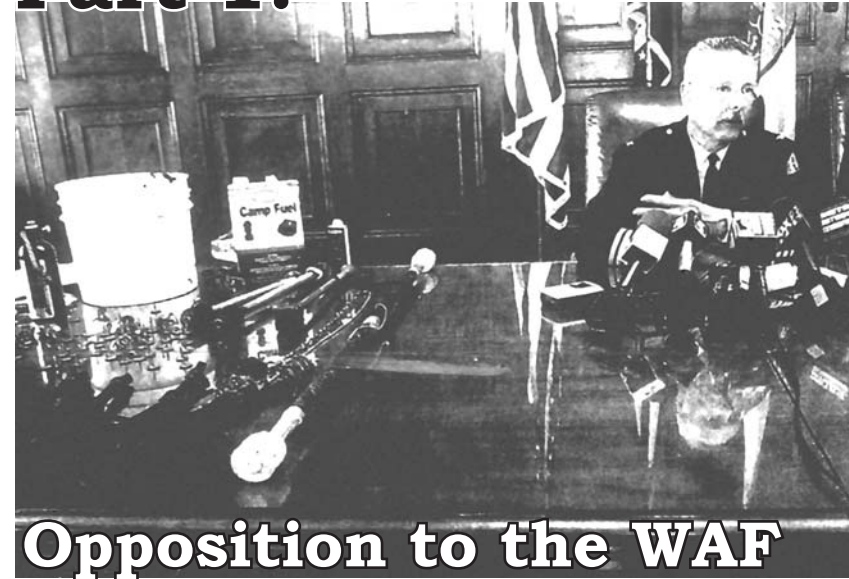
The rally kicked off with speeches by various opportunists and professional activists including radio talk-show host Lizz Brown, a leader of CAPCAR Jamala Rogers, and Reverend Larry Rice. After each had their time to hock their snake oil, a few real people, victims of police repression and proponents of action, were afforded the bullhorn. An effigy of the St. Louis "white, racist power structure"¹⁵ hung from a tree as people ambled around finding old friends and making new ones. A large number of people, many black-clad anarchists, hailing from the militant anti-war and anti-WAF movements, came equipped with masks (as did many others), helmets, and plastic shields¹⁶. Some individuals distributed bandanas and sunglasses for concealment, others a leaflet articulating an expanded critique of police¹⁷. When the last speaker finished, the effigy was set ablaze to a roar of voices, a clanging of shields, and some nervousness of a possible police response. Amidst this buzz of activity, a small number of people, possibly fearing others might realize what side of the class war they were on, left, "offended" by the action¹⁸. Once the flames subsided, marchers grabbed signs, banners, flags, shields, drums, and crosses bearing names of victims of the police and, despite the efforts of mediating forces (both the leadership of the march and the police) spilled into the downtown streets.

Police flanked the march, feebly attempting to steer it onto the sidewalk, but soon became content to allow it. The usual punches and kicks thrown at the cops through a strategically placed banner and the volleys of spit, which had normally been enough to push the situation into the red, this time did nothing. The march moved down Market St. with several cops shadowing it on bike and motorcycle; a look down side streets revealed many lurking cop cars and vans. After turning north at Union Station, the march hit Washington Ave. where a dozen cop cars waited. Ranks were tightened and people braced for conflict, yet neither side succumbed to the temptation to throw the first blow. Washington Ave., then at the early stages of gentrification with its new cobblestone lane ripe for action against those who control both the city and the cops, was sadly greeted with the same hesitation. Then, America's Center arrived.

New speakers tell old stories. The police collect, unveiling large numbers, but keep a sizable distance. The Center has a number of private cops to defend it, and the police seem willing to let them handle the situation. A leader attempts to pull open a door to the building. A security guard plays tug-of-war with him from the inside. Informational flyers about the boycott are launched into the building and strewn all about the lobby. Security guards move in to secure doors with heavy locks and chains. Finally, the mood shifts. Chants evolve from "Shut it Down!" to "Burn it Down!" Confidence grows as convention-goers flee deeper inside the building. Security forms ranks inside. Groups begin pounding on glass doors with fists, boots, and flagpoles. Glass plates bend with each strike, the breaking point is near. "We 'bout to bust dis motha-fucker wide open!" A group from the Black Bloc makes a

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Part 1:



Opposition to the WAF

May 2003. St. Louis was preparing for war. The World Agricultural Forum, a *non-profit* organization made up of people and corporations who do nothing but *profit* off us, were set to have their May 18th World Congress at Union Station's Hyatt Hotel to devise new ways to, of all things, more efficiently *profit* off of us. To clarify, the WAF exists to "partner" industry, research institutions, multi-governmental organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations, policy makers, and trade ministers all with ties to agriculture¹. They seek to celebrate that happy marriage between State and Capital which is in perpetual honeymoon. Many of St. Louis' elite have a particular interest in that celebration². Behind the scenes, a group of opponents, ranging from green-capitalists interested in getting organic foods into markets, to anarchists determined to destroy those who tweak, commodify, and profit off water, land, and life itself, were plotting to crash the ceremony. At the same time, a coalition of police, local government, national intelligence agencies, media, and a private security firm were rearing to destroy that opposition and interfere with their message.

Before the Forum took place, the attack dogs of Capital bit, raiding and condemning buildings and threatening and assaulting opponents. The henchmen were successful. The Congress took place and so did the protest, but with sparse attendance and energy and providing little opposition. Discussion, both in the media and outside of it, was transformed into, "Police out of line, protesters innocent," thus fixating on the violence of police and the potential violence of protesters, instead of what had brought both sides here: the violence of Capital. In the wake of the repression, some of the WAF opponents chose to retaliate against the police with a still pending lawsuit.

The preemptive strike started with the WAF hiring the Clayton-based international security consulting firm Allied Intelligence, Inc. and appointing its president Michael Intravia as Head of Security. Allied are essentially mercenaries- police for hire- regularly employed to protect executives' lives, images, and assets. Allied flew in police from Washington DC and Seattle (the latter being veterans of the city's 1999 WTO riots³) to prepare their St. Louis counterparts for what they would face. Police Chief Mokwa, Mayor Slay, and officers from the Washington DC, Seattle, and St. Louis police departments held a strategy session selecting Deputy

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of two high schools, Gateway High School and Soldan High School. Meanwhile at City Hall, over a dozen high school students, furious about the takeover, continue their 5-day occupation of the Mayor's office lobby. The mayor, who calls police in, and students each accuse the other of being "disrespectful." And in response to accusations that adults are using the students as pawns, student Kelly Frazier says: "We are sick and tired of hearing that. We are not being manipulated by adults and to be honest we feel this is insulting. We can stand on our own two feet and talk for ourselves."

March 17, Bel-Nor - Under the cover of night, Normandie Golf Club's golf course is attacked. Damages totaling \$4500 result from the dismantling of a wooden bridge, which is later thrown into a lake, the tearing down of tee markers and ball washers, and the digging of holes on the greens.

March 21, St. Louis City - Suspicious fires erupt near two different elevator shafts in an under construction loft building at 16th St. and Locust St.

March 21, St. Louis City - The owner of Centenary Tower Apartments in Midtown sends eviction notices to hundreds of residents after a growing number of people began squatting the building. Also, many surveillance cameras in the building are turned in the wrong direction and their wires severed.

March 23, St. Louis City - City refuse workers announce their refusal to participate in the city's coveted Operation Brightside Blitz to clean up neighborhoods. They demand overtime pay for working on that extra Saturday.

March 23, Jefferson City - St. Louis City high school students, showing a growing lack of respect for the adults telling them what's best for them, interrupt the Missouri School Board meeting about stripping city schools of accreditation. In opposition to the impending State takeover of city schools, students who made the bus trip to the state capital chant "No takeover!" from their seats before spilling onto the floor and preventing the meeting from continuing. Board members call for police and security to hold back the angry youth. A scuffle ensues and police chase down, tackle, and mace a student they accuse of assaulting a cop. Another student later says "I feel now sometimes it takes more for... students to be heard. I've realized that no matter what you have to do, some adults still won't listen to you."

March 24, St. Louis City - Someone rolls up alongside a uniformed off-duty St. Louis police officer in his personal car on I-55 at 7th St. and fires shots, wounding him.

March 25, St. Louis City - One day before the start of Kevin "Rockhead" Johnson's trial for the killing of Kirkwood cop William McEntee, graffiti appears in south St. Louis reading, "No tears for McEntee" and "All Cops are Bastards." St. Louis Police Officers' Association president, Kevin Ahlbrand, tells KTVI the graffiti is "the wave of the future." Several days later, above 3 different interstates, 4 large banners reading "Fire to the

Prisons. Free Rockhead." greet the early morning rush hour.

March 26-29, Bellefontaine Neighbors - For four straight days, hundreds of Riverview Gardens High School students walk out of school in protest of the unexplained replacement of a their principal. On the second day of the walk-outs, after someone pulls the fire alarm, 300 students, despite the pleas from school officials and student leaders, walk out forcing the cancellation of classes for that day. On the last two days, students march two miles in the street to the Riverview Gardens Central Offices in Moline Acres, ending in a shouting match with a line of police. Senior Brian Turner says, "They either meet our demands, or they'll see civil disobedience like they've never seen before." The students also threaten to boycott the standardized state MAP tests in the coming weeks.

March 28, Affton - A worker who recently quit his job at Manor Chemical Company allegedly returns and sets fire to one of the chemical storage tanks.

March 28, Alto Pass (IL) - Over the past couple weeks, vandals have forced the owners of the towering 111-foot cross to scramble to find enough money to upkeep the structure. Every light and fixture is smashed causing thousands of dollars worth of damage and porcelain panels of the cross are knocked off.

March 30, Venice (IL) - Saying, "We're not slaves," city street department workers refuse the mayor's order to clean curbsides by hand with brooms and shovels. The mayor responds by suspending all workers for a day.

April 1, St. Charles - Several people break into six trailers at Castlio Elementary School, smash a television, spray fire extinguishers, and steal two laptop computers.

April 1, Columbia (IL) & St. Charles - Concrete Resources plants on both sides of the Mississippi are sabotaged almost simultaneously by the addition of water to five giant silos storing dry concrete mix. The simple acts cause one plant to shut down for 10 days and the other for a month. The concrete company says the damage is "a huge financial burden" of \$400,000.

April 1, St. Louis County - Fifty angry family and friends of a motorcyclist, who lost one of his legs after a police cruiser collided with him, protest in the street outside a north St. Louis County police station demanding justice.

April 3, Citywide - Over the past six days, police throughout the region report five separate incidents of officers coming under fire. When questioned about the upsurge in armed attacks against St. Louis police since the beginning of 2005, Police Chief Joe Mokwa says "Having officers shot at is so common that I'm ashamed to say I don't even keep familiar with those statistics." One North City resident explains, "[The cops are] going to roll up in here and hassle everybody on the street for nothin', even the young children. They might club you or taser you or shoot you. If they're going to fire at you, you might as well fire at them before they fire at you." Another resident explains, "These kids, they look at the police like

Chief Everett Page to head up the "WAF Team." Next, they moved to their media outlets who, aiming to stir-up fear and xenophobia, began broadcasting images from the WTO riots and threats of an invasion of 50,000 violent anarchists from Seattle. Cops, anxious over images of trounced Seattle police, began psyching each other up⁴. The Missouri State Highway Patrol and the St. Louis County Police Department were enlisted, and the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security were alerted. The monitoring of websites and houses of organizers and hosts for visiting demonstrators began, and at least 2 snitches were planted into the movement⁵. Cops encouraged downtown residents and business owners to remain vigilant and immediately report any news of strangers taking over vacant property. The last addition to the alliance proved to be both strange and effective: the St. Louis Building Commission. John MacEnulty, a building inspector, was enlisted in the "Building Code Violation Enforcement Plan."

With a list of three South City targets, a small army of cops (sans name tags) and MacEnulty went to work on May 16, two days before the Congress. The Bolozone (a collectivized house), the Community Arts and Media Project (a community center and apartment), and a band rehearsal space were hit by the raiding party. All three were thoroughly ransacked, possessions were seized, and people inside were harassed and/or arrested⁶. Simultaneously, gangs of police patrolled in a large area around the buildings, arresting and detaining people suspected of being part of the opposition. They targeted at least three separate groups; one group bicycling in Tower Grove Park, another in a van, and the other on foot blocks away from CAMP⁷. All told, 27 were arrested, with many more detained, harassed, and assaulted. Mokwa rounded out the day with a press conference, displaying a slew of confiscated items which he claimed were to be used against the police and the Forum. Demonstrators had managed to hide anything incriminating successfully; Mokwa's treasure trove of weapons was laughable at best⁸.

All the while, opponents of the WAF were busy too, plotting, both publicly and privately, ways to disrupt the event and the forces behind it and scrambling to find ways to hold the oppositional project together in the repressive environment- employing horizontal methods to feed, house, heal each other, and of course, get each other out of jail. But sadly, as the day of the protest approached, it seemed the State's repression proved more than they could handle. On the day of the protest, facing a large and menacing police presence⁹, the demonstrators, holding the street from police the whole way, marched 12 blocks to Union Station but failed to mount an offensive upon reaching the hotel.

Several months later, a group of 25 protesters with the help of the American Civil Liberties Union of Eastern Missouri¹⁰ filed a civil lawsuit against the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department's Board of Commissioners, Police Chief Mokwa, and the City of St. Louis, accusing the lot of being responsible for infringing on their rights to free speech, carrying out unlawful arrests, and conducting illegal and unlawful searches of persons and property. After 3 years of delays, the date is now tentatively set for summer 2008 with only 10 plaintiffs still onboard.

Because of the David and Goliath nature of this fight, many want to portray the protesters as victims rather than actors. We think this is a grave disservice to those brave enough to take the offensive. These were not innocent people exercising their constitutional rights and advocating the charade of democracy; they were warriors guilty of attempting to destroy the system that

Missouri as a safe haven for the Klan...

March 10, 2007, Columbia, Missouri:

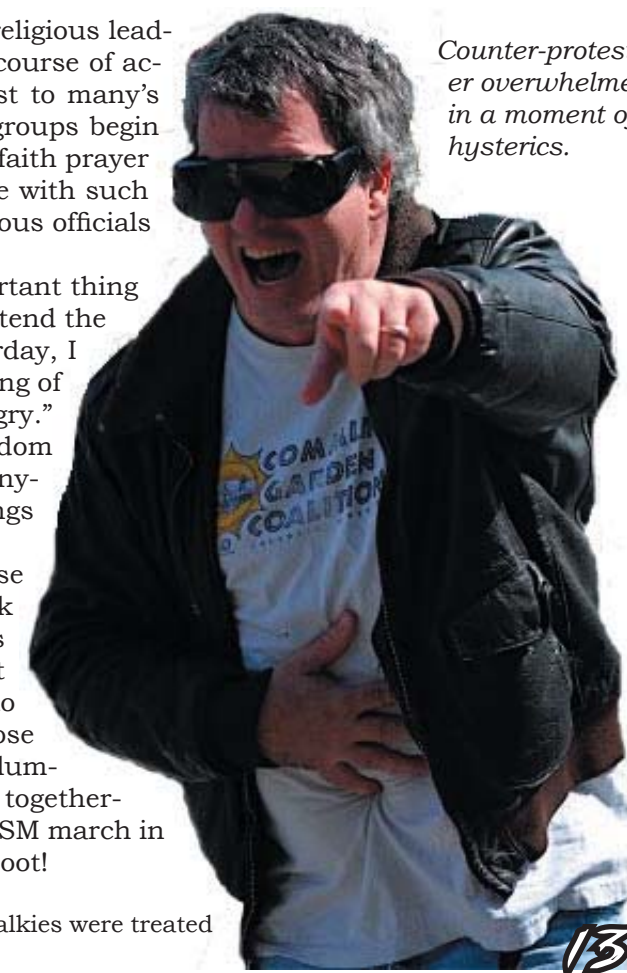
The National Socialist Movement's five-hour parade is completely stopped within the first thirty minutes. Despite the presence of local, county, state, and SWAT police, the crowd surged forward at the first glimpse of the fascists, passing mounted police and running up against the two dozen riot police guarding the fifteen Nazis. Punches and kicks met the fascists, as well as "Fuck You's," beer cans, their own signs, and an egg. Police, clearly panicked*, proceeded to zig and zag the Nazis back and forth across the street, repeatedly blocked by quick-moving, confrontational groups of three to five who brought along all new abuse and insults, and who were able to hold ground long enough for other protesters to swarm. Multiple times the police escort was brought to a complete standstill, allowing for beautiful moments of protesters stripping the Nazis of their hats, armbands, signs and flags. These brief periods of bedlam also allowed for spectators to turn participants: realizing the police lack of control, the lack of legal accountability, and how much fun those in direct contact with the Nazis and police were having, spectators who had been seen earlier snapping pictures and joking with friends found themselves in the thick of it, shouting and punching, including a frat boy who stepped forward and leveled one. Even with an episode of macing and another of arrests (also involving mace), protesters kept the pressure on, forcing the police and Nazis to eventually retreat back into a parking garage- the march's place of origin and the police's base of operation. Still, individuals pursued the Nazis up into the garage hurling insults, making the police escort the fascists in cars out the other side, to a Lowes' parking lot and then down to Jefferson City, where police and Nazis said their emotional good-byes.

Ignoring fascists is one of *the* worst ideas, and yet politicians, religious leaders, police, local media and liberals alike all tote this as the best course of action. Frequently, in America when fascists congregate, in contrast to many's first response of "Fuck no! Not in my town," the aforementioned groups begin setting up Acceptance Days, Unity Days, Tolerance Days and interfaith prayer groups which have all proven to be little more than adult-day care with such selling points as free hot dogs, music, and games provided by nervous officials hoping not to have their towns trashed.

First Ward Councilwoman Almeta Crayton said the most important thing was for adults to make sure teenagers and young adults did not attend the march and try to take matters into their own hands. "Come Saturday, I want you in between a kid and downtown," Crayton said at a meeting of city leaders. "I'm dealing with 15, 16, 17 year-old men who are angry." The city even went so far as momentarily renaming 9th St., "Freedom Way," to try and show opposition to the march they sanctioned. Anyone near 9th St. on March 10, could see firsthand the sorts of things the city has in mind in regards to freedom.

Columbia's Diversity Day was praised as a safe haven for those who were "more at risk of arrest:" namely working class, black youth. They, like the rest of the rabble, deserve to get their kicks in too, and to assume they know nothing of police evasion is not only insulting, but idiotic. And while Columbia's Diversity Day at no point addressed the fascist elephant in the room or celebrated those present's cultural differences, it did manage to keep the bulk of Columbia's non-student population at bay and thwart any real form of togetherness that a town-wide riot (like the one sparked previously by an NSM march in Toledo) might have facilitated... also with free food and music to boot!

* Throughout the march those with access to police scanners and walkie-talkies were treated to cries for back-up and frenzied commands.



Counter-protester overwhelmed in a moment of hysterics.

13



And they used to joke of 1

Top Left: Counter-protester rips off hat of lead Nazi. Top Right: Counter-protesters tell fascist, "Fuck you!" Middle: Two Nazis are left bewildered after one's flag and the other's sign are ripped from their poles. Bottom: Counter-protesters and spectators swarm.



destroys them. They demanded everything; a world without an exploitive economy and the coercive relationships that come with it. State forces like this don't come down on manageable people with harmless ideas. And that's what makes this episode so attractive.

The unattractive bit is that these radicals are choosing to put the gloves back on and spar with the State in its ring, where no matter the verdict, the State never gets KO'ed. In so doing, they run the risk of one, focusing on a singular aspect of the system (the police) rather than the totality; and two, isolating their struggle from our shared struggle. It must be said though, the people filing the lawsuit, with that deep critique of the hell we were born into and the willingness to collectively struggle to get out, are not foolish enough to fall into those traps. Should a new front open up, surely they would throw the gloves back down, or exchange them for brass knuckles. Until then, the lawsuit can be viewed as an invitation for continued conflict in otherwise quiet times, a lingering flame from the inferno of the anti-globalization movement. It must be viewed as such because the best place to be when in conflict with the State and Capital isn't in a courtroom hiding behind the Constitution, but in the streets with your comrades, lovers, and friends.

Part 2:



October 22

October 22, 2003. The annual "National Day of Protest to Stop Police Brutality Repression and the Criminalization of a Generation"¹¹, served as a convergence point for opponents of the police. The event was organized locally by some combination of reformist activists from the Organization for Black Struggle (OBS) and the Coalition Against Police Crimes and Repression (CAPCAR)¹². Flyers called for people to "Wear black and fight back!" attracting a diverse crowd of about 200, some from well beyond the leaders' dominion. Planned was a rally at Poelker Park, in the shadow of City Hall, followed by a march to the America's Center to express disgust with the National Recreation and Parks Association's refusal to honor a boycott¹³.

A few factors helped to make this annual march the largest and most exciting one to date. On March 30, 2003, the militant wing of the anti-war movement lost a confrontation with police as they abandoned a passive rally in Forest Park in an attempt to smash up the Central West End business district. Furthermore,

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the cops are an occupying army."

April 10, Belleville (IL) - The Belleville Police Department website is hacked from overseas.

April 20, St. Louis City - A disgruntled Jordanian immigrant intentionally accelerates his car into a police squad car downtown pinning the officer's legs. He then jumps out and fires several rounds at the officer seriously wounding him. He runs off and greets other police arriving at the scene with a hail of bullets as well, before eventually falling dead to the guns of the police.

April 22, Jefferson City - Protesting overcrowding and inhumane administrative segregation policies, prisoners of Jefferson City Correctional Center's administrative-segregation Unit "7-house" refuse additional cell mates causing a housing crisis in the prison. In response, guards shackle the rebellious prisoners to steel benches without food or adequate clothing. Sixty of the inmates initiate a "food strike" until the ad-seg policies are changed by the prison administration. One prisoner reports, "The fire has been lit and will continue to burn!"

April 27, Highland (IL) - A Highland High School senior stages a protest after school officials remove her art piece, "Operation Bush," featuring a likeness of the game "Operation" with President George W. Bush's head on top with a clown nose, and a large question mark extending from his "heart."

May 14, Citywide - MetroLink officials admit fare evaders have dodged more than \$210,000 in ticket costs over the last year.

May 14, Statewide (IL) - In a loosely coordinated, one-day statewide campaign, librarians across Illinois pass out fliers and bookmarks, install computer screensavers, and in some libraries, shut down internet services in protest of an Internet-filtering state legislative proposal that would overburden library budgets, invade the privacy rights of library patrons, and increase librarians' workload.

May 29, Cape Girardeau - Police arrest two Navy sailors on charges of desertion. Seaman Apprentice Justin Burns and Seaman Recruit Zachari Valentin, went AWOL from their frigate Carr docked in Norfolk, Virginia, in April and May, respectively.

June 1, West Plains - Postal inspectors intercept a package containing an explosive device destined for the West Plains Police Department.

June 1, Ullin (IL) - Around 50 prisoners at Tri-County Detention Center, a private prison owned by Boca Raton, FL-based company GEO Group, barricade themselves in a housing area by setting fire to mattresses and books. An hour into the standoff, police force the unruly prisoners from the barricaded areas by firing a water hose and multiple tear gas canisters.

June 3, Dixon Springs (IL) - A prisoner escapes by walking away from Dixon Springs Impact Incarceration Center.

June 9, Bridgeton - A man arrested during a traffic stop slips out from the back seat of a patrol car and into the driver's seat, leading police on a 2-county high-speed chase. The officers say they were distracted by family members trying to

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