

**TOTAL** 5  
**DESTROY**

*A MILWAUKEE ANARCHY PERIODICAL*

FOR **CHAOS**  
**AGAINST**  
**CAPITAL**

TO BE CONTINUED

6-14-11

## M&I Branch Vandalized With Anti-Walker Graffiti

According to the Journal Sentinel (MKE):

*“Greendale - Police said Monday they are investigating an incident Saturday night in which a citizen saw someone spray-painting anti-Gov. Scott Walker graffiti on the side of an M&I Bank branch at Southridge.*

*Interim Police Chief Bob Malasuk said Monday the bystander spotted the vandal just after 10 p.m. spray-painting the building. No suspect has yet been apprehended.*

*Malasuk said words such as Traitor and Unions are Forever, as well as profanity directed at Walker were spray-painted on the wall.”*



6-14-11

## Doors Superglued Before UWM Protests Over Walker Budget

According to TMJ4 (MKE):

*“MILWAUKEE - The fight over Governor Scott Walker’s budget is getting sticky.*

*Literally sticky.*

*TODAY’S TMJ4’s Diane Pathieu confirmed that doors at Chapman, Curtin, Mellencamp, Mitchell and Sabin Halls all had doors with superglue in the locks on Monday.*

*She said those doors were opened before 7:30 a.m. Monday morning. No classes were affected.*

*Newsradio 620 WTMJ’s Jodi Becker confirmed that the doors to the Sendik’s on Downer Avenue were also glued shut.*

*UWM campus police believed it was a sign of protest, but organizers of a campus rally later Monday afternoon say they didn’t have anything to do with it.*

*College students are angry over what the bill may mean for them, and they are making their thoughts known in protests.*

*They were to hold a rally on Monday afternoon in reaction to Walker’s budget, which would split UWM and UW-Madison from the UW system.”*

**Crisis** entails the vague contradictory realization, through activity, of existing in a world in which the normal is no longer possible. That force which strives for the normal, if successful in its materialization, pushes the possibility of the normal further into oblivion.

**Q:** “How has the situation in Wisconsin changed, if at all?”

**A:** It’s certainly devious in how imperceptible that change is and was, both for when there was a “change” and after. You had to seek it out or you have to have been effected, forced to pay attention. Most areas of life were on the surface in no way effected by “the events in Madison.” They were too easy to ignore. And this imperceptibility demonstrates the immense power of the apparatus that keeps everything the same and also the weakness of a struggle that either must change everything or will return to normal.

I’m tempted to compare the situation of seeming powerlessness, the general strike that was threatened and existed in many minds as a slumbering

yet awakening beast of a bygone age, and which remains present in many minds specifically as a lack, to a phantom limb. We feel, and are witness to the presence of our absence of power.

What I can share are frustrations, and a kind of shock that corresponds with any subservient march back to work, and that forgets the most important fact of these events, which is that it was not the unions or politicians which made us something to be feared. It was the constitution as a force, however briefly and however foolish, that shocked many, especially those who participated, with fear. Where else did the constant calls for non-violence come from? A million tiny failures repulse us with the horror of our powerlessness, specifically after we glimpsed or dared think otherwise. Not

*The following is the unedited email:*

*Please put your things in order because you will be killed and your families will also be killed due to your actions in the last 8 weeks. Please explain to them that this is because if we get rid of you and your families then it will save the rights of 300,000 people and also be able to close the deficit that you have created. I hope you have a good time in hell. Read below for more information on possible scenarios in which you will die.*

*WE want to make this perfectly clear. Because of your actions today and in the past couple of weeks I and the group of people that are working with me have decided that we’ve had enough. We feel that you and the people that support the dictator have to die. We have tried many other ways of dealing with your corruption but you have taken things too far and we will not stand for it any longer. So, this is how it’s going to happen: I as well as many others know where you and your family live, it’s a matter of public records.”*

6-13-11

## Vandals Attack WMC Ahead of Monday Protests

According to Media Trackers (?):

*“Over the weekend, vandals attacked the Madison office of Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce with anti-business, anti-Walker graffiti. Fists, images of Governor Scott Walker, and slogans such as “tax the rich” were painted on the building and sidewalks around the office of the state’s chamber of commerce.”*

## Collection of Things Not Non-Violence: Excerpts From News

*These acts are shared not necessarily because we condone them, rather because it is by their very existence that they shatter the monopoly of non-violence within the anti-austerity struggle in Wisconsin.*

6-10-11

### Lawmakers Get Death Threats

According to WTMJ 620 (MKE):

*“MADISON - The State Department of Justice confirms that it is investigating several death threats against a number of lawmakers in response to the legislature’s move to strip employees of many collective bargaining rights.*

*Among the threats the Justice Department is investigation is one that was emailed to Republican Senators Wednesday night. Newsradio 620 WTMJ has obtained that email.*

only time will tell how well we will retain this dream, because within a world that has every interest in our forgetting, it would sooner have never happened. Either we will feel the shame of taking part in our own forgetting or we will have to fight and through conflict remember more and more what is at stake in the present.

So yes, a lot has changed, but if one weren’t part of it then it’s as if nothing has and never did. It’s a news story. It’s a protest to be ignored. Life goes on. Now instead of a general strike, or strikes, or sick outs, or walk outs, what remains overwhelmingly are recall campaigns, and talk of electoral politics, which channel and subdue these events into processes that manage them, contain them, count them, and include them in the calculus of the democratic party. One must wait for their turn to put a piece of paper in a box and then go back to work, go back home, go to the mall – all places which we’ve been produced to fit perfectly within. Our presence within them contests nothing, and where contestation is ignored politics hides – the beast slumbers.

# Looking Toward Wisconsin: An Interview With a Participant from Milwaukee.

*This interview was conducted by someone from the journal Modesto Anarcho (MA).*

**MA:** What is the situation in Madison right now?

**P:** I've only been in Madison during one of the days since the occupation and demonstrations started. I've known people who have spent many days there, who have slept in the Capitol building, and who have been going back and forth between Milwaukee and Madison regularly. People are constantly talking about the situation, so I have an idea that is generally up to date, but there is often a bit of a delay. At other times I'm hearing about things as they happen through friends, because word travels much

faster than the reporting often does.

I can describe what my experience was there briefly on that day. I went on the first Saturday, the day when the Tea Party of Wisconsin had also called for protests to counter the occupation and protests taking place. About a couple thousand Tea Party protesters showed up, but they were dwarfed and drowned out by the fifty to one hundred thousand people who wandered through the streets, marched, inadvertently blocking traffic and rerouting it across the city, and took up most of the floor space inside the Capitol building. They were mostly ignored and made irrelevant, huddled into a corner of the back steps and yard on one side of the Capitol. I had expected the presence of the Tea Party to provoke and

Walker's austerity measures, the politicians and police unions have been remarkably silent about this provision. They've built a mythology that "we're all in this together" or that "they're on our side". It is more convenient for them to simply ignore the ways that the bill they purportedly oppose dramatically expands the prison system they faithfully defend. It's no coincidence that the bill both extends prison sentences while also protecting the Police Union from the elimination of collective bargaining rights. The role of politicians and the police is to maintain the dreadful economy and the prison system necessary to it. It should come as no surprise to us that those who fail to criticize this system are the same who encourage us to continue working and scold those who step outside the lines they've defined.

It is time for new lines to be drawn. On the one side: the governor, politicians, police, bureaucrats, professional activists. On the other: prisoners, workers, students, the unemployed, the enraged. If the spontaneous struggle against this bill were to generalize and become a movement against this economic system and its prisons, it would mean that those affected by the bill would need to extend their actions and gestures of solidarity through all the walls that separate them. December's historic strike by prisoners in Georgia shows us what such action could look like. For us, this means that the strikes, occupations and sabotage - the generalized disruption of the economy - needs to spread through the walls of the prison, to generalize, and to intensify. In this, we need to build complicit relationships and revolt inside and outside those walls.

Towards an unlimited strike, for a world without prison.

**-The enraged**

# *Toward an Unlimited Strike, for a World Without Prison* • **Communique**

The night of March 15th, a group of roughly forty students, workers, the unemployed and other uncontrollables marched to the Milwaukee County Jail, carrying banners and black flags. The banners at the front of the march read “Burn All Prisons” and “No Control”. Upon arriving at the front doors of the jail, demonstrators chanted “Free them all” and launched dozens of fireworks through the air in an effort to communicate with those locked inside.

The demonstration was called for by participants in the occupation of the Theatre building at UW-Milwaukee as a part of the ongoing struggle against the “Budget Repair Bill”. The bill, proposed by the hated governor of Wisconsin, contains a provision that will institute a Truth-in-Sentencing policy. This measure removes the possibility

for those locked away in Wisconsin’s jails and prisons to qualify for early release for good behavior or ‘good time’. For inmates this means a dramatic increase in the time spent in jail – more time in captivity, kept away from their families and loved ones, kept in abject misery and isolation. The Truth-in-Sentencing provisions of the bill highlight specifically how the economic attacks on working and unemployed people throughout the state goes hand in hand with the criminalization and imprisonment of the working class). The economic system that exploits our labor, deprives our benefits, and throws us on the street is the very same system that keeps us in cages and behind barbed wire.

In the past weeks of resistance to

heighten tensions between the two sides, but not much happened in response.

Inside the Capitol building people had been hanging posters and signs on everything. As would be expected, there were chants and crowds of people banging on things. When hearing “This is what democracy looks like” chanted I’m usually horribly ashamed to be present, driven almost to the point of nausea, but this atmosphere sent a shiver down my spine. Despite the form of expression this took, I had the feeling that its real content was hidden, but still exposed through the collective force of the activity of these people. It expressed a feeling of being together as thousands of people who couldn’t be fucked with, even if the parameters to express this were and are mostly pathetic at this point. It demonstrated that it is our activity that defines us. Otherwise, the contradiction of a movement that is both for and against democracy cannot be explained, as it physically prevents the democratic process. Democracy mitigates and disguises force relations by reducing them to a process and mere matters of opinion. It is the neutralization of force and thus of the conflict that is necessary for the elaboration of a politics, for one to take sides and act. We don’t care what as much what people chant, but as long as they increasingly define their position they will increasingly come into an internal contradiction with democratic logic.

What was going on in these spaces had been going on for days and had therefore assumed a kind of routine or culture. So after witnessing it there wasn’t much to do except to wander, meet and talk, eat food, hang out and occupy the space of the city along with the other thousands of people there.

As for what is going on currently in Madison, I’ve heard that Saturday the 26th has been one of the largest days of the demonstrations in terms of numbers. Though I haven’t heard much about the situation on that specific day. There have been rumors and talk of eviction since this all happened, but the police Chief of Madison made an official statement that probably came as an order to be distributed from the Governor, declaring that the Capitol building was to be “cleared” for cleaning, which meant forcefully evicted if need be. A day after this announcement the police union made a statement to the media and gathered crowds saying that they stand with those occupying the Capitol and protesters, not with Scott Walker or his proposed legislation, that they would not be part of any eviction of these people, and that they would in fact be joining them in sleeping on the floors of the Capitol. This is all very weird. It no doubt al-

lows certain illusions to persist, but it won't last long. It had seemed like the moment when lines would be more clearly drawn was fast approaching, making clear connections between this particular event, the inherent play of forces necessary to maintain everyday life and the function of the police, as a force of dispossession. We will not be surprised when the police are forced to act in order to attempt to maintain their role as the ones who make the threats.

On Saturday, word spread in various ways that the Capitol was going to be closed Sunday by 4pm and that everyone was going to have to leave. A couple hundred decided to leave to avoid risking arrest, but many hundreds more gathered and were determined to hold the space with the possibility of being arrested. Against the prospect of having to arrest hundreds of people in the Capitol, which would have been a bad move in the eyes of many thousands who had come to the Capitol in the preceding days, the police decided that they weren't going to arrest anyone. They encouraged people to leave voluntarily and that they would assess the situation "day by day." This all meant that as long as people stayed that the occupation would continue. It's still continuing now.

**MA:** Can you talk about what were some of the first events to happen? The sick outs for instance?

**P:** I first heard about the events in Madison sitting in a computer lab, when none of this seemed like it would last more than a day and it lacked a real quality for many people here. Earlier in the day there had been a relatively minor protest organized by teachers assistants, teachers and others. Nothing was surprising or out of the ordinary. Not until later in the week, when a walk out was called and three thousand people responded, did the unreality of the situation start to appear as if it wasn't going to so easily fade back to normal. After this there was always talk and rumors circulating. There was a giddiness that was held in common by people never expected to share anything. People, who before were just members of the crowd passing between work, class and their homes, suddenly had a vibrancy to them. Invisible dots that connected us became more visible.

I know a few who are teachers for MPS (Milwaukee Public Schools) and a number of graduate students who are TAs at the UW-Milwaukee campus. I don't have a very exact knowledge of all of the districts and specific schools that were shut down by the sick outs. All Madison public schools were shut down for at least four days. Then followed Racine, Milwaukee and a number of others I'm not

approved a statement calling for a general strike, and this without much of a discussion about just how a general strike could come about. Due to the nature of the laws regulating labor disputes in the US, a general strike cannot be declared from on high by the large labor federations. For a generalized strike to occur here it would necessarily involve some degree of self-organization whether through discussion and activity at the local union level, the forging of complicit relationships at non-unionized workplaces (which are by far the majority), sabotage at non-participating workplaces, or some other form perhaps completely outside and unrepresentable by the familiar apparatuses.

Yet within much of the assembled body of students, a general strike was not understood as something that everyone would have to create together, a festival of disruption, but rather as something that would just happen; a disheartening attitude that reduces the likelihood of a meaningful and widespread stoppage. Perhaps other forums will be created in which this necessary conversation can be taken up in greater depth.

To sum up we can say that although the occupation is rife with limitations and fails to overcome most, if not all, of them, it is a beginning and not an end. The attempt to expand the struggle against austerity beyond the boundaries of time (one day walkouts, weekly demonstrations), geography (the centrality of Madison), and social position (workers vs. students) is a step in the right direction. In order to actually derail the legislation which sparked all this uproar, the struggle will have to spread across even more boundaries (precarious and poor vs. securely employed, etc.) and develop both in form and content. It is precisely through this struggle to reverse a specific attack on the working class that we can open up further avenues for struggle and maybe even the possibility of a world without legislators or classes of any sort.

**-Some Non-student Participants**

All of these details, while illustrating the confused and timid nature of what in actuality was a prolonged, indoor protest, should not be used to completely write off the events that transpired. Criticism in this context is meant as a means of learning and growing so that a future attempt to engage with social struggle may avoid the mistakes of our past. The very fact of our lack of a collective living memory on exactly how to fight back is both the explanation for these errors and the motivation for a continued presence within the struggle against austerity.

The adoption of a general assembly model for making decisions, while being a safeguard against the manipulations of small groups, was also a forum for the discussion of issues such as the nature and purpose of occupations and social struggle, the possibility of a generalized strike, and the role of police in society at large. While these discussions did not immediately translate into practical activity, their effect on the future of this struggle and others which may follow it cannot be foreseen from this vantage point.

Generally speaking, the transition from thought and conversation into action, or rather the lack of this necessary step, is a major hindrance to the development of the occupation in a more consciously conflictual direction. The lack of confidence in ourselves, in our ability to actually transform our environment and our daily lives, was exemplified by both the insistence on following the rules and thus preserving the position of “student” as well as the ever-present conversation revolving around the need to inform more people about what was going on. Covering the campus and surrounding neighborhood with posters, flying desks and tables, disrupting classes or even consistently engaging those passing through the space in conversation were all ideas that were thrown out, but were only acted on to a limited degree. This hesitancy to take our ideas, and thereby our selves, seriously is a limitation that can only be overcome through further experience in struggle. The dynamic of leadership and followers must be superseded by the development of self-organization and the capacity to act decisively.

Perhaps the biggest limit of this attempt at occupation is its nature as an isolated activity for most of those involved. Because it does not currently coincide with a stoppage of either work or reproductive education, because there is yet no strike, the occupation takes on the form of an isolated protest. Without the lifting of the burdens of classes, homework, and part time wage labor many of the participants were quickly exhausted and didn’t have the time or energy to be more deeply invested in the project of qualitatively developing the situation.

Without any sign of disagreement or even a discussion of its implications, the participants accepted the slogan of “Strike, Occupy, Take-over!” Yet the first step in that simplistic equation wasn’t taken seriously as something we could collectively enact. Similarly, the assembled

as familiar with. Thousands have participated in the sick outs. Some of TAs and teachers have not shown up to a single class since the sick out started to teach, despite threats from the administration. Many of the public school teachers have gone back to work, feeling some obligation to their students and because it seemed that there was less purpose in sustaining the sick outs. It appears as very likely that they will be employed strategically, correlative to certain days: like a general strike, the day when the contracts for many public employee unions expire, or other possible events.

### **MA: What is the extent of the student walk outs? The occupations?**

**P:** Accompanying the sick outs there have also been widespread and random walkouts, by high school students. They have been incredibly self-directed. We’ve heard about them taking place anywhere from any of the rural Wisconsin towns, Schools surrounding Madison, and a number of urban Milwaukee schools. The numbers and magnitude of this activity was severely under-reported and communicated, so we have a hard time knowing what exactly went on. We had randomly crossed paths with one group of about two hundred to three hundred kids who had walked out of a school called Rufus King, who just happened to be meandering through the UW-Milwaukee campus during the walkout which was happening there. They joined the occupation of Bolton Hall on campus to show support temporarily, but seemed less interested in assemblies or discussion. They wanted to be angry and how they expressed this was to walk for miles around the city, chanting, yelling and being unruly. No activity we have seen thus far has contained as much energy as these kids.

The occupations outside of the Capitol have been so far pretty minor. Though many students have been a consistent presence in Madison and many have been staying overnight, sleeping on the floor of the Capitol building, and taking part in meetings and discussions happening there. There was the GOP office in Madison which was occupied by members of a disability rights group called ADAPT, who it was rumored to have been joined at least temporarily by steel workers. There is a lot of talk about occupation, and much is expected to coincide or respond to the release of the new budget that happens on the 1st of March, this upcoming student day of action on the 2nd of March, and when the bill passes.

**MA: If a general strike does break out, what do you think will happen?**

**P:** A lot of people barely know what a general strike means in the US. We don't know what it means for an entire city to be shut down outside of a snow storm in Wisconsin. Perhaps there will be a snow storm and city workers will refuse to plow it. Most likely not. Union officials are quoted to have said in their endorsement of the general strike that emergency services would not be effected. Everything else run by public and potentially private industries as well will halt. One would assume that there would be marches and many people in the streets, with workplaces suddenly emptied of all their bodies, but it's unclear what exactly these bodies will do suddenly freed and functioning less properly. With the strike being contingent upon when the bill passes and the bill passing being indefinitely delayed, it's hard to tell or foresee an increase or lack of momentum that would change the effect of the strike.

Many people in general are planning. They don't want to sit and wait for the bill to pass to determine their activity. Meanwhile the rank and file of unions are being educated as to the what and how of a general strike. It's hard to fathom what this will look like without being heavily based on the image of how it has happened in the past. In this case, the past is innovative in responding to the nothing we're so familiar with, but this only goes so far. The situation must be open to more creative and critical approaches in order to respond to the specific modes of production and reproduction of capitalism in Wisconsin currently, so as to fulfill the general strikes threat of a force that refuses to function, making everything stop. I don't expect creative or critical approaches to this, but I have been surprised many times already in the past number of weeks.

**MA: To what extent has the spirit of the Egyptian uprising been an impact on the demonstrators?**

**P:** To the degree that some of the people involved have paid some attention to the events in Egypt and found them inspiring, this has contributed some amount of a feeling of a greater possibility here. It is doubtful that it is a very large influence. There are many people who identify within leftist and radical discourses, who would have followed what was and is going on in Egypt, but the majority are normal ass people from Wisconsin who most likely learn about events from standard television news and other "mainstream" media. As someone who doesn't pay much attention to either I may be wrong.

anti-governor as well as pro-union, pro-democracy rhetoric. "This is what democracy looks like:" an unintentionally ironic slogan given that the occupation of the State Capitol building, which partially inspires the university uproar, is actually an attempt to disrupt the functioning of democracy and majority rule.

The sadly predictable rally which followed the demonstration was sufficiently long and boring to kill most of the momentum generated by the walk-out and disperse all but a couple hundred of those who had participated in the demonstration. This, by no means recent, trend is, if not a tool of manipulation used by organizers and leaders to maintain control over the situation, then at least an undesirable hold-over from bygone eras.

The point here is not to value one form of symbolic protest over another (marching in the streets versus standing in a plaza), but to realize when an activity is detrimental to the continuation and expansion of the struggle and to replace it with a different form. Marching through campus buildings in an attempt to further disrupt classes and the functioning of the university, holding an open "speak-out" at which any individual from the crowd could voice their opinions, or directly moving to occupy a building with a several thousand strong crowd would all be better than the impotent spectacle of speakers and a passive crowd.

Eventually the remaining demonstrators moved back into the student union, this time to resounding chants of, "They say class cuts, we say class war", "An eye for an eye, Walker must die", and "Kill the rich" (a slight alteration of the mainstream slogan "kill the bill"). After a brief discussion on the best building to occupy, the group moved into the lobby of the theater department and set up camp.

Almost immediately the "occupation" was overwhelmed by the formalism of meetings and a consuming concern with minutia. Instead of immediately discussing how to make the occupation more potent and massive, energy and excitement was drained into debates about demands that ultimately had no basis in a real counter-power to the administration and rules for how to exist collectively within the space.

While compromises were eventually reached on such issues as whether or not to barricade the doors, graffiti the walls, and drink indoors, the absurdities of "respecting the building" reached surreal heights. At one point an argument was started about what kind of tape to use when putting posters on the wall (the supposedly acceptable alternative to writing on them directly). At another point, after agreeing to a demand for "immunity for all involved in the occupations" someone from within the occupation called the police on a fellow occupier. A terribly divisive move that if repeated can only serve to weaken and destroy the potential for further collective struggle. This act of "snitching" led to heated debates, a periodic police walk-through, and an eventual agreement to cease relying on the police as a means of solving internal disputes.

# Warts and All: On the occupation At the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee

*The occupation is a feast at which we may satisfy our hunger for beautiful and intense moments.*

**- Graffiti from the occupied UWM theatre building**

The stage is set: years of defeat-induced, pessimistic depression and a more-than-healthy dose of cynicism; cut backs, layoffs, and foreclosures piled on top of already extreme levels of poverty, hopelessness and social disintegration; a context notable for its glaring lack of collective struggle against this misery. Then suddenly an outburst of activity: the occupation of the State Capitol building in Madison; anti-austerity demonstrations involving tens of thousands of people; massive wildcat sick-ins, student walk-outs

and murmurs of a general strike.

Of course this attempt to get back on our feet will include its fair share of missteps and stumbling. All the more so because for many of us, nothing quite like this has yet touched our lives. Even for those of us who desperately track such moments of conflict through the pages of books, across oceans and continents, this is a new and strange place we find ourselves in.

On March 2nd at the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee a student walkout took place followed by a demonstration involving some 2,000 students, teaching assistants, professors, workers and unemployed. The demonstration took to the streets surrounding the university. Chants and signs were mostly dominated by anti-legislation,

**MA:** What are some of the limits of what is happening in Wisconsin? To what degree are the unions and the Democrats in control of the situation?

**P:** The situation is permeated with limits. It would seem that any potential rupture or large scale manifestation of people reacting to crisis, and thereby being the crisis, will manifest likely at first as a movement for the return to normal. It will be trapped mostly within the apparatuses and discourses which contain them, but also necessarily exceeding them through activity. There are obvious identifiable limits. There are the unions themselves, which in their structure play a role in preventing and containing the self-directed activity of those who work. There are dominant discourses for what constitutes politics or contestation, which prevent and contain how resisting or being in conflict can be thought and acted out. There is the whole of our present conditions which employ and condition the worker that must be struggled against. It is vague but true to say that the alienated being, the kind that exists as a person living in Wisconsin, must fight everything. But this does not mean that there is no specificity to the struggle here. At this point of just barely being started, the struggle is though mostly unacknowledged, in reality against everything that maintains the normal progressive development of Capital. The anti-austerity struggle here must determine barriers by conflicting with its conditions - by creating a language, culture and practice of a shared struggle.

It appears as quite clear that the unions and Democrats are acting as a response to a popular rage and collective force that necessitates they act in a way which maintains degrees of legitimacy. That these mere representations and structures lack the potency which corresponds to the actual abnormal activity of people here is not to say that they have no influence over the situation. They channel this rage into established politics, organization, identity, discourses which all inherently impotently respond to the situation specifically because they are and produce the dead end which we inhabit, this ever increasing lack of control over our lives.

**MA:** Have you heard or come across many people who are getting annoyed at the control the Left is placing on the events?

**P:** I'm surrounded by those who are always more than annoyed by the Left. I have not been in close proximity to the organization of the occupation in the Capitol, how marches are organized, etc. The presence of the Left is something that one is always alienated from.

There is this feeling of being a member of mass to produce an image of power for ends other than yourself or your interests. There is a constant setting of the stage, the defining of what are acceptable terms, modes of conduct, the aestheticization of the event is often influenced most easily by those who can supply everyone with the same sign, with the same t-shirt, who take and make the image have a role of defining the event. But outside of this there is much self-directed and creative activity that contradicts these tendencies, and which will eventually come ever further into conflict with them.

We understand that activity itself has the ability to dissolve some of these subjective barriers and allows for people to be more than a member of a certain union for that certain union, a worker for work, a man for men, a student for school, etc. We can hope that this event to whatever degree creates a further crisis of subjectivity - that glimpses the abolishment of even more than the class, but the entire conditions and conditioning of the worker.

**MA: Have revolutionaries been able to intervene or expand the revolt in any way?**

**P:** It's at too much of an early and experimental stage to assess the effectiveness of our activity. People with much wider aims and intentions are participating in these events and they've been thrown into a fever pace in order to catch up, but it is perhaps not the best idea to go into much detail about specifics. Posters are made and widely distributed. Texts are written that analyze the situation, attempting to clear away as many inhibitions as possible with critique. But most of all, in these moments it is not words but actions which have and which will change everything, and which corresponds to a way of being in the world that we could call communism or anarchy.

**MA: Any last thoughts?**

**P:** Look to Wisconsin and see yourselves. Make it spread. Prepare for and create crisis.

open, a new time and a new rhythm takes hold and spreads almost as hastily as the operations of the police to conceal it. If you can achieve this, Wisconsin, you will set the precedent for the rest of us. The new rhythm will put to rest everything normal about our misery and exploitation. And it will be heard, reverberated, and mashed up by all the worlds that open to it.

We're anticipating your song Wisconsin,  
**Some insatiable Service-industry workers in the South**

# Crowd Noise ● Brief Reflections

## On the Walk-out, Demonstration and Occupation at UWM On February 17th

Today we witnessed the largest walk-out and demonstration at UWM since at least the height of the anti-Iraq war era and if not more than that then since the Vietnam war spilled over into Cambodia, spreading a wave of occupations and rage filled demonstrations across the US. Throughout the demonstration thousands of people came with hand made signs, stayed to hang out, or passed through, but the mass of people that seemed to slightly exceed the protest ritual of the past in Spaight's Plaza, that has been so easy to ignore, became a sight of interest in itself. Much of what was being said on a stage could not be heard over the crowd's noise. People found friends or talked to strangers, gawking at the crowd and sometimes feeling power – this curious sensation that with this many people we could do pretty

much anything we want. And when this passes, we also sense the frustration of squandering this moment.

The space of Spaight's Plaza seems to contain within it a memory and ritual that informs the repetition of a specific form of political activity, which produces different quantities of the same. Organizers stand on a stage and talk at people. People who are close listen or sometimes chant along. Some hold signs. All the while the activity maintains a strict division between different levels of a hierarchy of organizers and organized participants. This goes on until it loses steam and people go back to work, class or home. One should ask, what is the function of the reproduction of this continual defeat? We ask this, not to merely cut down our

conceal the realities of our daily lives and to liquidate those stories from the future. Reveal this, and make possible the education that was never allowed in school.

*Care-workers*, your strike is extremely significant when most waged-labor now includes elements of care administration. For this reason, your participation in the most undocile parts of the struggle is needed, not simply to share the skills of your vocation, but to interrupt the ways in which care is structured as a passive and neutral force.

*Students and young workers*, you set the tone for what it means for our generation to struggle. Don't limit your abilities; don't restrain your rage. Expose the policing and pacifying elements in the demonstrations by refusing to limit yourself. When the National Guard comes or if the counter-demonstrators attack, you will need improvised barricades. If those forces need to be pushed back, you will need to be the ones to throw the first rocks. If you occupy a position you will need the means to feed yourself. The large Grocery Store owners have already sided with the Governor, take what you need from them. Refuse all concessions, refuse dialogue with union managers, and bosses. Expose and undermine those elements publicly. Humiliate them when they try to speak, make them run when they try to pacify and limit the struggle. Make the prison guards and law-enforcement workers choose between siding with struggle or siding with government. There is no middle ground.

*Anon and techies*, solidarity is a weapon. As we've seen in recent revolts in North Africa and throughout the Nile, the use of information-technologies, social-networking and DDoS against the ruling party, against government infrastructure is a pivotal dynamic of contemporary struggles. Tweet hard, flashmob. Get behind a proxy, and let the us all know you got our backs.

The struggle must become dangerous to those in power. If the demonstrations are docile, they will never connect with those who have already been excluded from the world of unions and job security. The demonstrations must change their tone in order to resonate with those who live on shit-wages and tips, with those who are murdered by police, whose entire neighborhoods are already excluded from the bargaining table. The police, either in blue or in National Guard attire will be standing between you and all the possibilities that can emerge from a fierce and diverse struggle. One way or the other, they must be confronted, and defeated.

Struggles have a short period of time when they appear to be the door through which possibility enters. As soon as these possibilities are perceived, the police will attempt to neutralize them. We must act quickly and with precision in order to defeat the police and open up the struggle, to keep it going. This sense of urgency is the single order when we are racing with the police to occupy these zones of possibility. But if we can take positions and keep them

## *A Message to Wisconsin's Insatiable Workers and Students*

We're watching the RSS feeds and news sites like we watched Al Jazeera during the Egyptian Uprising. We're looking for a sign. Hoping that the rage we share cuts through our daily routine. We're hoping that what's transpiring in Wisconsin is an internal error in their system, and that it's irreparable. We're praying at our grandparents graves that they, who fought for dignity or who bowed shamefully, will give us all the strength and resolve to push ourselves beyond our limits of politeness. Wisconsin, we're looking to you like we looked to Egypt, like we looked to all the places that have recently flared up. We want you to say it's on. To say we don't have to be afraid anymore, and we don't have to take shit. We want to be forced to stop watching, take sides, and join up.

What we need from you:

Never go back to work. Never go back to school. Spread the occupation beyond the symbols of power. Occupy and block what counts. Attack symbols, occupy infrastructure. Extend the scale and scope of the struggle by attacking what links the governor's position with the misery of daily life. Fight, with all means, and through fighting make connections with others you never knew.

*Teachers*, elaborate your teach-ins. Tell your story, encourage everyone you touch to say why collective struggle (not just bargaining) is a necessary part of our position in this world. Talk about your dying grandmother. Talk about your difficult addictions. Talk about history. This law is an attempt to

political adversaries, but to ask how it can become more.

According to friends, many teachers were giving lectures or short speeches about the cuts and new proposed legislation, then told their students they were walking out and that they should follow. Across Milwaukee, Madison, Racine and other places today and yesterday thousands of teachers have called in sick in public schools. Combined with seemingly spontaneous walkouts by students many schools and some districts have been completely shut down. It's unclear what is happening with other state employees on the campus other than our individual experiences and conversations with a few people. Some janitors of the dorms were apparently planning on taking part in the walk out and were threatened with immediate termination. After this they asked why a security camera has been put in their break room, to which their managers responded "you don't have a break room." There were rumors and passing remarks of workers throughout the city who wanted to walk out or call in, but were threatened and frightened into isolation.

As we were walking home a friend called us and told us Bolton 150, a large lecture hall, had been occupied. Exactly what was going on was unclear. We turned back around and headed toward campus. On our way, we hear a march of students that looked too young to be students attending the University. They were a group of a couple hundred Rufus King high school students who had walked out and had been walking for miles chanting. We ran across the street and informed them that an occupation had just started on campus, that they should come join it, and we were astounded by the joy and lack of deliberation that responded to our suggestion. They entered the Bolton Hall still shouting and were met with cheering and applause. This went on for a bit, then a discussion resumed, among people who had already been present, about capitalism and its connection to education. Appeals were made to shut down the Campus, but the discourse prevailed. The occupation had a planned deadline for 5pm, though it wasn't clear why or how this was being decided. Some people had planned to join the thousands maintaining the occupation of the Capitol building in Madison and perhaps spreading it further in Milwaukee seemed less important in this moment.

# Something Important Might Happen...

On a Friday morning, some time in mid February, I was on a bus paid for by AFSCME and the MGAA en route to Madison. I had boarded the bus as the sun was rising. The vehicle was half-filled with a colorful cast of wing-nuts and progressives. The man in front of me was discussing neo-Malthusian population control and peak oil with the equally fanatic man to his left, while I sat next to a middle-aged ACLU observer. The two people behind me, students like myself, were chatting about various aspects of hip culture. It was hard to keep to myself with all these people trying to convert me to this or that cause. Despite their positions seeming strange, the thing that I shared in common with the other people on the bus was that we all knew that something important might happen in Madison.

As we approached our destination, marked by a cluster of nondescript office buildings near the Capitol, a perky MGAA volunteer described to us in great detail the coordinating office that had been set up in the rotunda to proliferate information about “security threats” such as the potential of “rowdy undergrads”. I was delighted at the thought that I was a security risk for these people and hoped that I might live up to their expectations.

I stepped off the bus and followed a stream of people who appeared as befuddled as I was. We followed those in front of us who followed those in front of them. Eventually I found myself on the steps leading into the dome. I decided to go in if for no other reason than to kill

some time until my friends who went to the university got out of their class.

The rotunda was packed wall to wall with bodies making a thunderous noise. People yelling to be so loud that some official person would empathize with the struggle. They yelled as if this situation could somehow be different from the past. They yelled because they didn’t know what else to do. In retrospect, the rotunda was filled with people, including myself, who never expected for everything to go this far and might not have been able to conceive of what to do next. Perhaps if the crowd had been pushed, if the situation had been escalated, things would be totally different. The thousands could have stormed the Capitol offices and thrown all the politicians, bureaucrats, and union leadership out on the streets to be immolated with all of the fancy art that lines the halls of the Capitol.

I spent very little time in the rotunda, as the activity was limited to chanting and sign waving, and soon returned to the street. Outside thousands of equally confused people were circling the dome like the walls of Jericho, hoping that the whole thing would come crumbling down. The Capitol was surrounded by people who were, in turn, surrounded by about a half-dozen banks with towering glass windows reflecting the spectacle back at the crowd. Around and around the protesters went, all day long.

At some point I briefly returned to the Capitol on my way to spend time with my friends. I even returned to the rotunda, if only for a moment. There were more people outside than ever before, but inside there was a hollow space in the middle of the room reserved for the elite of activists and organizers with megaphones and bucket drums. They were quite irrelevant at the time, as their “impassioned” speeches were drowned out by the cacophony of the crowd.

After returning from dinner I turned on the television to see a pundit from MSNBC singing the praises of the protesters. They returned his affection one hundred fold to the disgust of my companions and myself. No one said it, but we all knew that any meaningful struggle was not going to be carefully managed by a few in positions of leadership. The understanding in that room was the understanding that this struggle was, for the time being, beyond our control. I felt slightly betrayed by this man on the television who spoke of working class values while wearing an American flag pin. I can’t imagine how anyone couldn’t see the dollar signs in his eyes.

When I boarded the bus back to Milwaukee I was relieved to be getting away from that place. My hope was that maybe the struggle back home could go better than this one. Maybe we could keep the politicians away. Maybe we could change our conditions in a meaningful way. Maybe we could occupy buildings and reappropriate them for ourselves while simultaneously bringing down the infrastructure which binds us to the world of work and capital.