

the matrix.



breaking the silence.

# Breaking the Silence.

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“Never be afraid to raise your voice for honesty and truth and compassion against injustice and lying and greed. If people all over the world would do this, it would change the earth.”

- William Faulkner

## THE MATRIX

### [Editor]

Selina Mach

### [Cover Design]

James Olson

### [Writing Crew]

Andrea Capere  
Laura Ewton  
Katie Griswold  
Sarah June Johnson  
Olivia McLaughlin  
Amanda Seely  
Kenny Stancil  
Andrew Tinker  
Elizabeth Valdez

### [Advisor]

Beth Kraig

### [Additional Thanks]

Lace Smith  
Amber Baillon  
University Printing  
Student Media Board



# *A Letter to the President*

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Dear President Krise,

I am writing to you as a concerned student who, despite attempts to have you hear this story, has been kept silent. What I have to say can no longer be taken lightly and kept unsaid. I have decided to take a stand and break the silence about sexual assault on this campus.

Statistically speaking, 35 women out of every 1,000 attending a university are sexually assaulted, (Fisher, B.S., Cullen, F.T., & Turner, M.G. (2000). *The Sexual Victimization of College Women*. National Institute of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.). PLU currently has approximately 2,140 female students. If you apply the previously stated statistic, approximately 75 women have been sexually assaulted while attending PLU each year.

Before I begin, I want to hear your voice. Do you think that this campus—YOUR campus, MY campus—is exempt from the national statistics? Do you believe that this school should be keeping sexual assault “hush-hush”? What is your stance on defending the victim? What would YOU do, Mr. President, if it was YOUR son or daughter who was a victim?

If it was up to you, Mr. President, what would your response be to the attacker? If it was up to you, would the attacker be protected or would there be more serious consequences to their detrimental choices?

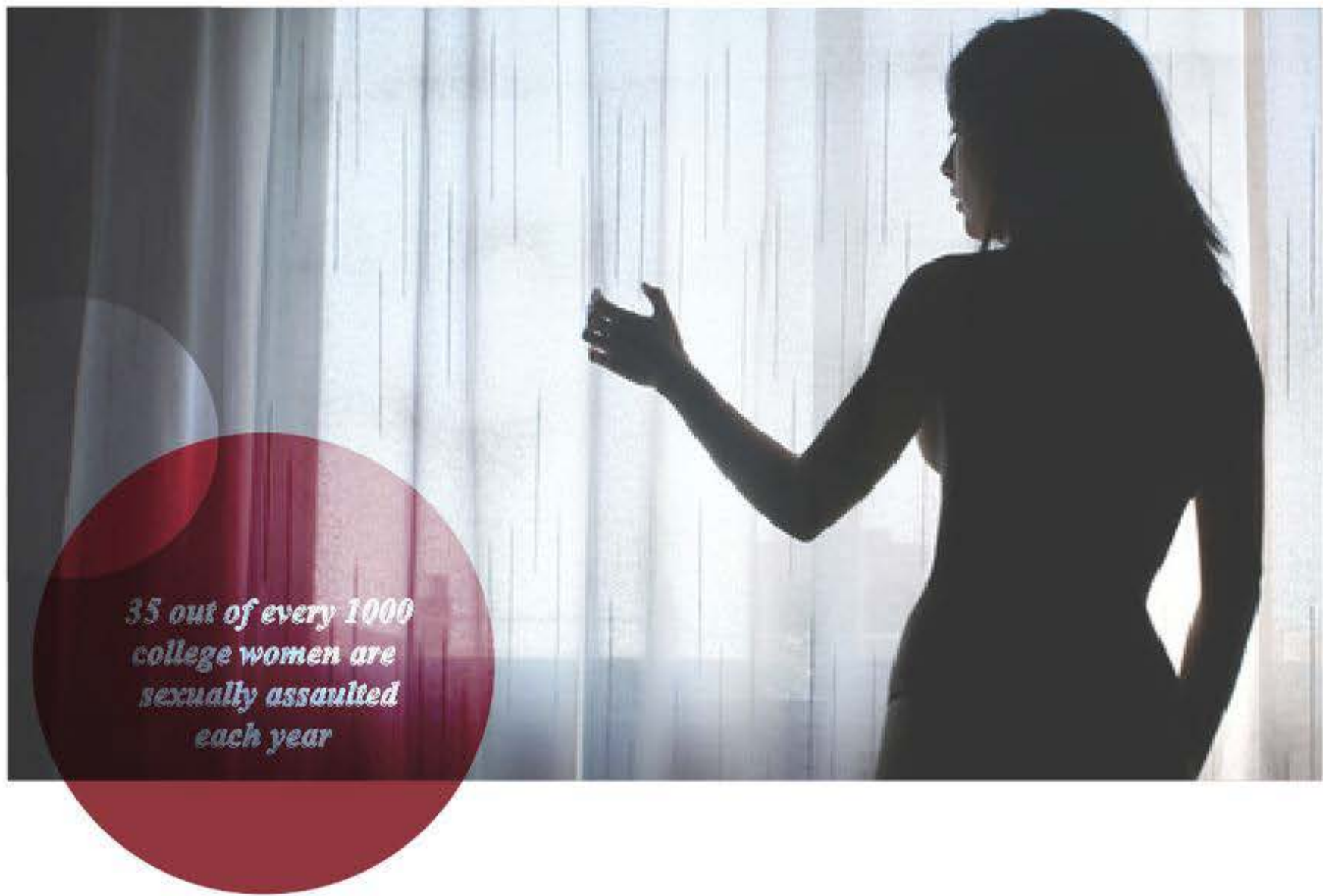
What if I told you that many staff and students on this campus are living in a pervasive “rape culture,” that through the silence of the campus leaders, is being supported and inadvertently taught to predators and their victims? What if I told you that I was sexually assaulted

this past fall and have been told to keep this “issue” “hush-hush”? What if I told you that very few people under your administration have truly shown any empathy or support for my case? What this school has put me through isn’t right. Every day is a reminder of how I am seen as “responsible” for my assault, not just by the person who believed that my “no” meant “yes,” but by the system that is supposedly there to support me. Every day is a reminder of how unsafe I feel on this campus. Every day is a reminder of how this school’s conduct system has let me down.

During my hearing I was attacked with questions that were accusatory, shaming, and flat out disrespectful. Isn’t it supposed to be the OTHER way around? Shouldn’t my attacker be the one being faced with these questions? Shouldn’t it be my attacker who has to defend themselves, rather than me, the victim? I shouldn’t be faced with questions that left me feeling responsible for my assault. I shouldn’t be left feeling that I was the “stupid” one for “falling” for a manipulator who, intentionally and methodically, took advantage of my vulnerable state-of-mind. I definitely shouldn’t be left feeling unsafe on this campus that claims to support its students.

The irony is that this issue of *The Matrix* is about “breaking the silence,” yet I am writing in fear and anonymity and I’m still being silenced through writing this. I am not “allowed” to talk about it for fear of slander, of the wrong person hearing, of retaliation, and many other reasons. I have a voice—a voice that wants to scream from the tower of Eastvold what is happening on this campus, but the many “punishments” for “outing” my attacker by speaking about my attack stops me—so now I share only with the few who do





*35 out of every 1000  
college women are  
sexually assaulted  
each year*

not judge or punish rather than being the vocal advocate that would create a better campus for others like me.

Now, let me ask you, Mr. President, does this sound like something you want your university recognized as? Is that what a “first rank” institution does? Do you really want your university being seen as a silencing and shaming university that doesn’t support their victims? Or do you want us to be a leader in ending this incessant and senseless violence?

My voice is not allowed to be heard, much the same as the night I was sexually assaulted, and this is causing a very long healing process and perpetuating an even greater silence. Along with a long healing process, there is no way to bring accountability to my attacker who rightfully deserves to be held accountable and responsible. Please, Mr. President, explain to me how this is seen as just in your eyes.

As I have said my voice has been silenced throughout this whole process; however, my attacker is still being allowed to use their voice. They are still being allowed to live on this campus; they attend class, clubs, and events. They are still living their life as if NOTHING has happened

while I have to live every day with this heavy weight on my shoulders. While I have to live every day recalling my assault. While I have to live every day in a world that refuses to support the victim. I am the victim of my attacker and of this university.

The silence I am forced to keep is just about as equally disturbing and hurtful as my assault itself. Having to put on a face every day that must shield my true feelings, fears, and thoughts is exhausting. It just reminds me each day that what I am forced to do is protecting my attacker. They are left to walk this campus and enjoy life living as if this was all a joke, a bad dream that they can fluff off that I will live for the rest of my life.

Here it is, Mr. President, I’ve put it out in the open now. There is nothing that can be done now to keep me quiet. I hope you know what to do from here with your campus. I give you the benefit of the doubt as someone who can truly make change to the institution you are getting to know and taking leadership of. I just hope you will listen. If you decide to ignore it I will know exactly who you are and what you are endorsing. Please don’t let me, or every other victim on this campus, down.

Vicki Rights



# *IronKnees*

Amanda Seely, Anthropology '15

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*How sad to veil a pretty face in cloth;  
How pathetic to kneel and submit to invisible almighty and despotic man*

Commodified solidarity and morsels of culture fill the bellies of piñatas; pummeling these with pent up angst is a favorite pastime of festive progressives.

Nauseatingly hackneyed, right? Rich western women as the moralistic banner-bearers of the world: the angle of their powdered noses the perfect trajectory for scorn; a pedestal of martyrous feminine “compassion” the ideal vantage point for superior judgment.

But standing ringside, throwing taunts and hurling bets is not the same as taking a hit.

We have our own battle—great as Goliath and insidious as cancer. Women, turn your tenacious gaze inward and confront the emptiness that consumes you and breathes life into your frenzy.

As I gaze in shame past my blurry, exaggerated features and commit that degrading act of self-punishment I wonder when I will deem my face too precious to bow before a receptacle for shit.

*How sad to veil a pretty face in toxic chemicals;  
How pathetic to kneel and submit to a porcelain confessional and retouched fashion models*

No, we don't even need men to actively oppress us. In our “advanced” society, we are adept at doing it ourselves.

Our natural impulses? Sloppy excess. Our beauty standards? Remediation of the inherent insufficiency of the female body.

Sisters, mothers, daughters, friends: when will we say, “enough is enough?”

Our knees are sore—let's stand up.





# *The Age of Innocence*

Laura Ewton, Communications &  
Women's and Gender Studies '13

Magazines spread out all over the floor.  
Covers cut unevenly, taped to the wall.

It's the age of innocence.

Womanhood defined through pictures and products,  
I learn at a young age.

Close resemblance to my mother.  
I stand back and watch her as she looks in the mirror.  
She asks herself, "Why can't I just be pretty?"

Cancelled plans, she won't get out of bed.  
She doesn't want to show her face.  
She's my other half;  
Why doesn't she see she's beautiful?

It is no longer the age of innocence.

The alarm sounds.  
I groan. I want more time for sleep,  
But the consequences are much greater  
If I do not wake to paint my face.

Why can't I just look in the mirror  
Without a string of critiques racing through my mind?  
We may share the same DNA,  
But we are no longer the same.

I put the magazines and self-loathing away.  
She may be my other half, but today,  
I refuse to hang my head in shame.  
Today, I will love myself for who I am.

No more cancelled plans.  
No more not wanting to get out of bed.  
I am not afraid to show just who I am.

Future generations of women in my family,  
Will no longer look to those pictures or products for beauty or approval,  
But will find it inside themselves.

This is the legacy I will leave behind,  
By loving myself and others.





# *Students of the Left:* *what it is, and why it exists*<sup>1</sup>

Students of the Left is a recently formed group at PLU. We aim to study the left—radical works of history, geography, political economy, and social theory—and to provide a much-needed leftist antidote to the ideology and practices of neoliberalized global capitalism, the hegemony of which is best encapsulated by Former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's nauseating remark that "there is no alternative."

Starting from the viewpoint that the pervasive injustices which plague our world are neither natural nor accidental outcomes of history, we wish to expose and critique how inequalities are systematically produced and institutionally maintained. We also wish to develop a language of possibility surrounding fundamental social transformation. We abhor the idea that there is no alternative. There *must* be alternatives to this dehumanizing system in which human beings are commodified and seen as disposable, while social suffering and environmental destruction are considered inevitable costs of "doing business," and, perhaps even more disturbingly, are preyed upon as yet additional investment opportunities.

Our desire to understand the historical-geographical context and the structural causes of oppression leads us to view capitalism as the source that produces and reproduces social misery and environmental degradation, not to mention erodes the possibility for democratic politics. Therefore, it is only logical that we are anti-capitalists.<sup>2</sup>

The capitalist mode of production is based on the exploitation of working people by a small group of economic elites. Members of the working class are forced to

sell their labor to members of the capitalist class (who own the means of production) in exchange for a wage. Despite the fact that it is labor power that produces surplus value, it is capitalists who subsequently appropriate it for their own purposes. Rather than spend away the surplus, which would surely drive him or her out of business, the capitalist is compelled to reinvest the surplus in expanded production. More surplus value is produced by workers, it is reinvested in new areas, and on and on the story goes. The endurance of capitalism depends on ceaseless expansion: a compound growth rate of roughly 3% is necessary to be considered "healthy." This means that capitalists must constantly find profitable outlets in which to invest surplus capital. Endless capital accumulation thus depends on the constant production and absorption of surplus capital, irrespective of the social and environmental costs this incurs.

The massive accumulation and concentration of wealth leads to a massive accumulation and concentration of political power. The capitalist class then uses its coercive influence to gain increasing control over different mechanisms of the state, the media, and other institutions like think tanks and (increasingly) universities, as a way to legitimize and reinforce its rule. There is a central and irreconcilable contradiction between the assumption of the capitalist system of economic inequality and the assumption of (neo)liberal ideology of political equality; the notion that political equality could exist without economic equality is certainly illogical. The political power afforded by extreme concentrations of wealth gives rise to plutocratic and oligarchic forms of governance,

<sup>1</sup>The purpose of this piece is to outline our group's basic understanding of the present situation and to explain our views and intentions. While I believe the members of SL would generally agree with what has been written, which is why I use "we" throughout the essay, I want to emphasize that all views, as well as any errors, are mine alone.

<sup>2</sup>I say anti-capitalist to highlight the fact that there is a broad range of left alternatives to capitalism and to convey that there is no prescription for what a new society would look like.



calling into question the seemingly commonsensical yet deeply flawed association of capitalism and democracy.

Furthermore, as Karl Marx explains in Volume I of *Capital*, the “accumulation of wealth at one pole is, therefore, at the same time accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation, at the opposite pole.”<sup>3</sup> That the enrichment of the few is directly related to the immiseration of the masses should also call into question the popular but inaccurate association of capitalism and freedom.

Throughout the 20th century, the collective power of worker, civil rights, feminist, environmental, and other social movements achieved victories that reduced the power of capital over labor and engendered a relatively gentler form of capitalism, in which inequalities and injustices were softened.<sup>4</sup> When Keynesianism—a mixed economy approach whose principle theorist and advocate was British economist John Maynard Keynes—was held as the conventional wisdom, from Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal as to Lyndon B. Johnson’s Great

### “The enrichment of the few is directly related to the immiseration of the masses”

Society, the development of the welfare state led to reduced levels of economic inequality. This milder version of capitalism continues to exist in some European countries, especially in Scandinavia. However, the few remaining moderate examples of capitalism are under constant threat of being undermined and converted into the contemporarily dominant and extremely vicious form of capitalism known as neoliberalism.<sup>5</sup>

Neoliberalism refers to a particularly brutal version of capitalism that seeks to dismantle the welfare state and subsequently privatize public goods, such as water, health care, education, pensions, and more, as a means of forcing open profitable investment opportunities that permit the increased accumulation and concentration of capital. As radical geographer David Harvey succinctly argues in his 2005 book *Brief History of Neoliberalism*, neoliberalism has been a political, economic, and ideological project to create the necessary conditions for

capital accumulation and to restore and consolidate capitalist class power. Since the mid-1970s, and especially since the elections of Thatcher and Ronald Reagan in 1979 and 1980, privatization, deregulation (especially of the financial sector), and the withdrawal of the state from social provision have become routine processes. The flip side of the eradication of the welfare state has been the formation of a neoliberal, or corporate, state. In other words, the state has been drastically reconfigured in recent decades to primarily, if not solely, reflect the interests of economic elites.

The concept that perhaps best illuminates the underlying objective of neoliberal capitalism is Harvey’s notion of ‘accumulation by dispossession,’ from his 2003 book *The New Imperialism*. Accumulation by dispossession is an extension of Marx’s theory of ‘primitive accumulation,’ which is the term Marx used to describe the violent processes that originally created the necessary conditions for capital accumulation. Harvey says that a closer look at Marx’s description of primitive accumulation exposes a wide-ranging set of processes that include:

the commodification and privatization of land and the forceful expulsion of peasant populations; the conversion of various forms of property rights (common, collective, state, etc.) into exclusive private property rights; the suppression of rights to the commons; the commodification of labour power and the suppression of alternative (indigenous) forms of production and consumption; colonial, neo-colonial, and imperial processes of appropriation of assets (including natural resources); the monetization of exchange and taxation, particularly of land; the slave trade; and usury, the national debt, and ultimately the credit system...<sup>6</sup>

Paradoxically, neoliberal practices have been accompanied by a discourse of increased individual freedom. As Harvey puts it, “It has been part of the genius of neoliberal theory to provide a benevolent mask full of wonderful-sounding words like freedom, liberty, choice, and rights, to hide the grim realities of the restoration or reconstitution of naked class power.”<sup>7</sup> The association of neoliberalism with increased individual freedom is truly absurd, given that the neoliberalization of capitalism has

<sup>3</sup>Marx, Karl. *Capital: Critique of Political Economy*. 1867. Chapter 25, Section 4.

<sup>4</sup>Of course, many inequalities and injustices still existed, as evidenced by the fact that this time period was plagued by patriarchy, white supremacy, segregation, rapid suburbanization, imperialist warfare, and the emergence of a military-industrial complex. However, the gap between rich and poor was shrinking, rather than growing, while social services were being expanded, rather than being eliminated.

<sup>5</sup>This term can be especially confusing in the U.S., where the word “liberal” is generally understood to mean socially liberal and thus has positive connotations. “Liberal,” in this sense, is a reference to economic liberalism, or the laissez faire views of Adam Smith and other influential British philosophers and political economists who were strong advocates of the free market and free trade, such as David Ricardo. “Neo” conveys the relatively recent nature of the neoliberal turn, which began in the mid-1970s.

<sup>6</sup>Harvey, David. *The New Imperialism*. 2003: Oxford University Press. p. 145.

<sup>7</sup>Harvey, David. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. 2005: Oxford University Press. p. 119.



undeniably exacerbated the inequalities and injustices of the global economy. One must ask: freedom for whom? For people like the billionaire Carlos Slim—who has become the richest man in the world after privatizing Mexico's telecommunications system—sure. But not for poor Mexicans who have been forced by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) to migrate to the U.S., where most politicians and many citizens routinely scapegoat them for issues of unemployment and reductions in social services (which are problems also caused by neoliberal economic policies!). I doubt that the countless families who have been destroyed by millions of deportations in recent years consider themselves free.

The upward redistribution of wealth has been a defining feature of neoliberalism, and the current levels of inequality caused by this process are stunning and heartbreaking. In the U.S., “for every one dollar of assets owned by” an individual black or Latina woman, “a member of the Forbes 400 has over forty million dollars.” Or, as Paul Buchheit puts it in his article, “a can of soup for a black or Hispanic woman, a mansion and yacht for the businessman.” Since the start of the foreclosure crisis (better termed the eviction of millions of poor people, disproportionately black and brown, from their homes) provoked by the Wall Street-induced housing crash, the median wealth of Latino households fell 66%, and there was a 53% decrease for black households.

While investment bankers have recovered extremely well and continue to amass exorbitant amounts of wealth for their posse, the average single black or Latina woman now has a net worth of roughly \$100. In addition, the difference between what CEOs and their minimum wage workers are paid each hour is \$5,000.00 versus \$7.25.<sup>8</sup> Since money in a capitalist society is supposed to be a representation of value, this conveys that a CEO is nearly 700 times more valuable than his or her minimum wage employees. This could not be farther from the truth! Workers are the very people who produce wealth, yet they find themselves divorced from the fruits of their labor.

According to a 2011 study conducted by the Congressional Budget Office, the share of total annual income in the U.S. going to the top 1% increased from 11.3% in 1979 to 20.9% in 2007.<sup>9</sup> Wealth inequality is even more egregious than income inequality. The wealthiest 1% of

U.S. citizens controls 35.6% of the country's total wealth. The wealthiest 10% of U.S. citizens controls 75% of the national wealth, meaning the remaining 25% of the country's wealth is left to be divided amongst the remaining 90% of U.S. residents.<sup>10</sup> The net worth of the Walton family (heirs to the Wal-Mart fortune) alone is as large as the net worth of the bottom 48.8 million families in the U.S. combined. That is, six individuals have as much wealth as 41.5% of all U.S. families!<sup>11</sup> The numbers are even more disturbing on a global scale. The richest 1% of the world's population has accumulated 43% of the world's wealth. Meanwhile, the poorest 80% of the world's population has only 6% of the world's wealth between them. Global wealth disparity is worsening. 200 years ago, rich countries were three times richer than poor countries. By the end of 1960s, they were 35 times richer. Now, they are 80 times richer! A world in which the wealthiest 200 people on Earth have more than the poorest 3.5 billion people combined certainly isn't the kind of world that I want to live in.<sup>12</sup>

Many people will be surprised to learn that the unfair rules governing the global economy—which regularly pass for common sense today—were actually born from the wreckage in Santiago. On September 11, 1973, democratically-elected socialist President Salvador Allende was assassinated in a military coup organized by Chilean and U.S. elites, Richard Nixon, and Henry Kissinger. The bombing of La Moneda (the Chilean equivalent of the White House) was carried out with help from the CIA. It was precisely the democratic nature of Chile's transition to socialism that so frightened Kissinger and Nixon. They could not stomach the notion that President Allende might provide a successful example of achieving socialism through democratic elections. Instead, Chileans were forced to endure the 17-year long military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet, who forcefully implemented the neoliberal model in the country since regarded as “the laboratory of neoliberalism.”

State terror became the official policy of the Southern Cone via a 1975 agreement amongst the right-wing military dictatorships in Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia, and Brazil, called Operation Condor.<sup>13</sup> This pact was a transnational plan to collaborate on eradicating leftists and their ideals, and eventually all dissent-

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<sup>8</sup>Buchheit, Paul. “Five Ugly Extremes of Inequality in America.” *Alternet*. 24 March 2013.

<sup>9</sup>Congressional Budget Office. “Trends in the Distribution of Household Income Between 1979 and 2007.” October 2011.

<sup>10</sup>Allegretto, Sylvia A. “The State of Working America's Wealth, 2011: Through volatility and turmoil, the gap widens.” *Economic Policy Institute*. 23 March 2011.

<sup>11</sup>Bivens, Josh. “Inequality, exhibit A: Walmart and the wealth of American families.” *Economic Policy Institute*. 17 July 2012.

<sup>12</sup>Hickel, Jason. “The truth about extreme global inequality.” *Aljazeera*. 14 April 2013.

<sup>13</sup>Condor is a disturbing metaphor for a bird in the Southern Cone that hovers over a large amount of territory, looking for and waiting to prey on the vulnerable.



ers and those labeled subversives. Hundreds of thousands of people were tortured, killed, “disappeared,” or forced to go into exile, while millions more were made to suffer the daily indignities of living without any liberty under a military dictatorship, and several complicated consequences persist.

In Chile, the economy was turned over to small group of Chilean-born economists who had trained under Milton Friedman at the University of Chicago. These “Chicago Boys,” as they are called, went on to direct the privatization of healthcare, education, pensions, telecommunications, water, and other public utilities, in addition to introducing credit cards to cashless Chilean consumers. Chile has experienced economic growth since, leading proponents of free market mythology to hail it as a “miraculous” example of the promise of neoliberal development. However, inequality has ballooned, as nearly all of the country’s wealth has been funneled into the hands of a few Chilean elites and multinational corporations, an instructive example of accumulation by dispossession. For the transnational capitalist class, this has been nothing

short of a miracle! For the rest, it has been a painful experience of violent deprivation. The whole history of the implementation of neoliberalism has been full of extreme political repression. The deeply undemocratic nature of the now dominant global political, economic, and social (dis)order should be revealed by the fact that its genesis depended on use of torture chambers.

By now, nearly every country in the world has been afflicted with the neoliberal disease, to varying degrees. Fortunately, not every country has had to endure a military dictatorship in order for the virus to take hold. It would be misleading say that the implementation of neoliberalism in the U.S. required an equivalent amount of violence as it did in the Southern Cone. But it would be equally misleading to pretend that neoliberalism has been implemented peacefully here. The late 1960s assassinations of the democratic socialist Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Black Panther Party member Fred Hampton, and students at Kent State, all of whom posed a threat to what Dr. King called the triple evils of capitalism, racism, and

militarism, cannot be viewed in isolation from an attempt by the capitalist class to reassert its power in a period of increasing dissent.<sup>14</sup> Any perceived scarcity of physical violence has definitely been supplemented by an overabundance of structural violence. Take, for example, the mass incarceration and subsequent disenfranchisement of millions of disproportionately black men, women, and teenagers, or what Michelle Alexander aptly terms “The New Jim Crow.”<sup>15</sup> Does it not share eerie similarities with the Southern Cone phenomenon of “disappearing” certain elements of a population deemed undesirable?

One recurring theme regarding the invasion of neoliberalism is that it has been deeply undemocratic. In her 2007 book, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, Naomi Klein documents how the implementation of neoliberal economic policies has hinged on being preceded by a shock (bombing of La Moneda), disaster (Hurricane Katrina), or crisis (debt emergency) of some kind.<sup>16</sup> The neoliberals thrive at managing crises—including ones they manufacture themselves—to their own selfish ends.

**“By now, nearly every country in the world has been afflicted with the neoliberal disease, to varying degrees”**

For example, when struggling countries are in

dire need of assistance, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) grants high interest loans only on the condition that the indebted country restructures its economy according to a set of policies called “structural adjustment.” IMF-mandated structural adjustment programs require that countries privatize their public utilities and social services in order to receive a loan. U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan once infamously said that “the best thing that happened to the education system in New Orleans was Hurricane Katrina.” In this statement, Duncan revealed the fact that before being taken over by private forces, existing public schools must first be destroyed. In the case of New Orleans, a devastating hurricane is the disaster that investors have been thrilled to take advantage of. An instructive example of a manufactured crisis is the unraveling and impending privatization of the U.S. Postal Service, which is currently underway, after Congress created a funding emergency in 2006 by requiring the USPS (but no other government agency) to prepay billions of dollars of health benefits to future retirees. What better

<sup>14</sup>Although it is rarely acknowledged, Dr. King’s dream was far more extensive than his well-known call for ending racial prejudice. There is a great need to recapture Dr. King’s revolutionary spirit. After seeing that the monumental gains in civil rights had not improved the material conditions of many black people, Dr. King shifted his focus to alleviating poverty amongst all races. He organized the Poor People’s Campaign, which was a multiracial effort that demanded economic rights for poor people of all colors. He was also a fierce critic of the Vietnam War. He was supporting striking sanitation workers in Memphis, Tennessee, when he was murdered.

<sup>15</sup>Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. 2010: The New Press.

<sup>16</sup>Klein, Naomi. *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. 2007: Metropolitan Henry Holt.



way to remake the world after their heart's neoliberal desire than to purposefully bankrupt the social services they seek to destroy? I imagine that the neoliberals are avid readers of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, since they have so well perfected O'Brien's mandate: "We shall squeeze you empty, and then we shall fill you with ourselves."<sup>17</sup>

Squeezing via dispossession and subsequent filling has been a visible pattern. Recall that if capital cannot find profitable outlets for investment, a crisis ensues. Harvey explains that a lot of what has been driving the past 40 years of globalization—in addition to the neoliberal penchant for accumulation by dispossession—is a related attempt by capitalism to bypass its inherent susceptibility to crises. Harvey calls this method of circumventing crises the 'spatial fix,' which is defined as "capitalism's insatiable drive to resolve its inner crisis tendencies by geographical expansion and geographical restructuring."<sup>18</sup> Whether it is a national case like that of U.S. suburbanization, or the farther-reaching phenomenon of neoliberal globalization—which is a multifaceted phenomenon but is often used as a euphemism for (neo)colonialism and (neo)imperialism—these geographical expansions provide ample opportunities for the production and absorption of surplus capital. Accumulation by dispossession and spatial fixes are the means by which economic elites attempt to overcome (at least temporarily) the 'capital surplus absorption problem' that drives crisis formation. This leads Harvey to conclude that capitalism never really solves its crises; it simply moves them around geographically.<sup>19</sup>

Considering how capitalism has spread throughout the world—robbing and displacing the masses along the way—the enduring history of colonialism and imperialism is largely a history of accumulation by dispossession and spatial fixes. Strikingly, Marx had already developed the concept of primitive accumulation (accumulation by dispossession) in the later chapters of Volume I of *Capital*. In addition, Marx and Engels had already developed in the *Communist Manifesto* (published in 1848!) an outline of the spatial fix as an explanation of globalization when they wrote that "the need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the entire surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere."<sup>20</sup>

Literally everywhere. Healthcare has already been largely privatized in many countries, leaving the already vulnerable, uninsured population even more helpless. Water, telecommunications, and other public utilities are constantly under threat, turning basic daily necessities into luxuries connected to ability to pay. Among the most disturbing

trends is the privatization of immigrant detention centers and other prisons, which incentivizes an expansion of the punitive security state. Meanwhile, these increasingly profitable forms of social control prevent the creation of anything approaching just immigration, drug, or other social policies. Equally disturbing is the accelerating privatization of education at all levels. Using standardized testing as a weapon to punish students and teachers by closing already marginalized public schools, establishing charter schools as profitable investment opportunities, converting precious children into instruments of capital accumulation, and increasing the concentration of the means of knowledge production in fewer and fewer private hands is not only criminal, but it also spells a bleak future for us all. The corporatization of education is taking place within higher education, too. One of the most illustrative examples I can think of is the fact that universities such as Harvard and Vanderbilt have been involved in the escalation of large-scale corporate acquisitions of land in sub-Saharan Africa via the way they invest their multi-billion dollar endowments in private equity firms.

Land grabbing, prison-building, and charter school "reform" are just a few examples of attempts by the capitalist class to overcome crises through spatial fixes and accumulation by dispossession. As Harvey pointed out in a lecture I attended in Santiago called "Social Injustice and Accumulation by Dispossession," it appears that the general outlook of the global financial oligarchy is that perhaps the only—and surely the most foolproof—way to ensure the survival of capitalism is to buy up every square inch of the world's land; they actually believe that a final, global enclosure of the commons will literally permit them to *own the earth*.

The disturbing goal of owning the earth is made easier by owning the political spectrum. The Republicans have clearly positioned themselves not only as the party of the wealthy but also as the party of white supremacy and misogyny. But notice the complete absence of attempts by Democrats—who talk (at least during the electoral season) as if they work on behalf of the middle class, women and people of color—to put a stop to foreclosures, alongside their failure to prosecute any of the associated criminal activity taking place on Wall Street. Not only do the Democrats fail to prosecute Wall Street criminals, but they actively work on their behalf, too.

For example, the Obama administration's heinous *Race to the Top* education policy exacerbates public school closings and accelerates the privatization of education set in motion by Bush's *No Child Left Behind*. It turns out that

<sup>17</sup>Orwell, George. *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. 1949.

<sup>18</sup>Harvey, David. "Globalization and the 'Spatial Fix.'" *Geographische Revue*. 2001: p. 23.

<sup>19</sup>Harvey, David. *The Enigma of Capital and the Crises of Capitalism*. 2010: Oxford University Press.

<sup>20</sup>Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels. *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. 1848.



the 1% actually has two political parties! The 'Party of Wall Street,' as Harvey calls it, rules, resulting in a bipartisan agreement to protect the narrow and inhumane interests of the capitalist class.<sup>21</sup>

We currently find ourselves living in a post-*Citizens United* world of "corporate personhood" (without the corresponding legal responsibility, it seems), \$6 billion dollar election extravaganzas, and the appointment of unelected "Emergency Financial Managers" to further bleed cities like Detroit. How these embarrassing spectacles pass for democracy is beyond me. The illusion of a left-right battle between the Democrats and the Republicans

is one that we must challenge. A belief in this false dichotomy when the reality is that there are two strikingly similar parties perpetuates continuous right-wing control. Left political theorist Sheldon Wolin noticed the staggering amount of ideological convergence between the two parties and began warning of a creeping 'inverted totalitarianism' as early as 2003.<sup>22</sup> Inverted totalitarianism differs from examples of overt totalitarianism in the 20th century in that it "wield[s] total power without appearing to, without establishing concentration camps, or enforcing ideological uniformity, or forcibly suppressing dissident elements so long as they remain ineffectual."<sup>23</sup>

In a similar vein, Camila Vallejo—one of the principal leaders of the inspiring Chilean Students Movement for free, quality public education—has pointed out that Chile has transitioned from a military dictatorship to a dictatorship of the market. While the huge reduction in physical and psychological violence is an immensely important step that saying "NO" to Pinochet accomplished, the failure of the subsequent governments to say "NO" to the neoliberal model imposed by Pinochet has resulted in dictatorial violence being replaced by structural violence. That Pinochet's economic and even constitutional framework persists—along with all of the corresponding inequality—is hardly an acceptable outcome for those who fought for democracy. Many Chileans, who understand the incompatibility of neoliberalism and democracy, explain that they don't live in a democratic society but rather in a post-dictatorship society. While its actions were constrained by Pinochet's heavy-handed presence as commander-in-chief of the army until 1998 and as "senator-for-life" until his arrest in 2002, the



*The Chilean Student Movement, a series of student-led protests beginning in 2011, took to the streets to demand major reforms in the country's education system.*

Concertación—Chile's center-left political coalition that was in power from the elections in 1990 until 2010—did little to challenge the policies put into place by the military dictatorship. Rather than present a fundamental challenge to what they once considered the illegitimate and unwelcome neoliberal model, the Concertación played an integral role in legitimizing and strengthening it. In his 1997 book, *Chile Today: Anatomy of a Myth*, radical Chilean social scientist Tomás Moulian calls this an example of "the leopard changing its spots." By this, Moulian means that the modification of the political packaging has enabled the perpetuation of the economic contents.<sup>24</sup>

The dramatic rightward shift of politics that has led formerly center-left parties to not only adopt but to actually embrace and advance the right-wing neoliberal agenda has taken place in Britain after Thatcher and in the U.S. after Reagan. In Britain, the Labour Party has failed to make a clean break with Thatcher's neoliberalism so that New Labour has been described as Thatcher's biggest victory, since she got "her opponents to buy into her mythology."<sup>25</sup> In the U.S., the Democrats of today are the Republicans of yesterday, while the Republicans of today have sprinted so far to the right that they've stepped right off the face of the real world that—given their obsession with anti-intellectualism—they probably believe is flat. It could be argued that these New Democrats are Reagan's biggest success. Every president since Reagan (whether Republican or Democrat) has largely done as Reagan would do. In some respects,

<sup>21</sup>There is a big difference between the state and national Democratic Party that I criticize and its well-intentioned local politicians and grassroots supporters. I think that most on-the-ground Democrats are actually very progressive (much more so than their party leadership!), and there is even a small number in Congress whose efforts are commendable. But the fact that Young Democrats has to spend so much time preventing a Democratic president from cutting Social Security explains one reason why the left has to be on the defensive all the time.

<sup>22</sup>See: Wolin, Sheldon. "Inverted Totalitarianism." *The Nation*. 1 May 2003.

<sup>23</sup>Wolin, Sheldon. *Democracy Incorporated: Managed Democracy and the Specter of Inverted Totalitarianism*. 2008: Princeton University Press. pp. 57-58.

<sup>24</sup>Moulian, Tomas. *Chile actual: anatomia de un mito*. 2002: LOM Ediciones.



Clinton and Obama have been more successful at emulating Reagan than Bush I and Bush II dreamed was possible. It is Clinton, after all, who signed NAFTA, demolished welfare, and repealed the Glass-Steagall Act that had separated commercial and investment banking. It is Obama, after all, who has willingly offered to dismantle Social Security, taking us one step closer to the neoliberals' sinister dream of having freezing, homeless seniors roam the streets. The mean-spirited, far-right Republicans have (understandably) been too unpopular to make this dark spectacle come true themselves, but they are happy to let the center-right Democrats (who are often mistaken as being caring) do their dirty work. While they are very effective at appearing to be the "lesser of two evils," the Democrats have still pledged allegiance to advancing malicious neoliberal economic policies in the name of capital and a militarized foreign policy in the name of empire. As radical political analyst Glen Ford argues, the ability of the Democratic Party to appear concerned at the same time as they successfully advance a heartless right-wing neoliberal agenda often makes them the "more effective evil."<sup>26</sup>

Chilean students have posed a brilliant question: "If Pinochet is dead, why does Pinochetism live on?" We should echo this question. If Reagan is dead, why does Reaganism prevail? Thatcher is now gone, so why is Thatcherism still around? The three generals of a one-sided class war have all fallen, and their ongoing legacies ought to be undone, too. Pinochet, Reagan, and Thatcher have been buried. It is long past time to bury Pinochetism, Reaganism, and Thatcherism.

Thatcher was fond of saying "There is no such thing as society." Sadly, her disheartening slogan came to dominate peoples' mental conceptions of the world, exacerbating hyper-individualism and mass consumption, while cultivating cruelty rather than compassion. Historical amnesia, geographical unawareness, and various social degradations have greatly diminished our collective political imagination. It is crucial to ask the question: *Who controls the conversation about what's possible?*

Throughout the world but certainly in the U.S., the confines of the debate are so narrow and so far skewed to the right that thinking outside of the pre-determined boundaries of acceptable opinion is really difficult. In order to rekindle our political, economic, social, and geographical imaginations for a better world, we consider it imperative to struggle against the normalization of the world's horribly unjust social conditions and the unquestioning acceptance of the current system as the only legitimate way to organize social life. George Orwell once said that "in a time of universal deceit, telling the truth becomes a revolutionary act." Our task, then, is to uncover and tell the truth about the

destruction that neoliberal capitalism hath wrought, how it has prevented full human development and squandered so much human potential, and what kind of grim world we may descend into should we fail to build a coherent and powerful anti-capitalist politics.

The truth is that throughout the past 40 years, notions of the public good have been demonized and cast aside to accommodate the ever-growing plutocratic power of multinational corporations and a global financial oligarchy. As a consequence of this neoliberal malaise, impoverishment, unemployment, homelessness, incarceration, personal indebtedness, a growing gap between rich and poor, austerity, and a whole host of other expressions of inexcusable social suffering condemn the huge majority of the world's population to premature death or to scraping by, full of anxiety and insecurity.

One reason for the normalization of brutal injustices and the naturalization of neoliberal capitalism is that conservative (as in neoliberal) and centrist outlooks dominate the media, some classrooms, and other realms of social life. Meanwhile, progressive and radical viewpoints are suppressed, making it difficult to express ideas that are critical of the existing political-economic system. Endless capital accumulation is considered commonsensical, while those who point out the socially, ecologically, and politically devastating consequences of a socially alienating system based on relentless pillaging of environmental resources and expropriating the labor of others to achieve growth for growth's sake, are considered brash and foolish, if not outright stupid. We believe that those who think that we can and should maintain this increasingly irrational and poisonous system in the face of evidence that the only way to do so will be subject billions of people to unbearably harsh socio-ecological conditions are truly silly and reckless. We don't want to be, as Cornel West often puts it, "well-adjusted to injustice and well-adapted to indifference."

We are against the pathological privatization and commodification of everything, which entails converting what have long been considered components of the public good into marketable "things" to be bought and sold. Clean water, nutritious food, adequate housing, quality healthcare, critical education, ample pensions, and efficient transit ought to be human rights, not commodities. These social and economic rights are the basic prerequisites for living autonomous, happy, fulfilling, productive lives in association with others. As such, there should be equitable access to all of these public goods, provided by democratically-governed political structures. Our opponents will likely ask who will pay for what they maliciously call "handouts."

We believe the capitalist class ought to pay.

<sup>25</sup>Numns, Alex. "Dispelling the Thatcher myths." *Red Pepper*. April 2013.

<sup>26</sup>Ford, Glen. "Why Barack Obama is the More Effective Evil." *Black Agenda Report*. 21 March 2012.





“Pinochet, Reagan, and Thatcher have been buried.

It is long past time to bury Pinochetism, Reaganism, and Thatcherism.”

It is the 99%, after all, who have been made to pay for the 1%'s grotesque wars in Iraq and elsewhere. In addition, capitalism has long externalized (more accurately socialized) the risks and costs of social reproduction and environmental degradation. Is it unreasonable to demand that the 1% now be made to pay for universal access to public education, healthcare, housing, transportation, food, and water? We don't think so. In fact, we think that is the only reasonable thing to demand. Slashing military spending, taxing the super-rich, and bringing banks under public ownership to convert them into socially-beneficial public utilities would easily make our ambitions achievable. Governments are not broke, as repeatedly conveyed by the dominant narrative of politicians and the media, which have redirected the world's attention from the crisis of capitalism to the “crisis” of public spending and budget deficits. In reality, governments and the people have been pickpocketed by a parasitic capitalist class that subjects citizens to inane amounts of debt, while it simultaneously enjoys lavish subsidies, dodges taxes, and wastes money and ruins lives through mindless wars. We must struggle to reconfigure the state to be socially-oriented and democratic.

We are fed up with the demands of the ruling class for austerity in an era of record profits for multinational corporations and Wall Street. Even despite the economic meltdown, the investment bankers who essentially generated the collapse have emerged better off than before! Why in the world are they receiving performance-related bonuses? That they do continue to receive bonuses after wrecking so many lives should reveal that “performing well” in this day and age is based on how well one is able to siphon off public wealth and deliver it to private hands. Meanwhile, politicians of both corporate parties—with the exception of a small minority of progressive Democrats—toy around with the so-called sequester and other automatic budget cuts, as if reducing or eliminating spending on social programs won't result in real, significant suffering, especially amongst

children and including an escalation of preventable deaths. We are indignant about the human rights catastrophes associated with crippling poverty, hunger, thirst, homelessness, relentless warfare as a “solution” to the geopolitical problems that are often a result of capitalism's

uneven development, and mass incarceration of the marginalized as a “solution” to the very social ills produced by neoliberal capitalism's inequality-producing (il)logic.

Not only do we want to fight against capitalist exploitation and exclusion, but also against imperialism, militarization, institutionalized racism, patriarchy, xenophobia, and homophobia, all of which work together to sustain this repulsive system. Highlighting the interplay between class-based exploitation and racialized and gendered forms of oppression is a central concern of ours. Given that power asymmetries based on social differences serve to divide the 99% to the delight of the 1%, it follows that any struggle for socialism must be a struggle against not only the power of capital, but also empire, militarism, racism, patriarchy, and xenophobia. A coherent and powerful push by the world's 99% for global justice necessitates a unified, multi-scalar movement against oppression of all kinds.

There should be far more synergy than antagonism between these struggles, considering how much we all need each other to achieve the equitable, just, democratic, and peaceful society we envision. It's possible to see, for example, how movements against home foreclosures, land grabbing (whether in Detroit or Honduras or Tanzania), the prison-industrial complex, and the education-industrial complex provide fertile collaborative ground for anti-capitalist, anti-racist, and feminist struggles. The ruling class trembles at the thought of a coordinated coalition of leftists who challenge both capitalism and the social hierarchies that underpin the manipulation and domination of the 99% by the 1%. As such, we should work together on a more comprehensive emancipatory project whose goal is to make it possible for all human beings to realize their own potential and unique capacities. As Michael A. Lebowitz argues, “the unifying element in all these struggles is the right of everyone to full human development.”<sup>27</sup>



It will take a huge intellectual and political effort to construct an emancipatory project capable of overthrowing these oppressive forces, and transforming capitalism's geographies of dispossession into geographies of liberation. This is no small task, but it is one that to which we wish to contribute. As students, we believe that education has an important role to play in this regard. Again, the Chilean students are spot on when they ask "What do we learn, how do we learn it, and why?" As Richard Shaull puts it in the forward to Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, "education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world."<sup>28</sup> We recognize that education is a moral and political practice that cannot be neutral. We agree with radical education scholar Henry Giroux that there is a pressing need to "reclaim the academy in its multiple forms as a site of critique and a public good, one that connects knowledge and power, scholarship and public life, and pedagogy and civic engagement." This is especially important because, as Giroux argues, "universities are some of the few places left where a struggle for the commons, for public life, if not democracy itself, can be made visible through the medium of collective voices and social movements energized by the need for a politics and way of life counter to authoritarian capitalism."<sup>29</sup> Universities cannot simply repeat corporate orthodoxy and produce obedient neoliberal subjects. They must be places of social critique and exploration of just alternatives.

Ultimately, we must mobilize to radically transform our society into one that places more importance on meeting human needs than on lining the already-overflowing pockets of a small few. Prioritizing social well-being over the private accumulation of socially-produced wealth is the essence of what it means to be on the left. We recognize that Stalinism and other deplorable regimes carried out under the name of socialism—but which were actually antithetical to the emancipatory aims of socialism and have perverted and distorted its image—have failed in tragic ways. We are not sympathetic in any way

to these failures of the past; we detest totalitarianism of all kinds. We seek to put forth anti-capitalist alternatives that avoid the pitfalls of many previous and some current endeavors. As Harvey points out in his 2010 book, *The Enigma of Capital and the Crises of Capitalism*—which we've been reading as a group this semester—there is a catch-22 in that the "lack of an alternative vision prevents the formation of an oppositional movement, while the absence of such a movement precludes the articulation of an alternative."<sup>30</sup> But this is not a time for the left to recoil. This is the time for the left to be ambitious and self-confident. We've got a world to win, as the saying goes.

Perhaps we can gain some confidence in the fact that oppositional movements are sprouting up throughout the globe, from the Indignados in Spain, to the Arab Spring, to the Occupy Movement, to the students in Chile and Quebec, to the striking miners in South Africa (34 of whom were murdered by police forces in August), to the leftist social movements gaining traction in Latin America, there is a good deal of social action taking place all over the world.

We are for a world in which the private accumulation of massive amounts of wealth is subordinated to meeting social needs. We think that human beings should be deemed more important than capital and that people and the planet should be put before profit. We envision a world defined by equitable social and economic relations, radical democracy, and real freedom for real (not corporate!) persons, in which people from all places have equal life chances, more control to shape their own destinies, and the opportunity to enjoy their lives more fully. Another world is possible. But as Marx once put it in a letter to Arnold Ruge in 1843, "we do not dogmatically anticipate the world, but only want to find the new world through criticism of the old one."<sup>31</sup> If you want to expose and criticize our unjust society, and in so doing, contribute to the process of building a new society that is truly fair, humane, and participatory, then please join us!

To learn more about Students of the Left, including how you can become involved, email [stancikw@plu.edu](mailto:stancikw@plu.edu)

<sup>27</sup>Lebowitz, Michael A. "The Unifying Element in All Struggles against Capital is the Right of Everyone to Full Human Development." *Monthly Review*. November 2011.

<sup>28</sup>Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. 1970: Continuum. p. 34.

<sup>29</sup>Giroux, Henry. "Angela Davis, Freedom and the Politics of Higher Education." *Truthout*. 9 April 2013.

<sup>30</sup>Harvey, David. *The Enigma of Capital and the Crises of Capitalism*. 2010: Oxford University Press. p. 227.

<sup>31</sup>Harvey, David. *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution*. 2012: Verso. p. 164.

<sup>32</sup>Marx, Karl. "Letter to Ruge." 1843.



## *Socks, Not Virginity*



Hey, have you seen my virginity lately?

*I'm not sure. Wait, why do you ask?*

There's all this talk about women sleeping around, waiting until marriage, and being pure. I guess I'm just trying to jump on the bandwagon.

*I'm so confused. What bandwagon? And why does it matter if you're a virgin?*

Well these people... you know, the people talking... they keep referencing their future husbands. They say they are going to "save themselves" for their husbands one day. Well, I can't be vacuum-packed or injected with preservatives, so I need to find my virginity. I want to get in on this special gift thing. Shoot, I'm pretty broke so if I can just give him my virginity I won't have to buy a wedding gift, right?

*I'm not sure it works quite like that.*

Why not? I only lost it six years ago. Some people find money or souvenirs they lost years ago! I'm just not sure how I should go about finding it. Like, is it hiding somewhere? Does someone have it? I'm not sure if I can just ask for it back, give a reward, or if I'm supposed to find it like you do a four-leaf clover. Do you think I can apply for a new v-card online? I mean, they have everything on the internet these days.

*I think virginity is more like a concept or idea, not something like a sock you can physically lose.*

I'm not following. A virgin is an idea? Like creationism? Okay, so let me get this straight: I'm not a virgin, but I'm still a whole, good-hearted, and morally sound individual? I can lose an idea but not actually lose a part of my being or character? Well I guess that's relieving—I was starting to think that my virgin friends were better quality people than I am, or more "pure" as some would say. I feel very reassured that we are equals despite our own choices to engage in sex.

*Now you are getting it! Yes, you are a wonderful person regardless of the form that satisfaction takes in your life. You are still a whole person that is and will be loved for every part of your existence.*

Now, to solve a real problem: where do all the lost socks go?



# *Untitled*

Andrea Capere, Sociology '13

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I am gas-lighted  
irrational,  
this complex rage  
“quiet down  
now  
you are just  
imagining things”

I am an extinguisher  
as I float in the room on teetering heels  
the laughter softens  
because I am  
far too delicate  
and also  
I am the joke

I am pilot-lit  
ignitable  
just waiting for  
a reason  
to engulf

I am arson  
painted in gasoline  
carrying a match  
after all,  
I was asking for it.



It comforts me to know that you still  
Read my poetry even when I thought  
My voice was silent scratchings on the inside of my cranium  
Opaque chalk  
Is that arrogant for a white man to think even  
If I'm caught in some gender matrix I don't understand  
And even if I'm trying to tear down the walls  
Of all the social constructs I see in a fire of nihilism  
Or though I'm at a dangerous intersection of mental health  
And isolation and queerness and small small smallw  
I'm at the crossing over point of veins and insanity and love?

All I want with these words splitting arrows down the middle  
And studying the grains and pulling them into splinters out from  
Underneath my toes where they've infected me and built up blood  
Flows and callouses and can only be pried free by calipers  
Cold steel to the touch sterile steel clinical precise uncaring  
Digital steel chilled by soft cyber winds and these calipers  
Digging around like scalpels extirpating every excruciating emotion  
Until I don't have feet anymore and that sickly locomotion  
Gives way to tree roots built from that agony and absorbing  
It into flowers and leaves and fruit solid foundations that  
Cannot be sullied by hurricanes or turned over by bulldozers  
Let alone calipers or scalpels or razors  
I want arborescence tall oak arms supple to the breeze  
But unyielding never falling I'll take all that painful blood filling  
Up my shoes and staining my socks and the puss from the infection  
Bloating my toes to look like purple grapes in the mouth of  
A Roman emperor and I'll convert it into pure energy

I'll convert it into pure energy and with those bloody splinters  
Split from arrows shot from taut cords vocal cords  
I'll build a tree in the middle of the street and stock it with  
Stop signs to cut off the disastrous traffic the human trafficking  
The congestion of insults hate oppression disease stinking  
Up society like the hazy fog that catches the sunlight in its  
Molecular walls and leaves it there to die as global warming  
Turning up the heat on polar bears and people  
While we just turn up the A/C and pay the bills with credit cards  
Swiped lazily but actively swiping away the future from children  
The inheritors of the earth they the meek and the least  
The last of all of us and they unspoken small small small

I'll be the traffic cop in that L.A. smog heat inversion  
Where the upper echelons tan and then relax in chilly palaces  
While the multitudes choke air and blister skin  
I'll be a legion of traffic cops that says no the intersectionality  
Of racism classism sexism homophobia hatred burning  
Up in global funeral pyres let's give social justice a try  
Instead of earth warfare where temperature is a bomb  
And we can't tell distinguish welfare checks and bribes  
Let's bring activism to the streets and from there take  
It into the fields and parks and beautiful nature that is birthright  
Common heritage of all living life and sacred right of peace

# Plant Daisies in Concrete Cracks

Andrew Tinker, Economics '16





# The Network for Peacebuilding and Conflict Management



*NPCM's event Day of Reconciliation*

*Photo Credit: Joshua Aten*



It doesn't take a rocket scientist to understand the plethora of social justice issues around the world. Picking up the newspaper, one can easily feel as though the world is going to Hell in a hand basket. Large corporations are misusing our natural resources; gender violence is of continual concern. Regional and multinational conflicts seem to be everywhere. The income gap is increasing, with minority children receiving notably less access to good education. Divorce is ripping more and more families apart with unaddressed or undermined long-term consequences. What can possibly be done? As a college student, what can I do to prepare myself to be an educated, well-rounded, knowledgeable and empathetic global citizen?

Network for Peacebuilding and Conflict Management, more fondly known as NPCM, is a student organization on campus dedicated to addressing social justice issues and conflicts on all levels. In March, NPCM highlighted the world's water crisis and local initiatives in Washington State. In April, NPCM and Interfaith Council hosted a candlelight vigil to celebrate Day of Reconciliation, an annual event dedicated to showcasing reconciliation and peacebuilding efforts around the world and understanding that there is much left to be done to make our world a more peaceful place.

Building on our social justice background, it is our great passion to understand and find creative solutions to conflict. Currently, NPCM officers are working on a program devoted to understanding that conflict doesn't have to be a battle, but rather a delicate dance that can be a highly rewarding and valuable experience. NPCM will be providing a training program for individuals who wish to learn how they can identify conflict, address the issues, and create mutually acceptable solutions. In addition, NPCM will be providing assistance in mapping conflicts ("What do I do? How do I talk about this with so-and-so?") and third-party mediation ("We're stuck and need help!"). The program will also provide an introduction to mediation work by allowing individuals to shadow trained student mediators during third-party mediation work and during Community Dialogue Day events.

At Network for Peacebuilding and Conflict Management, we believe everyone has the ability to create change. Thus, we welcome and strongly encourage all majors and minors to attend the two monthly club meetings (Thursday nights at 7 pm on alternating weeks) and get involved in our events and programming. We are currently looking for students interested in taking leadership roles within the club and on project committees. Peace and justice come in all shapes and sizes. What can you do to be a spark of positive change in the world?

If you'd like to learn more about NPCM or subscribe to an emailing list, please contact us at [npcm@plu.edu](mailto:npcm@plu.edu) or like us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/thenetworkforpeacebuilding](http://www.facebook.com/thenetworkforpeacebuilding).



# Attempts in *Defining Hate*

Katy Griswold, Psychology '13

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It is a thing

A being unto itself

Resides within its master –

Or is Hate the master of its housing?

The latter, more likely

For Hate is a thing, an all-consuming thing

It eats the thoughts, actions, energy

Of all within whom it resides

Destroys logic

Destroys empathy

Destroys humanity



## *Outskirts of Warsaw*



*The 1943 Warsaw Ghetto Uprising was a revolutionary act of resistance that arose when thousands of Jewish families began to oppose Nazi Germany's final efforts to transport the remaining population of the Warsaw Ghetto to Treblinka extermination camp.*

I wrote this piece on the plane ride home from Berlin, Germany where I spent a month studying the Holocaust. "Outskirts of Warsaw" is about Treblinka, a death camp 50 miles outside of Warsaw. Between 1942 and 1943, Germans murdered somewhere between 870,000 and 925,000 Jews at the Treblinka death camp. Many were killed in the gas chambers then sent to the ovens so that their bodies would burn and could then be disposed of in the mass graves that are scattered throughout the countryside. Treblinka continues to haunt my memories and my dreams.

This is a dirge (a song of mourning and lamentation) for the victims that cried out when nobody was listening. This song is for all of the voices I heard as I walked the same path that hundreds of thousands of people followed to the gas chambers. This is a song for any person, alive or dead, that has suffered because of racism, prejudice, or hatred. I will never be able to forget what I saw in Poland and I hope I never do.



## Lyrics

*Oh Papa Papa, would play your violin?  
Cause I miss the sound of it dancin' in the wind.  
Oh Mama Mama, our food they keep rationin'  
But I love you all the same and it's for you I'm smugglin'*

*But on the outskirts of Warsaw Oh, I want to go back home  
I wanna feel the wind and snow upon my skin  
And although our people cry we must fight the hatred in their eyes  
And hope through our whispers he is listenin'*

*Oh Brother Brother, won't you get up off that ground?  
Cause I hear the soldiers comin' for the town.  
Oh Sister Sister, it's time for me to let you go  
And my only regret is you're too young to know...*

*That on the outskirts of Warsaw once was freedom in the air  
And there was plenty to give and time to spare  
And although to him we pray our people die and waste away  
And I'm done tellin' myself he's listenin'*

*Oh Mister Mister, do you have some bread to spare?  
Cause they've murdered all my loves and they have cut off all my hair  
Well, it's been quite some time since I have seen the light,  
And I'm broken and I'm beaten and I don't think I can fight...*

*Back to the outskirts of Warsaw Oh, I used to love it there  
When there was plenty to give and time to spare  
And although I waste away I lose my breath but keep my faith  
Oh God, won't you deliver me there?*

Listen to Outskirts of Warsaw online:  
<http://www.plu.edu/matrix/misc/OutskirtsofWarsaw>





# *What Do We Kill?*

Elizabeth Valdez, Hispanic Studies '14

What do we kill in the world,  
even before breakfast?  
A quiet meadow full of birds and mice?  
A small paradise?  
Construction is a contradiction.  
Bulldozers come and destroy  
the natural order of things,  
obliterating in moments,  
life built up over aeons,  
with a board meeting,  
the stroke of a pen,  
a drawing on a napkin,  
a computer program,  
in a distant place.  
Is this a good idea?  
To have more things  
at a better price?  
To put them in a bigger house  
we don't even own  
or have time to live in  
because we owe the future  
more than our present or our past  
could ever pay for?  
Who asks the meadow  
and the birds and the mice?



# No Longer *Silent*

Laura Ewton, Communications & Women's and Gender Studies '13

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Fluorescent lights shine as a spotlight.

Faceless, packed and wrapped, and silent.

Denial was my strong suit.

Masquerade of innocence, no blood on my hands,  
I won't take the blame.

Pain and abuse.

Oppressed and marginalized.

My gender not far behind.

I speak for the silent.

I am no longer complicit in the violence against others.

No longer silent or faceless.

I am lending my voice to those who cannot speak.

My voice may just be a whisper amongst billions of loud  
voices,

But we are not silent anymore.

Animals.

Women.

We are not for consumption.



## PACIFIC LUTHERAN UNIVERSITY: GO FOSSIL FREE

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We are witnessing the increasing impacts of a warming planet more and more consistently; in this last year alone our country experienced record-breaking heat, droughts, and hurricanes, which impacted hundreds of thousands of people and cost our country hundreds of billions of dollars. Hurricane Sandy alone caused \$50 billion in damages. Experts agree that global warming caused by humans burning fossil fuels (oil, coal, and natural gas) will continue to accelerate and intensify these tragic climate disasters. The scientific consensus is clear and overwhelming: we cannot safely burn even half of global fossil-fuel reserves without dangerously warming the planet for several thousand years. This issue is especially pertinent for our region in light of the looming proposal to export nearly 250 million tons of coal every year from the shores of the Pacific Northwest to China. If approved, this project will be the largest national contributor to global warming; we cannot idly stand by and condone such injustice.

Our region has taken a stand against the dirty coal industry with the city of Seattle being one of the first to divest city funds from fossil fuel companies. As public pressure to confront climate change builds, we call on Pacific Lutheran University to commit to this movement by immediately freezing any new investment in fossil-fuel companies, and to divest within five years from direct ownership and from any commingled funds that include fossil-fuel public equities and corporate bonds. As a campus that has made a commitment to become carbon neutral by 2020, greening our portfolio is a significant movement required to achieve our goals. We believe such action on behalf of Pacific Lutheran University will not only be a sound decision for our institution's financial portfolio, but also for the wellbeing of its current and future graduating classes, who deserve the opportunity to graduate with a future not defined by climate chaos.

For the good of our students, community, nation, and the preservation of the quality of life for this and future generations worldwide, I hope you will advocate joining a growing movement of universities around the country that are committed to preventing a more extreme climate by moving endowment beyond fossil fuels.

To sign Pacific Lutheran University's Divestment Petition, visit the following link:  
<http://act.gofossilfree.org/act/pacific-lutheran-university>

*Compiled by a coalition of students from G.R.E.A.N., Students of the Left, Latinos Unidos, ASPLU, and Food Club.*





# THE MOORING MAST



Sax·i·frage

Check out *The Matrix* and the rest of Student Media online!

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