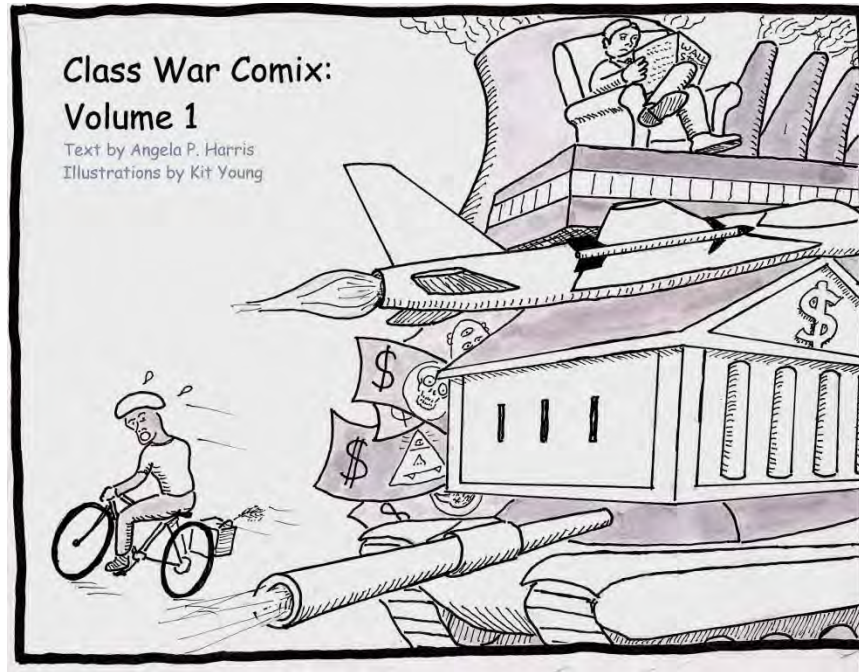


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# Class War Comix: Volume 1

Angela P. Harris<sup>†</sup> and Kit Young<sup>\*\*</sup>



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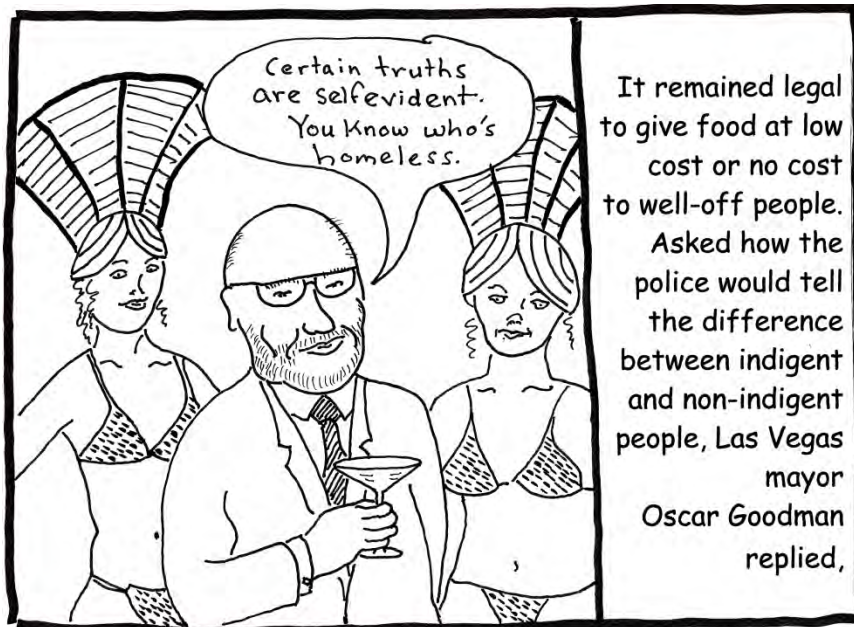
<sup>†</sup> Copyright © 2012 Angela P. Harris and Kit Young.

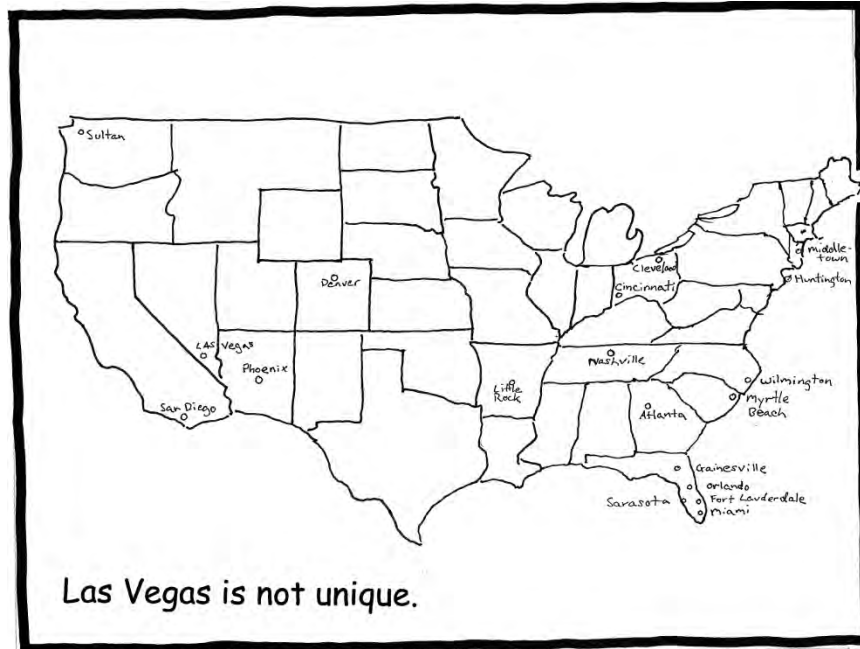
<sup>\*</sup> Professor of Law, University of California, Davis. This comic began as a talk I gave to the Northeast People of Color conference in October, 2009. The theme was “A New Class War?” My thanks to the organizers of that conference, including Rick Su, Teri Miller, and Elaine Chiu. Thanks as well to Kit Young, my partner, friend, and collaborator. Finally, love and thanks to my dear friends Keith Aoki, Luke Cole, Tucker Culbertson, and to all the unsung heroes.

<sup>\*\*</sup> Sculptor, video and performance artist. My thanks to The Beehive Collective, Food Not Bombs, the Occupy Wall Street movement, and Angela P. Harris for doing such great work.

In an article published in the journal *Urban Geography*, Don Mitchell and Nik Heynen discuss an ordinance passed by the Las Vegas City Council in July, 2006 that made it illegal to provide food in public parks to indigent people for free or for a nominal fee.

Don Mitchell and Nik Heynen,  
*The Geography of Survival and the Right to the City: Speculations on Surveillance, Legal Innovation, and the Criminalization of Intervention.*  
 30 *Urban Geography* 611, 623 (2009)





In 2007, Mitchell and Heynen report, the city of Wilmington, North Carolina passed an ordinance making it illegal to share food on city streets or sidewalks.





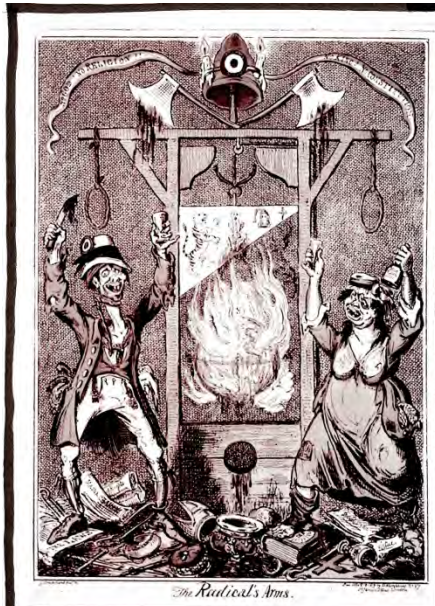
The city of Orlando, Florida makes it illegal to share food with more than twenty-five people without a permit, and restricts organizations to no more than two one-day permits per year.



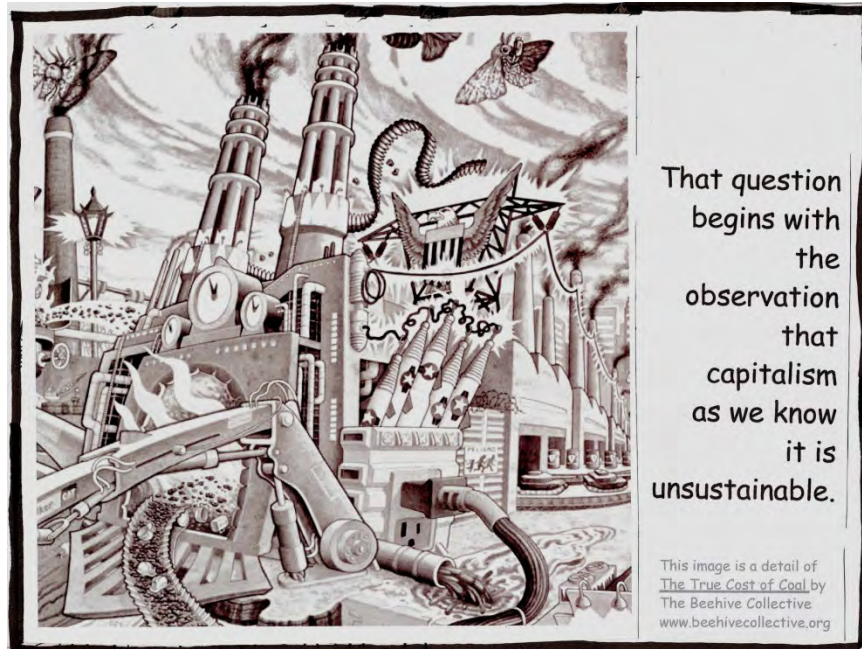
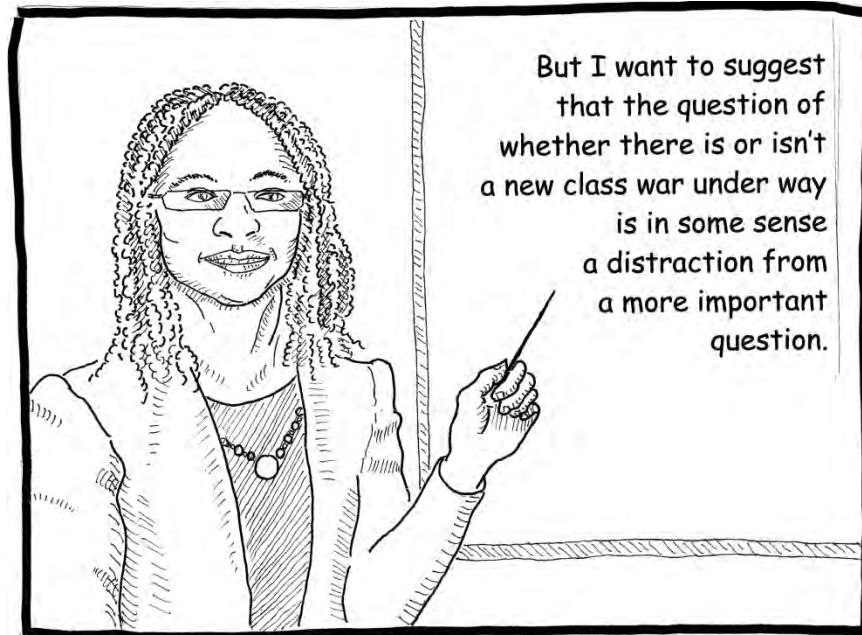
In all, Mitchell and Heynen report, at least 22 US cities since 2003, and at least 15 just since 2006, have either passed

new laws restricting free public food distribution or stepped up enforcement of health and food safety laws to shut down existing food distribution programs.

As they further note, these laws -- like anti-camping ordinances that make it illegal to sit, lie, or sleep on sidewalks, parks, or other public places -- are designed to make the homeless - not homelessness, but the homeless - disappear.



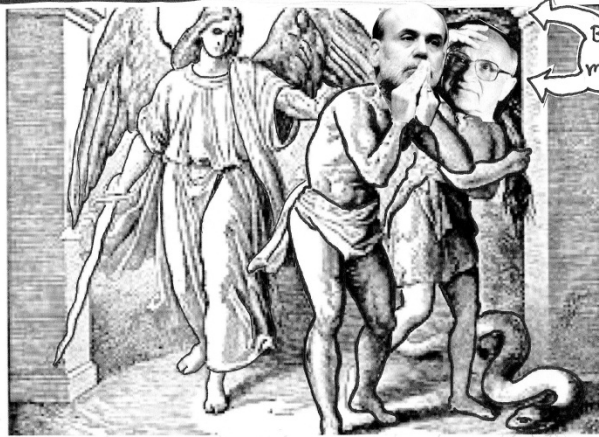
In the last few years, there has been a lot of talk from different ends of the political spectrum about "class war."

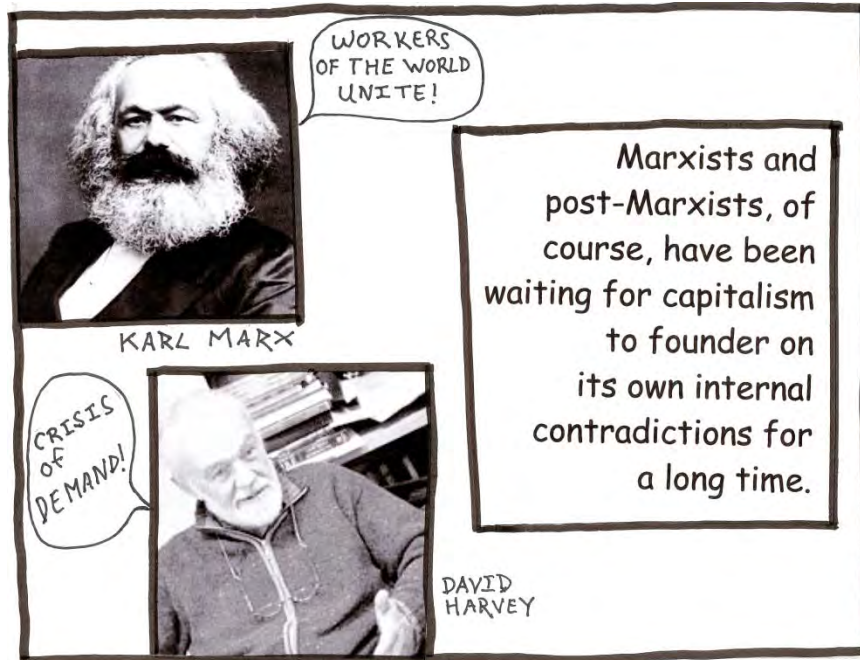
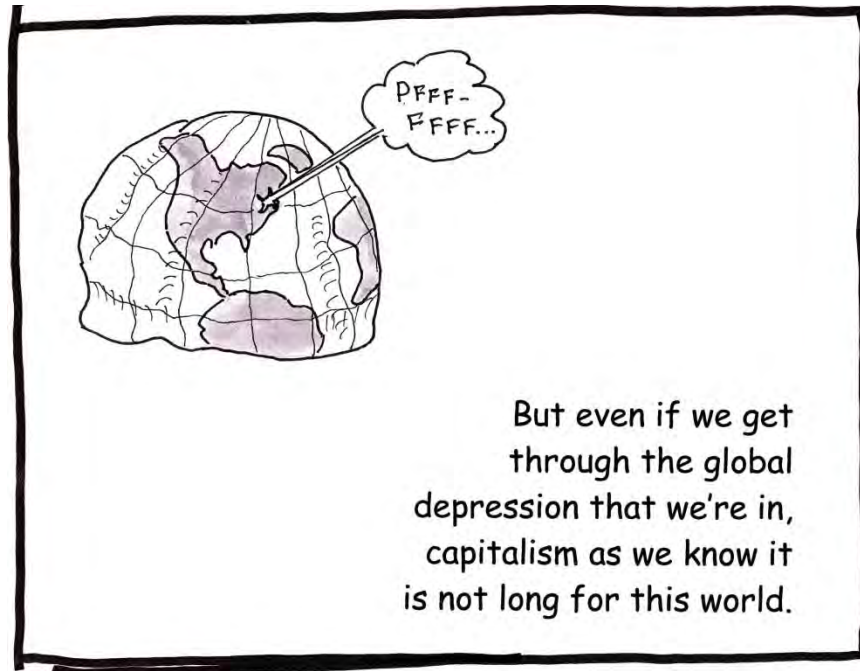


In this moment of global macroeconomic crisis, of course, the breathtaking folly of laissez-faire capitalism has become visible for a minute or two.

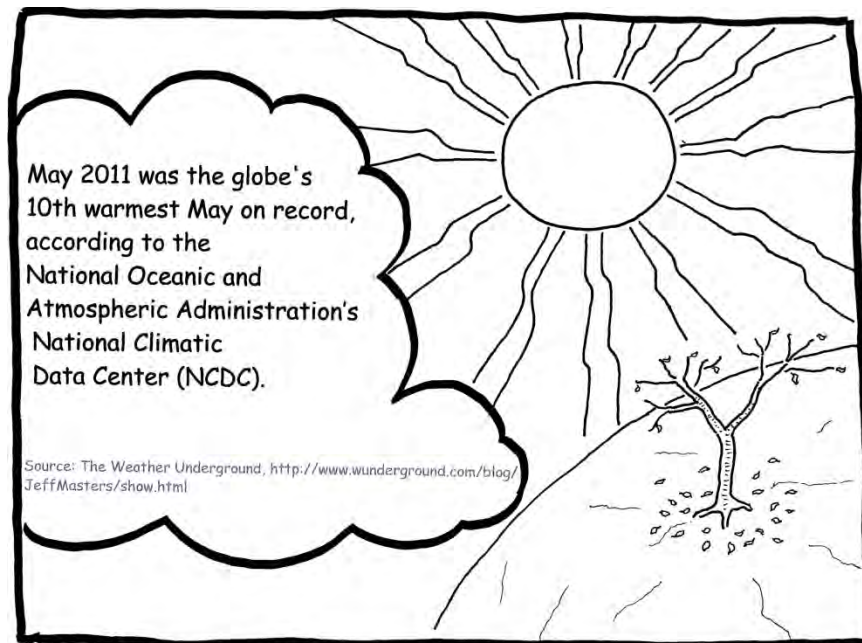
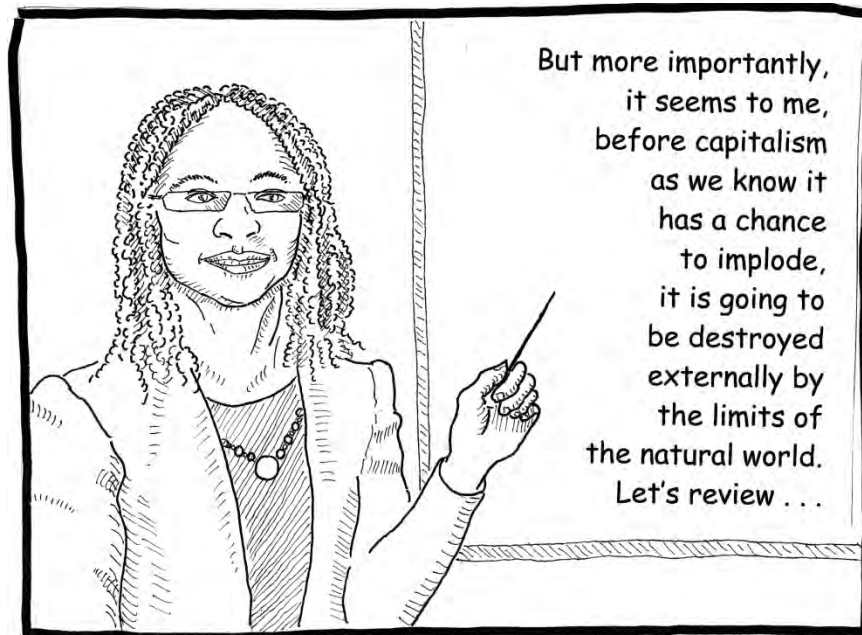


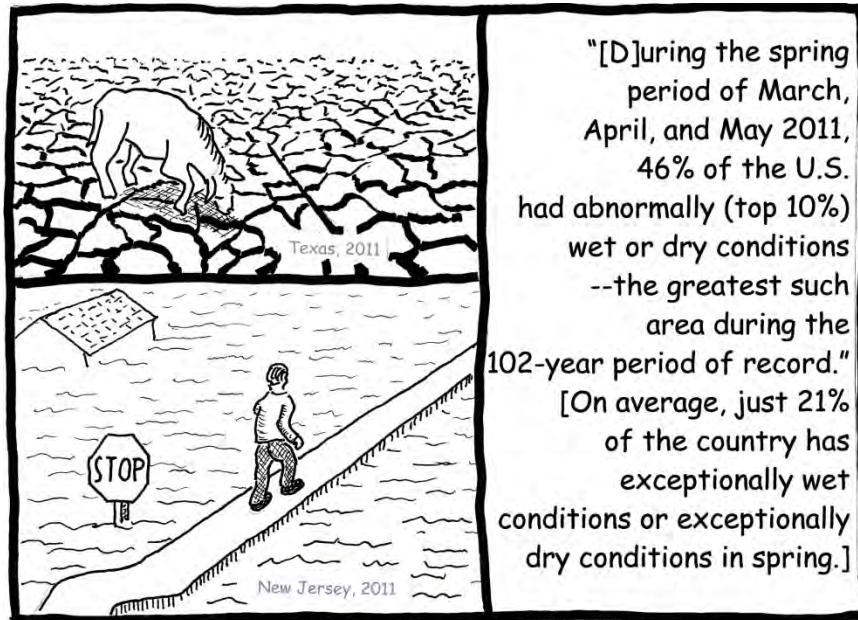
Even more interestingly, the economic disaster has called attention to the fact that the intellectual framework on which neoliberal policy was built is visibly falling apart. The discipline of economics itself suddenly seems to be imploding.







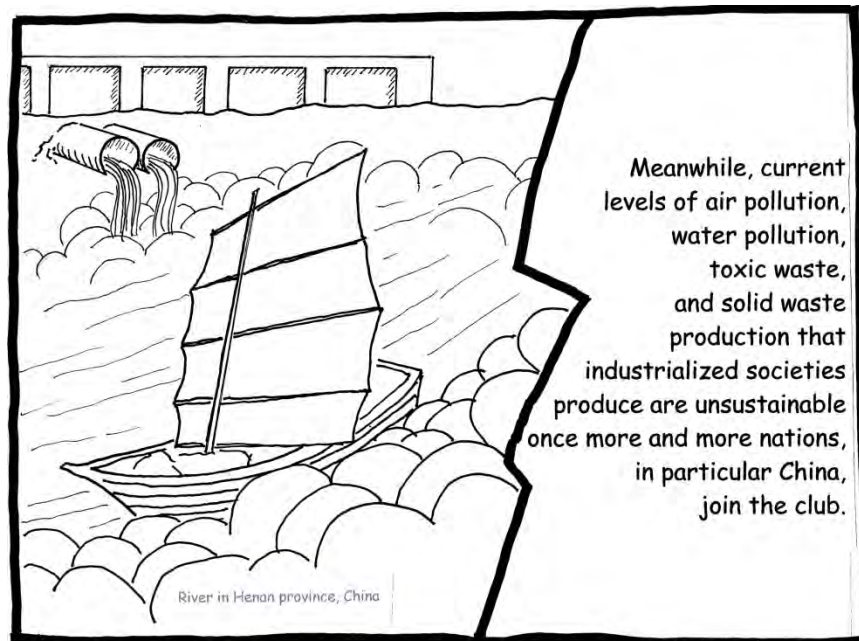




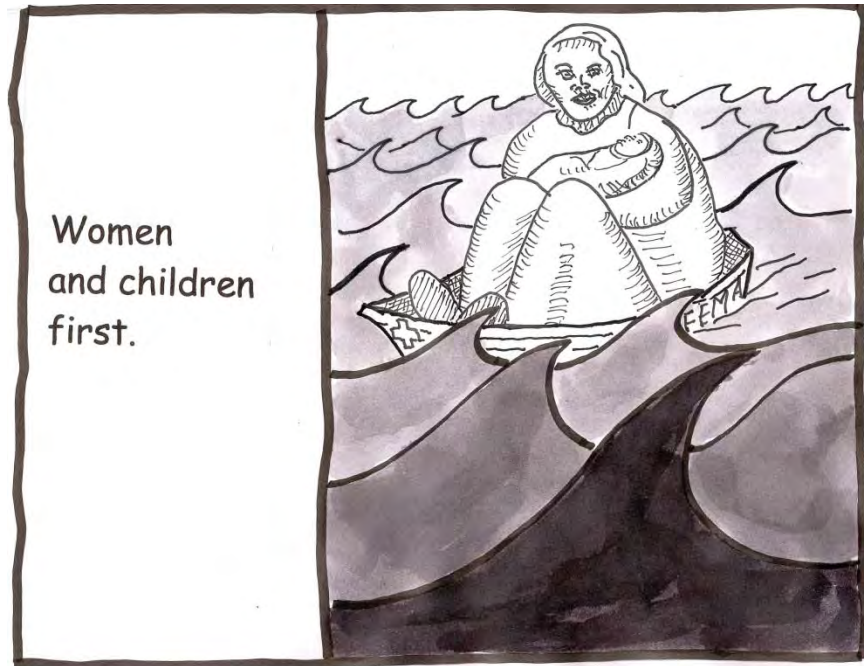
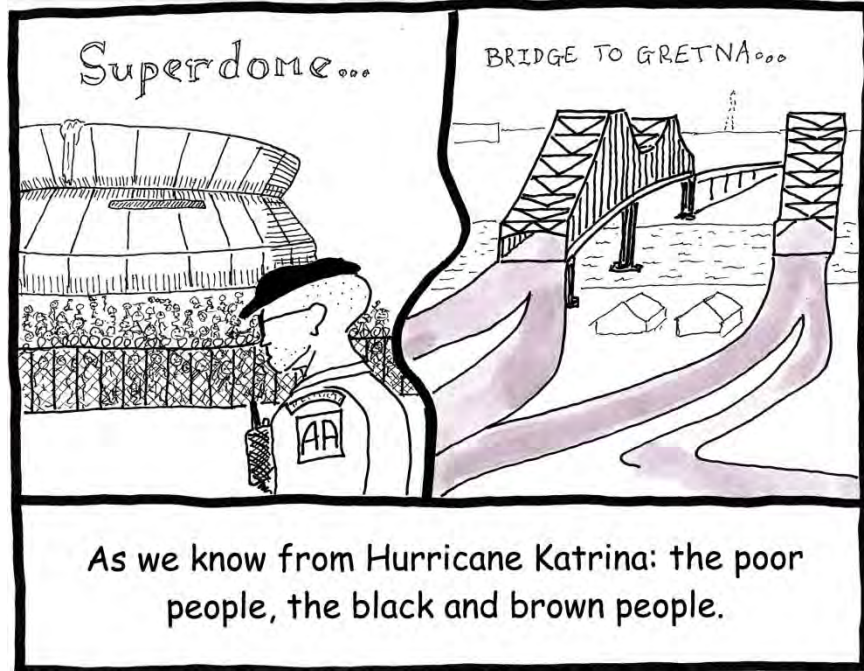
"[D]uring the spring period of March, April, and May 2011, 46% of the U.S. had abnormally (top 10%) wet or dry conditions --the greatest such area during the 102-year period of record." [On average, just 21% of the country has exceptionally wet conditions or exceptionally dry conditions in spring.]

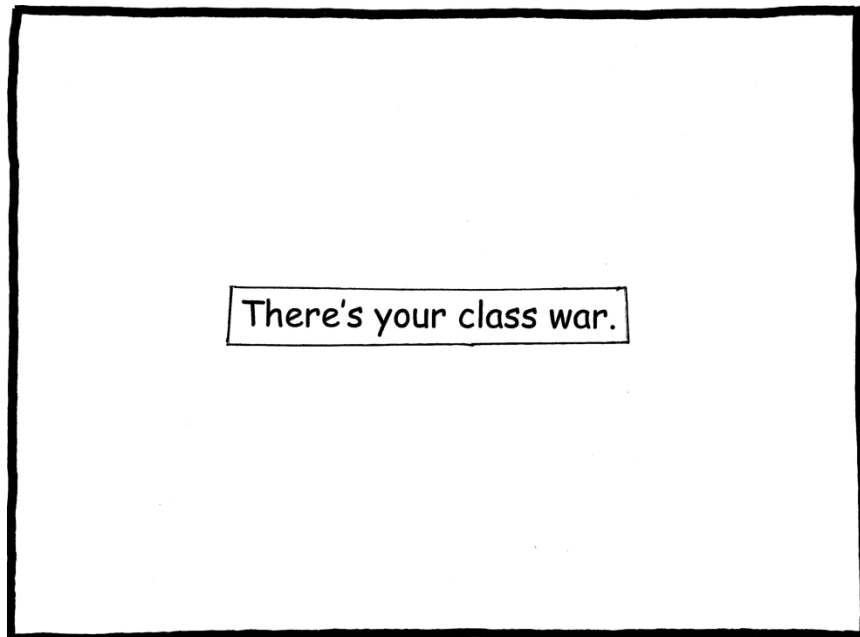
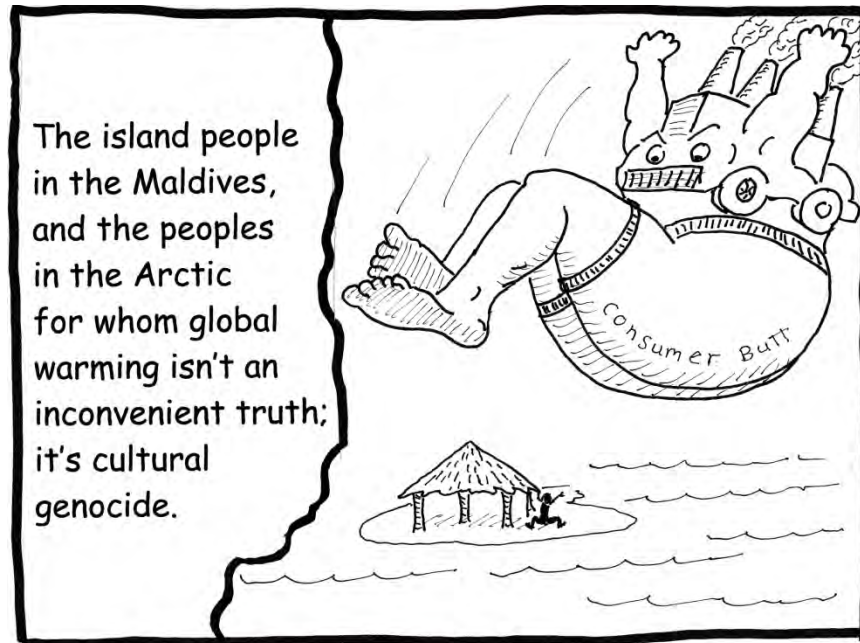
In addition, heavy 1-day precipitation events--the kind that cause the worst flooding--were also at an all-time high in the spring of 2011.



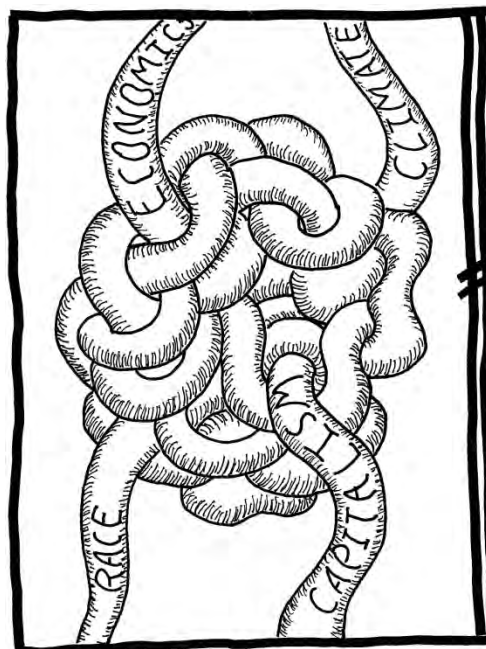


Who's going to suffer the most from global warming and the natural disasters that it will bring?

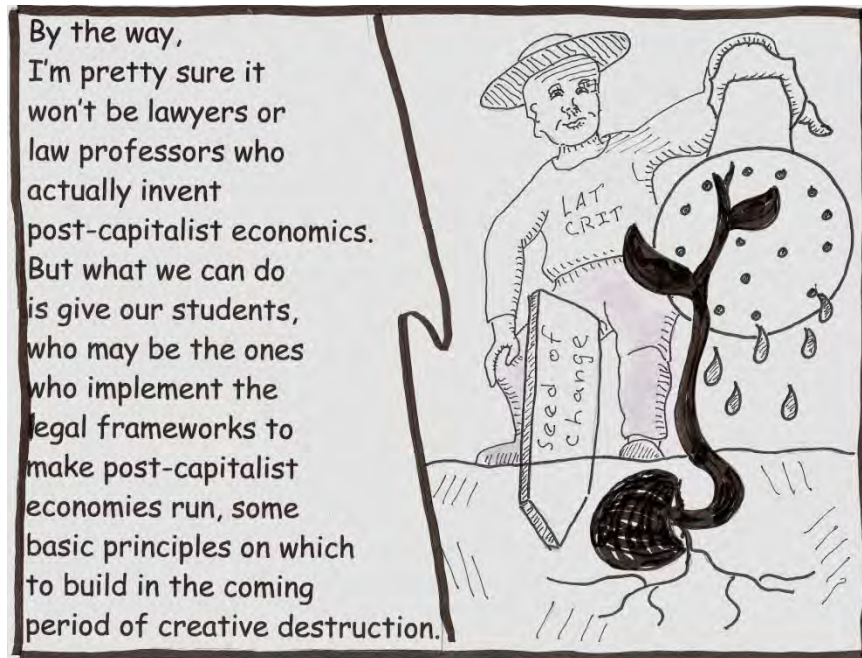




And still . . . it is politically "unrealistic" to say that capitalism as we know it is doomed.

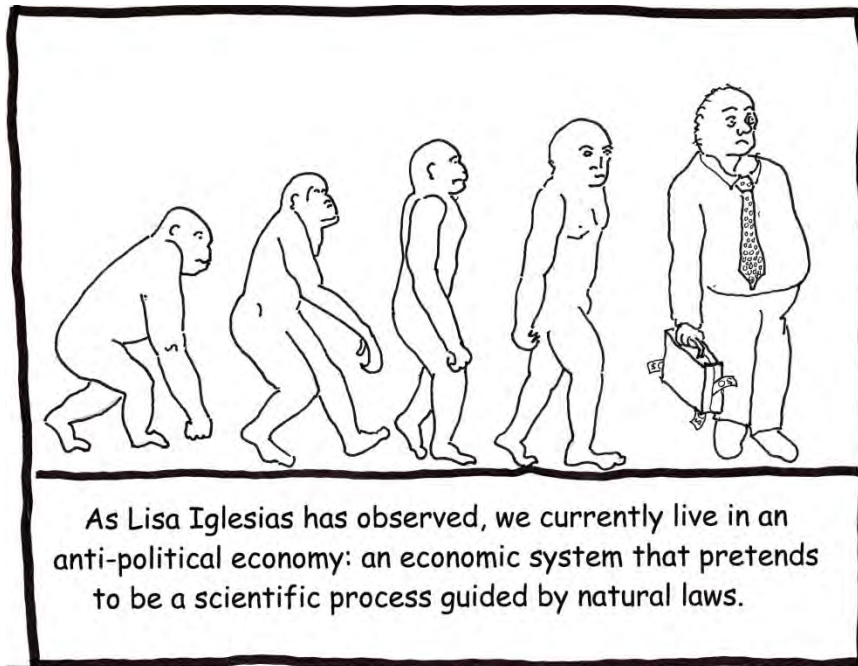


So for me, the question is not whether or not there is a class war. The question is, how do we, as professional un-confusers, as people who understand how race works in America, help figure out what comes after capitalism?



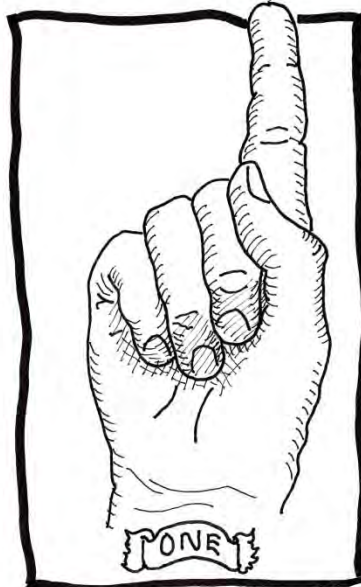
The first principle is the one that so many Crits have emphasized: Economics is political.





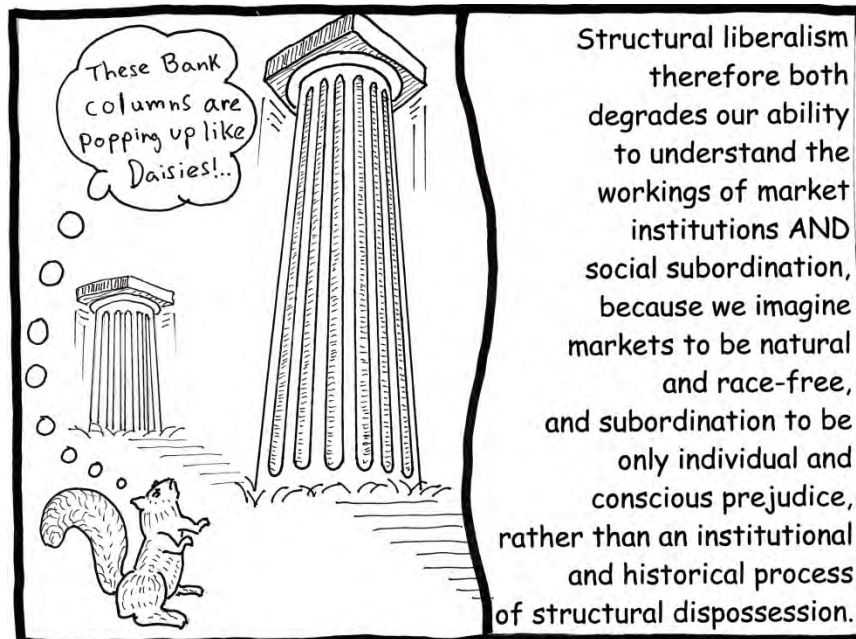


From a legal perspective, then, any sustainable post-capitalist economic system has to begin by rejecting what I call structural liberalism, or the presumption that "public sphere" notions like equality do not apply to the "private sphere" of the market.

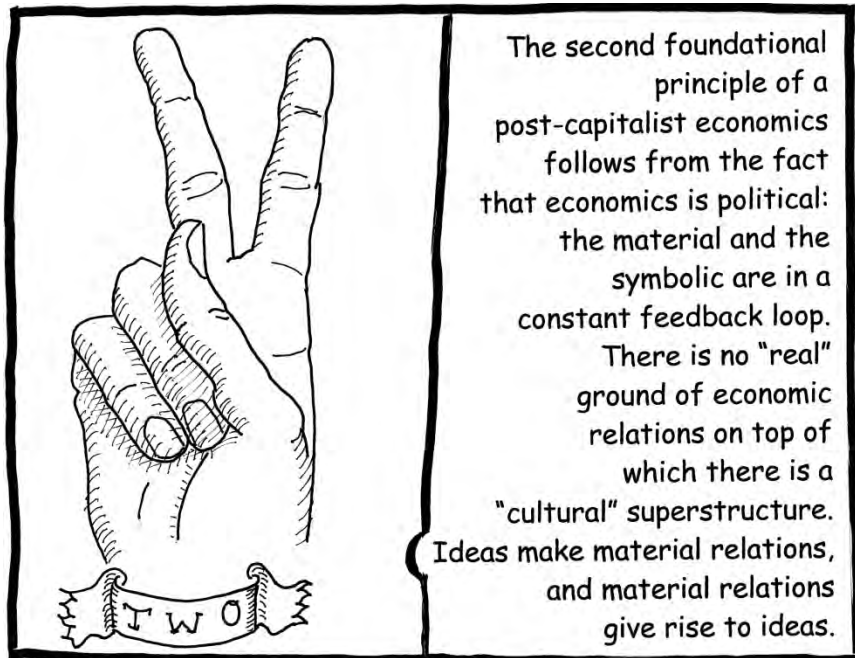


Structural liberalism gives us a society in which we have long and serious arguments about whether the fact that hazardous waste sites are disproportionately sited in poor and minority neighborhoods is because of "racism" or because of "market forces."

This question only makes any sense because we have agreed that if the answer is "market forces," there's nothing anybody could or should do about it. And that is only true, in turn, because of our belief that the private sphere is free of justice claims.

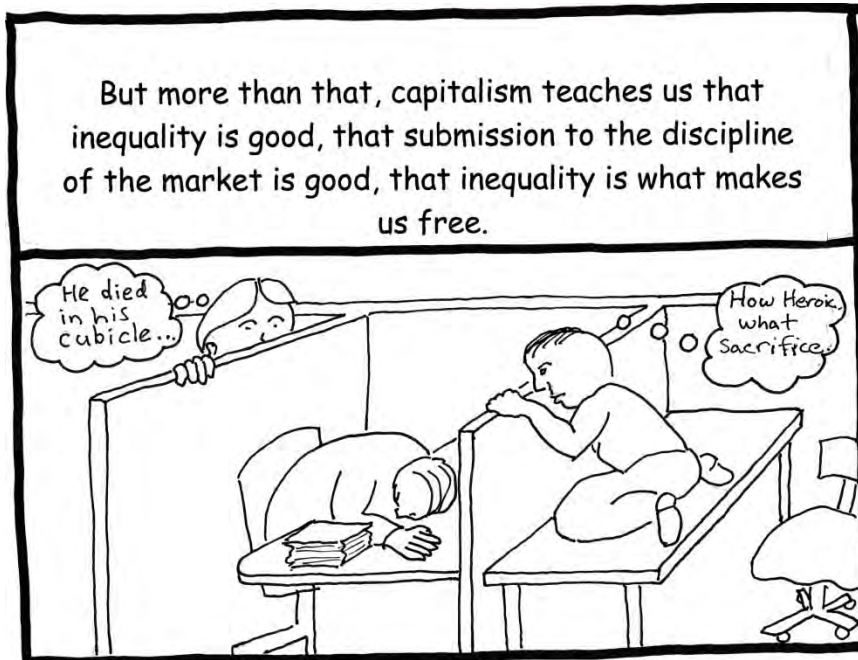


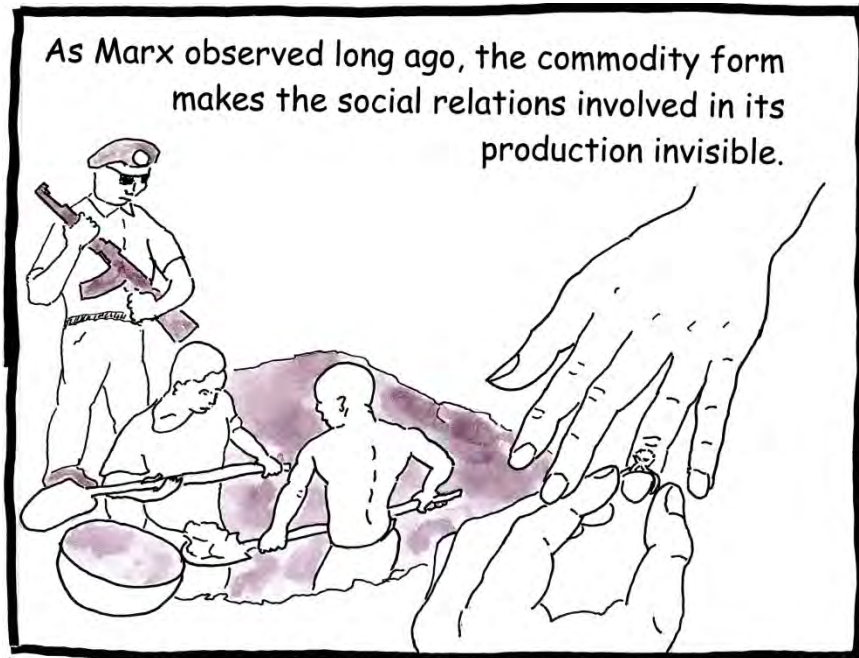
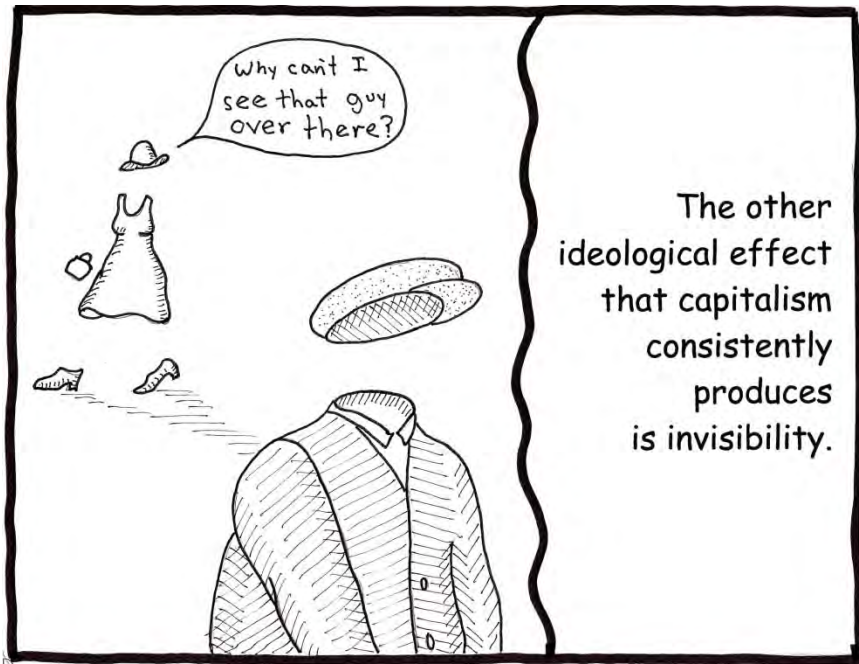
Structural liberalism therefore both degrades our ability to understand the workings of market institutions AND social subordination, because we imagine markets to be natural and race-free, and subordination to be only individual and conscious prejudice, rather than an institutional and historical process of structural dispossession.

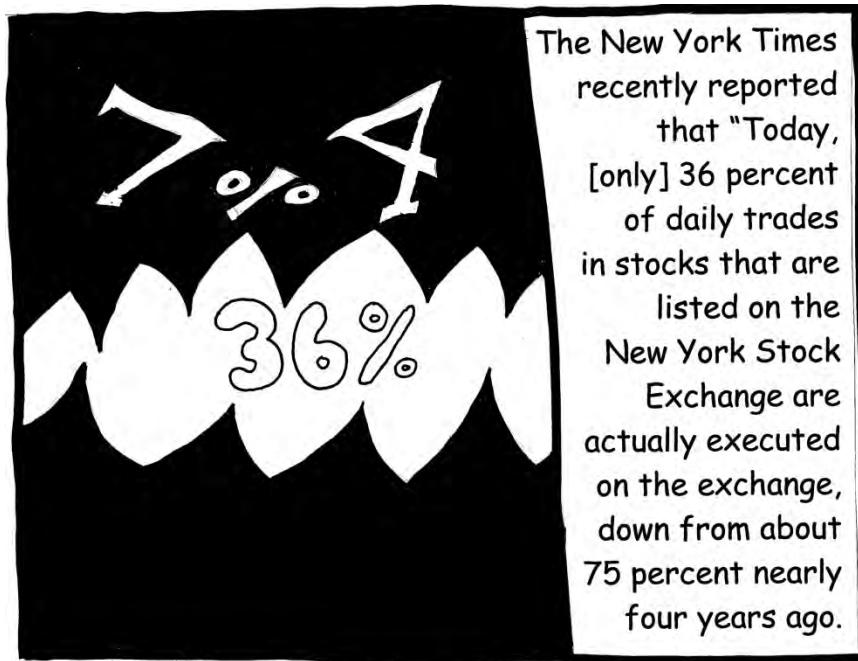
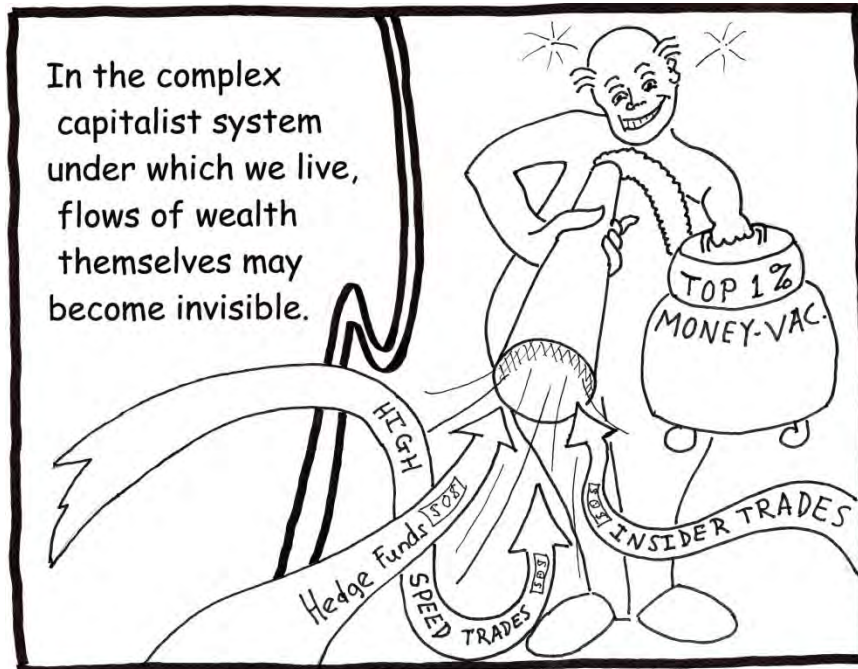


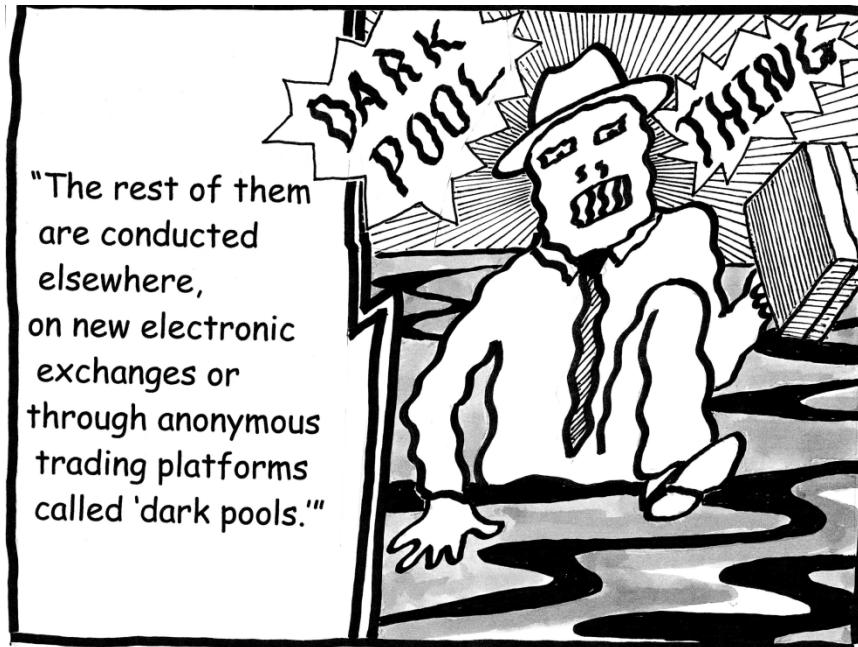
For example, property values are "real," but where they come from is people's ideas about what communities ought to look like.



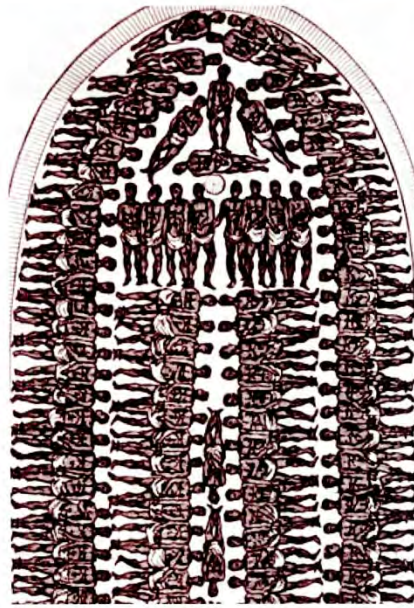








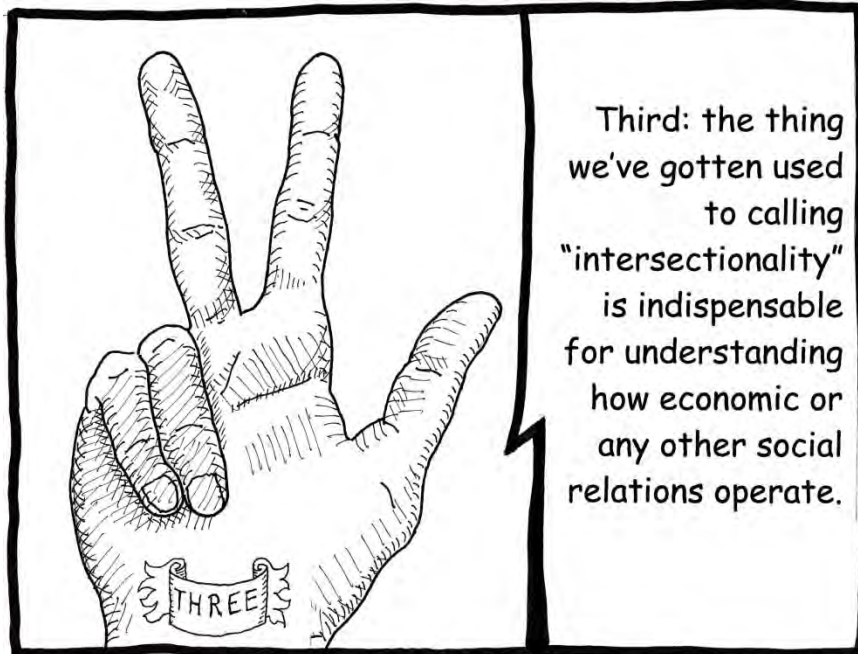
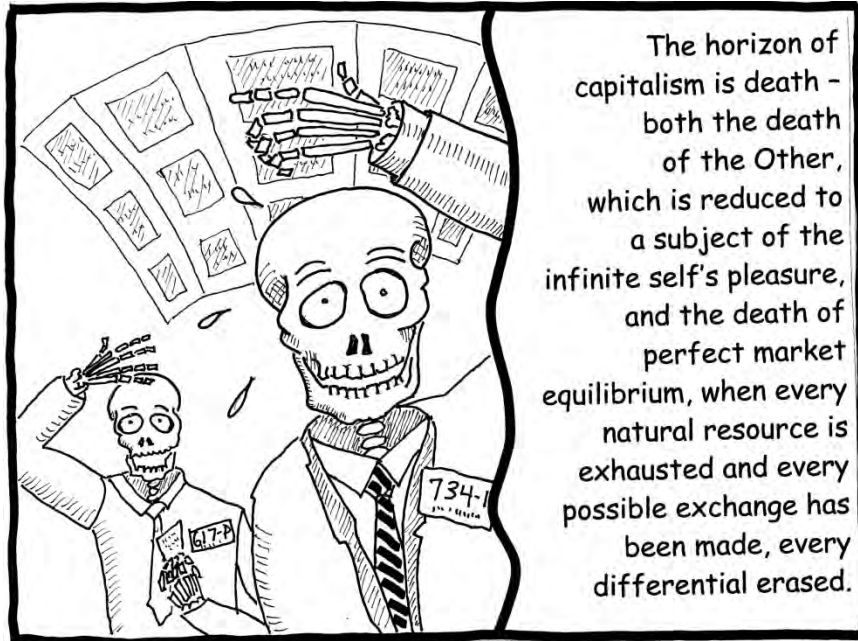
Finally, as Anthony Farley has reminded us, capitalism as we know it relies on the continued invisibility of the moment that human flesh itself was made invisible as flesh, when it was reduced to labor power that could be owned, and therefore bought and sold.



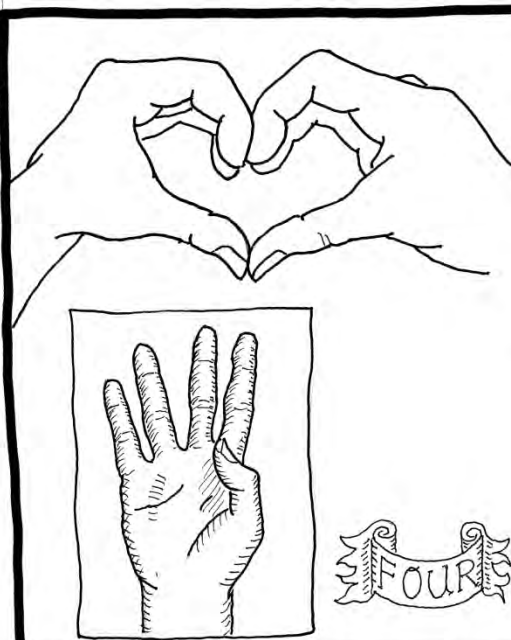
And we should remember that that moment, however momentous, was itself just a small step forward from the moment when the world itself was reduced to a collection of dead things, things that could be owned and therefore bought and sold.







Indeed, there are, strictly speaking, no "intersections" of race, class, and gender; rather there are nested and linked chains of associations through which every debasement, every subordination, makes a new one thinkable, and then possible, and then accomplished.



The fourth principle that we should use to ground the search for a post-capitalist economy is the hardest to talk about, because it's the one that is the most severely suppressed in both the market and the state: love.

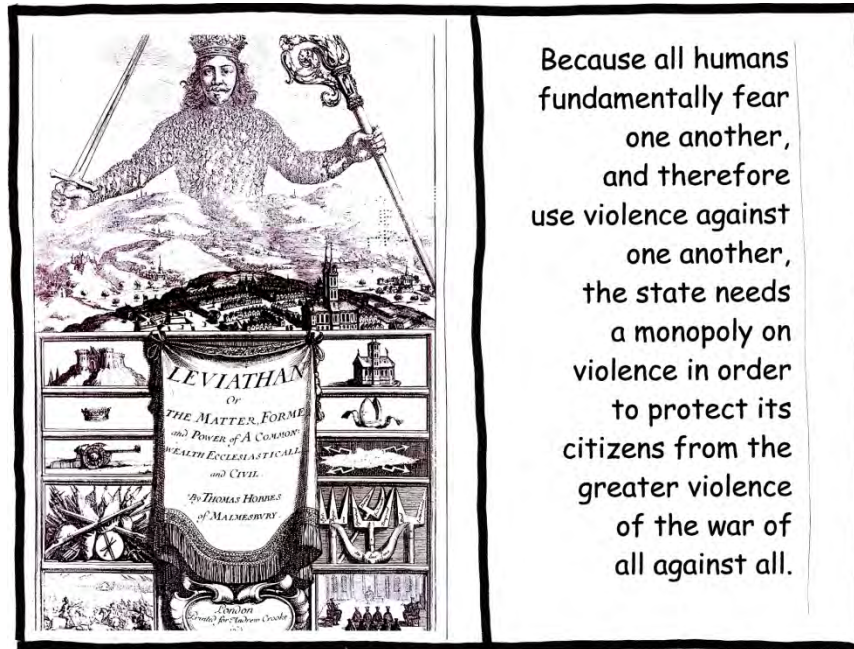
Love is an idea that has been debased in political theory, because it is gendered female, and because it has been relegated to the private, domestic sphere. We are used to thinking of love as a private, romantic thing that is somehow weak in public life.



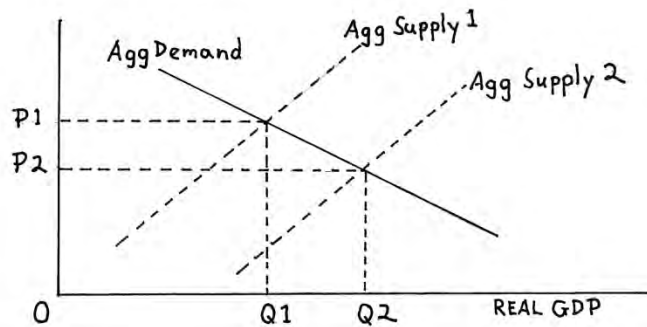
THOMAS. HOBBS.

In contrast, political theory from Hobbes on and the practice of national security are founded in violence and fear.



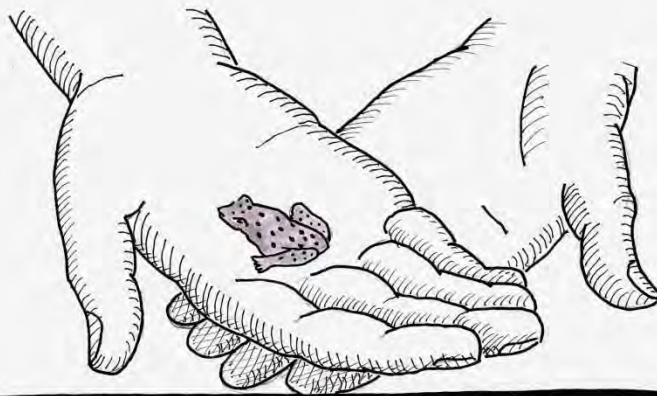


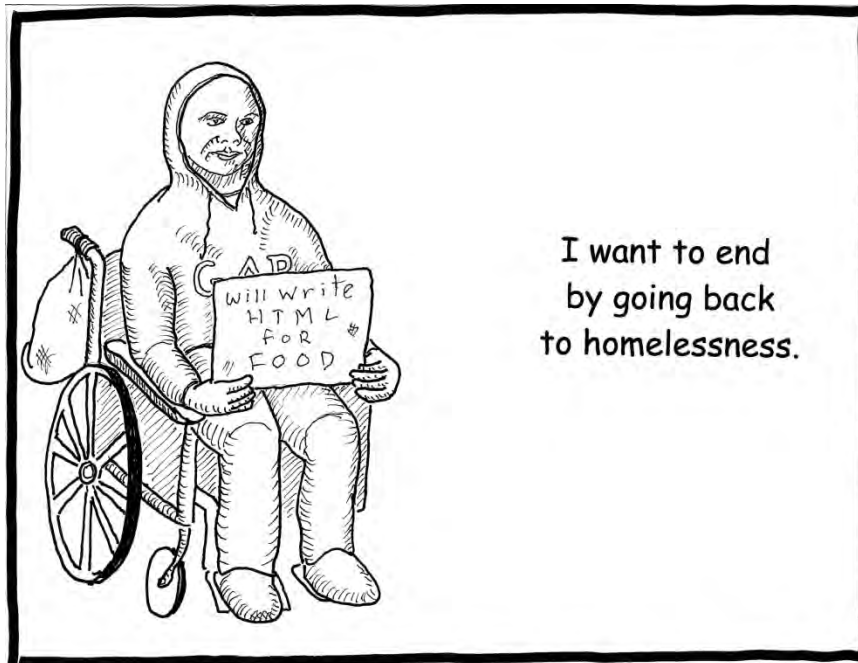
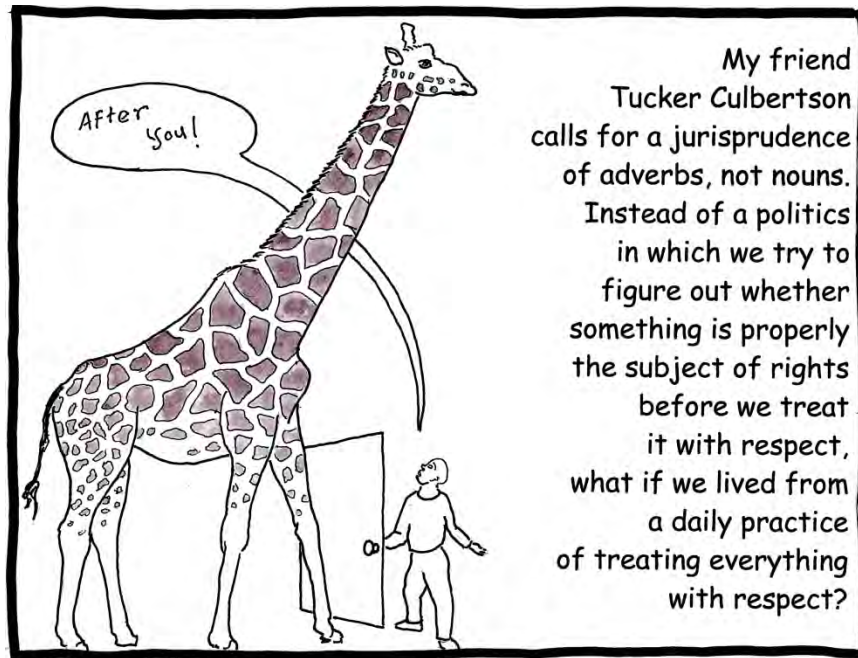
What is existing economics about?  
The allocation of scarce resources.



What might a post-capitalist, sustainable economics be about? I've described it as the institutional conditions for human flourishing.

But as I think about it, the qualifier "human" in that phrase is already problematic. Love taken seriously is love for all sentient beings.





## Food Not Bombs

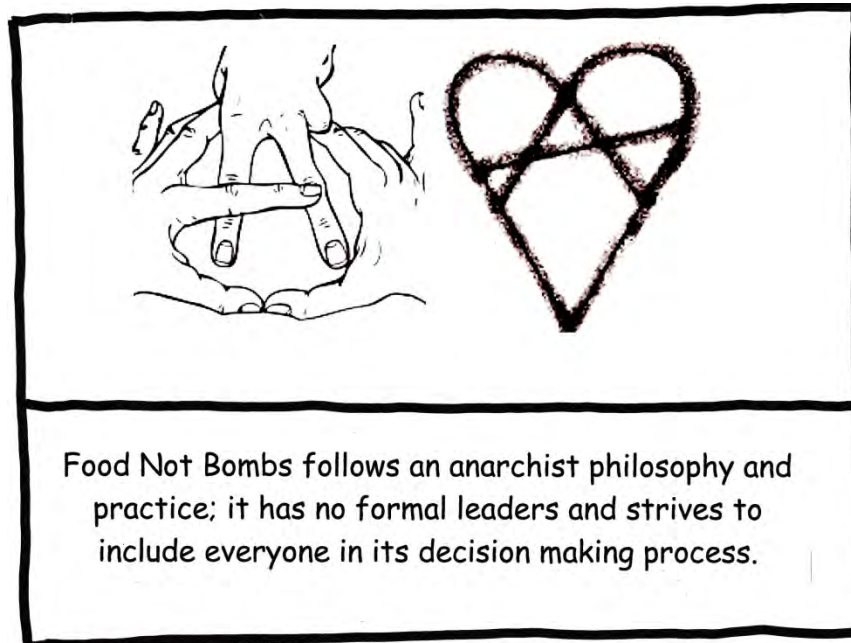


Many of the ordinances against sharing food that I mentioned at the beginning were passed in order to target one organization in particular - Food Not Bombs.

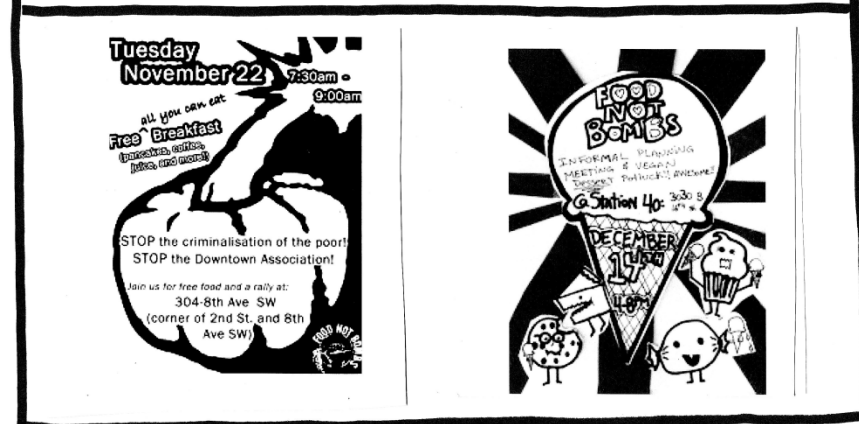
Food Not Bombs, according to its website, is "an all-volunteer organization dedicated to nonviolent social change. It began in the United States in 1980 as an outgrowth of the anti-nuclear movement, but now works for peace, the environment, and social justice both here and elsewhere in the world."

On tour this fall semester.  
**ELECT TO END HUNGER  
AND POVERTY TOUR**  
(Fall 2011 to Spring 2012)  
A presentation on the  
campaign to end the  
criminalization of poverty  
and the global protest  
against austerity!  
*See the current tour schedule*

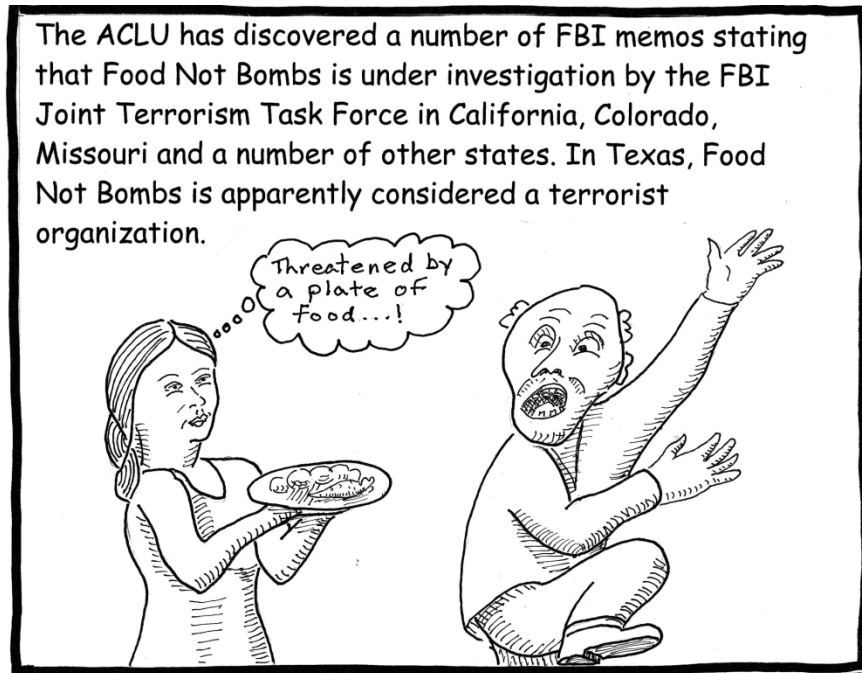
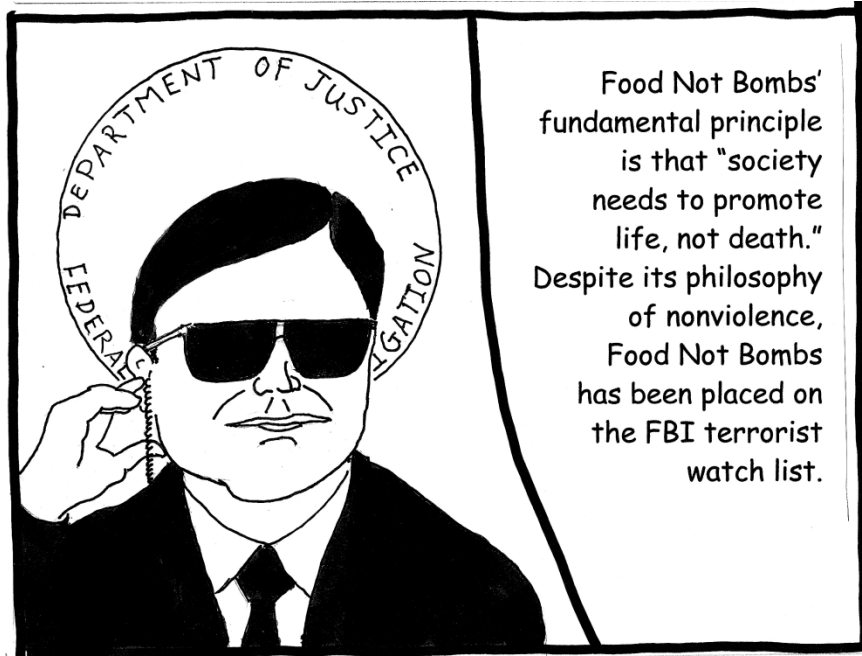
Occupy Wall Street:  
The Most Important Thing  
in the World Now by Naomi Klein  
**PROPOSED 99 PERCENT  
DECLARATION FORM A  
OCCUPY WALL STREET  
WORKING GROUP  
HELP FEED THE OCCUPATIONS!  
SUGGESTED SUPPLIES  
TO FEED YOUR OCCUPATION**

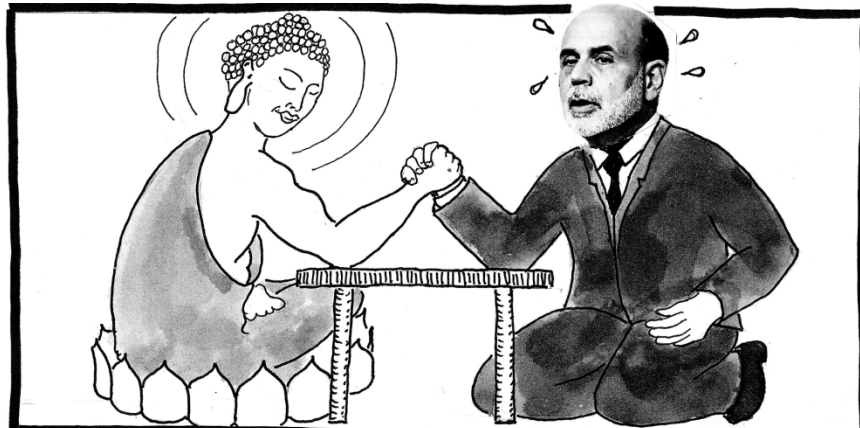


Each group recovers food that would otherwise be thrown out and makes fresh hot vegan and vegetarian meals that are served in outside in public spaces to anyone without restriction. Each independent group also serves free meals at political protests and other events.



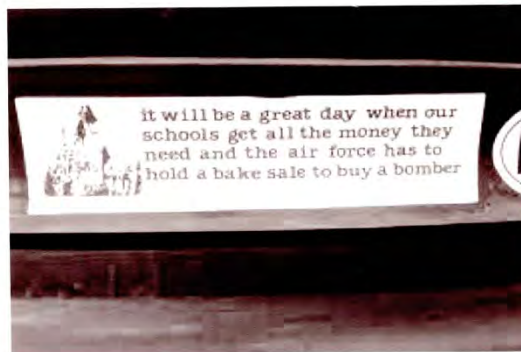






The point I want to make is that taken seriously as a practice of everyday life, the commitment to nonviolence, life, and the alleviation of the suffering of all sentient beings has a force that can disrupt and threaten the practices of invisibility and acceptance of inequality on which capitalism runs.

In this way, Food Not Bombs is a revolutionary organization, not only because of its philosophy but because of its practice. Food, not bombs.



That's the thing about revolutions: the most lasting are those that are grounded not in a utopian future, but in the disciplines of taking care here and now, in the present, in developing practices, like nonviolence, which are relentlessly principled but also relentlessly compassionate.



Here come the cops...

GENERAL STRIKE (THE END)

Are you being violent?... I'm not being violent...

