



WILLIAMS 97

## Seattle Logistics Zine

Brought to you by the Seattle N30 Logistical Crew

Editors: Kim Mike E., gabriel

all photographs by Lisa, Jason and Karen.

art by Josh Macphee



inquiries, questions, rants, praise, etc., should be sent to:  
(send \$5 for additional copies)

Logistics Zine  
P.O. Box 3501  
Oakland, CA 94601

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## Introduction

This is a zine about the support functions that made the Anti-WTO demonstrations in Seattle possible. The intent was to stress the importance of those functions to any large-scale gathering and to make this information available to anyone that wants to put an event like this together in the future. Even though every organized event is unique, there are certain basic needs that are always present. There are a few work groups we were unable to get write-ups from, most notably childcare and food, but we hope to put out an updated version of this zine which will correct this and will include updates from the Anti-IMF actions that took place in D.C. in April. Please understand that in many cases it was impossible to get the input of many of the people who worked very hard, but here is the best we were able to get.

Since the mid-80s I have wanted to do a zine like this, because the work that I love is often overlooked by the movement, in favor of the actions and marches. Seattle provided the perfect opportunity for this project. It was well-organized by competent people, who were also interested in doing a write up. Thank you to all of you who took time out from your busy schedules to do these write ups. Big thank you to Kim without whom this zine would not have happened and Gabriel who helped finish it. Thanks also to Lisa, Jason and Karen for providing pictures. Thanks of course to all of those who did that behind the scenes work, who this zine is about.

This zine is dedicated to all of you, who spend much of your time at actions and gatherings filling support roles. All of you whose stories about actions center around the amount of food you served, the night you were up doing security, the sleep you lost doing legal, medical etc....

~~~Mike E.

## Security

>> Mike E.

### Basic Set-up

First I will describe the basic security set-up. Security was responsible for two warehouses about 16,000 sq foot each. One called Filbert the other called 420 or Denny. Most of the coordinating activity for the actions happened at 420. At 420 there were at least 4 security people and one security coordinator working at any time. One person each at the front and rear door, as well as, 2 people roving (filling positions as needed). Any door that was open, had a person on it. Each person had a walkie-talkie and the security coordinator had a nextel system that was a walkie-talkie and a cell phone (through which we were able to contact most of the other work groups such as legal, medical or media). At Filbert there were two people on shift, both at the front door (as there was no other door that was open). Passing on of information and basic continuity from shift to shift happened through the two security coordinators, a security log at each space and having the shifts overlap.

### General Tasks

Calling this work group "security" is somewhat misleading since many of the tasks we performed had little to do with that word. Security spent a lot of time helping the front desk orient people and directing them toward things they needed, such as childcare, meetings etc... Since 1-2000 people a day were arriving, during the last few days before the actions, this was no small task. Keeping the front of the building and various walkways relatively clear of people also became a major task as large numbers of people arrived and certain areas got clogged up to the point of being unusable every 10 minutes. At times security were stationed at specific doorways in order to make sure foot traffic would keep moving. Keeping random people from wandering into areas that needed privacy, such as childcare, the legal office and the clinic was also an ongoing job. Once the actions started the latter two were crowded and the people staffing them overworked, so making sure these areas had only people in them that needed to be there, was crucial.

Storing people's luggage in a locked room was also something we did until that became a task for a separate group. Another task was keeping media from coming into the space unannounced and making sure they only had access to certain areas. We also made sure the media were accompanied by a media liaison at all times and did not take any pictures without people's permission. At times security coordinators doubled as media liaisons. Coordinating lost and found was shared by the front desk and security. Having security orient people arriving late at night and getting them a place to sleep allowed us to close down the front desk for the night. Cleaning up the day's mess, as well as opening and closing the space were also among the nighttime duties. With the amount of stress and chaos that any such large gathering brings having security constantly

act as rumor control was vital. At times there were several false reports an hour which could have started major panics if security had not taken the time to check the information and then presented it correctly.

Security also spent some amount of the time dealing with people that were being that were being very disruptive or were engaging in ism behavior (you know, sexism, racism etc). Generally if what the disruptive person was doing was already being dealt with we left it alone. There were only a few cases where security stepped in and deescalated a situation or asked someone to stop some particularly obnoxious behavior. Almost all of the time simply talking to the person worked, insofar as they stopped what they were doing more or less willingly. While this level of intervention didn't address the continued presence of isms or obnoxious people at the conference, it was enough to keep things running for the duration of the action. One person was asked to leave the conference due to repeated run-ins with people (2-3 times a day). He came back a couple of days later and was much calmer. Another person, after losing their medication, became physically threatening to other people and the proceeded to run up a free-way on-ramp. At that point security physically intervened, because it seemed likely that he would end up dead otherwise. He also came back several days later, after a stay in the hospital and was fine. I am mentioning the two above instances, because it is important to know that this level of intervention can be necessary, but it is and should be rare to have to resort to it. Many people think that security spends much of the time doing the above, but in reality almost all of our time was spent with the other tasks.

On the average the police showed up twice a day, usually attempting to get into the space. When they were seen approaching, door security would close the door behind them, (and make sure it stayed closed) call the security coordinator for back-up and would try to find out what the cops wanted. The security coordinator would then present the legal paperwork (lease, insurance etc) and inform the police that they were not to come inside at which point the police would leave. There was a plan for the possibility that the police would have tried to force their way in and I am including it for interest, even though we did not use it. When the actions started surveillance of and general police presence around our spaces became serious. There was an increasing sense that our spaces would get busted. We did not want this to come as a surprise, so we organized periodic patrols of the two-block area around the space. The patrols were always made up of two to three people, who would radio in regularly. While they reported any police presence they saw, only large numbers of police in riot gear, clearly heading our way was going to get us to use our cop response plan. The patrols were also very useful with rumor control, because people often started to cause panics inside the spaces after they had spotted a full cop car a couple blocks away. The patrol would then check it out while other security calmed people down. Communications people oftentimes helped with these patrols.

Another function these patrols provided, was to warn security, whenever some enthusiastic organizers directed a demo too close to the 420 space. Security

folks, usually one of the coordinators, would then go out to negotiate moving the demo in a different direction. This was done mostly to keep the large and violent police presence that always accompanied the demos away from 420, which once the action started served as a clinic, legal office and tactical coordination center.

The two security coordinators were responsible for training security staff. We spent much of our time making sure shifts were covered, and that the information flow from shift to shift was happening and that no crucial details were falling through the cracks. This involved taking a lot of notes and checking in with others constantly. One of us was at least on call if not present at any given moment, coordinating needs with folks from other work groups. There was also a daily meeting of all the coordinators of the different work groups that one of us attended every morning. We acted as back up for the rest of the security crew in any emergency situation and whenever the cops showed up. Keeping track of keys for the space, making sure the radios were functioning and generally filling in whenever, with whatever needed doing. The job required a lot of attention to detail, quick, flexible and creative thinking, ability and willingness to communicate with lots of other folks, and an understanding that we were able to focus on little else for the duration of the action. I am glad that there were two of us. It allowed us some time to sleep and eat. Working closely with the space coordinators helped as well, since we were able to pick up loose ends for one another. Having one more security coordinator would have been a good thing.

#### **Some difficulties and their solutions**

Many of the above duties became part of the "plan" once it became clear they were needed. One factor that impacted security work greatly was the lack of space. There were many more people than there was space. At times there was barely room to stand much less move in certain areas. At one point a community meeting and the dinner line both filled the main walkway. Minutes later people were packed so tight that no one was able to move and shoving matches, a couple of attacks of claustrophobia and some injuries ensued. So, more of our time than was originally anticipated was spent making sure walkways and doorways were clear. It also required that extra doors be opened to accommodate the increased flow of people, which meant adding one or two security per shift. Keeping people clear of the clinic, especially, when it was full of injured folks, took some time as well.

Another reason we ended up needing more security staff than we originally anticipated, was that security generally worked at any tasks that had not been anticipated, until those tasks got reassigned or a work group was created for them. Keeping a log of all accounts of police harassment and surveillance is an example of this. The log served two purposes. First it helped us build up documentation for any future legal action against the police. Second it greatly reduced the amount of time we spent listening to people paranoias and allowed us to give them something to do that made them feel validated. We had people do their own writing, in order to reduce our work load and so we wouldn't have to make deci-

sions about separating fact from fiction when we had a ton of other things to do. The care of people's luggage, managing lost and found, organizing shuttles, and many of the tasks named above also fall into that category.

Another difficulty was that, while we did two trainings for all the staff initially, when the majority of participants arrived there was neither time nor space to have more (trainings that is). It was impractical to have a training every time we got a new volunteer and since we needed most of them immediately and didn't want to lose them to the general chaos, it didn't make sense to have them wait until they were trained first. We decide instead to give new people a very brief (10 minute) training by the coordinators and pair them with experienced trained security.

As we got closer to the actions, an increasing number of people didn't show up for their shifts or showed up very late. Most of these people had good reasons for not showing, such as responsibilities toward their affinity groups, making props etc. This fact combined with our need for more security, due to the larger population meant that often times we were scrambling for people from shift to shift. The coordinators spent a lot of time making sure the shifts were covered. Scheduling more people than we needed and having a number of people who had agreed to check in with us regularly and make security their priority was useful. Getting entire affinity groups committed to filling whole shifts also worked. Never having all of the people go off shift at any one time was a little more work to coordinate, but was very useful when people arrived either late or didn't arrive for their shift. It meant there were always at least half the people we needed on hand while we scrambled for more.

Coordinating the security for the Filbert space was also harder than we had originally anticipated. It was a huge space that was mostly used at night. Initially the plan had been for lots of people to stay there, but due the fact that it was far away from everything else and that we were unable to provide for regular shuttle service (not for lack of trying though), the number of folks there was always small. There were at best 150 people there and 6 of them were needed per night to do security. Finding 6 trained people each night who were actually staying there was hard. It usually involved some pleading and once again pairing trained people with ones that only got a briefing. Given that we had a hard time providing adequate security for two buildings, we decided not to promise security to any of the other smaller spaces. We felt that it was better to concentrate on what we could provide well, than to make promises we would probably not be able to keep. We did offer to provide security training to folks already working in those spaces, but no one took us up on it.

Having well trained security is crucial to having a large gathering space run smoothly and safely. Unfortunately, it is also something many people take for granted, when it works right.

## Security Guidelines

- 1.) act mainly as the eyes and ears of the community in other words actively focus on your surroundings and try to spot problems that others miss, because they are preoccupied with their activities.
- 2.) familiarize yourself with the layout of the space, the schedule and any other information, so that you can help direct people to what they need.
- 3.) help direct mainstream media toward media liaisons and keep them from recording events unless they have peoples' permission.
- 4.) there are too many cops in the world already, the last thing we need is more of them, don't become one and don't let anyone else convince you, you should act like one. Think of yourself as more of an advisor or observer, than some kind of thug.
- 5.) don't sign up for too many shifts, that way it won't become a job. People will be less likely to identify you with this role and infiltrators, who will try to use this role to snoop, will be limited.
- 6.) at some point you will start to feel bored especially if everything is going smoothly. Friends will come by or your shift partner turns out to be absolutely fascinating and it becomes easy to pass the time being social. This is okay, but try to stay focused anyway and don't create problems just to have something to do.
- 7.) always try for the least invasive, most creative solution and be willing to ask for help if you need it especially from other security people.
- 8.) at times people will come to you with problems that you can do nothing about, try to be reassuring but honest about your ability to address their needs.
- 9.) help with rumor control. Try to verify anything you hear by getting first hand information. Be very clear about what you know to be true (as much as that is possible) and what you have simply heard repeated by others. Remember misinformation is one of the main tactics that the state uses to destabilize us. Let others know if you are guessing and don't offer guaranties that you can't back up.
- 10.) treat people with respect and treat them with an expectation that they are capable of being responsible and respectful of others in turn,(they are more likely to respond that way) even if they are not acting that way in the moment.
- 11.) learn to be visible to those who need you, but generally keep a low profile
- 12.) some of the most important work you will be asked to do will be to deal with stray dogs and children ,distrught lovers and irreplaceable items lost and found. Be caring and compassionate even if you have other things you need to do.
- 13.) while it is important to be helpful, don't let an "organizer" bully or charm you into being their personal go-for or thug, especially if you have other things to attend to.
- 14.) know your limits in dealing with medical emergencies and direct people toward the nearest fist aid station. Escort them if they appear disoriented.
- 15.) use the log to record all significant events each shift. Note the time of the occurrence and your name. Be careful writing down information that may be of use to the cops as they or an infiltrator may get access to the log.

16.) help keep skins and fascists out. Don't feel like you have to do this all by yourself because you signed up for position, get lots of people to help you, but don't create hysteria

17.) if the police or other agents of the state appear at the door have one of you meet them outside with the appropriate paperwork. If they get pushy close the door behind you. This person should identify themselves as security and inform them that they are not welcome inside and that we do not consent to any search of the premises. The other security people should be ready to call the lawyers and to inform the people inside as needed. If they will not take no for an answer or have the right paperwork (even then do not consent to their entry or searches) have a couple of security people accompany them as they go through the premises and record their activities (get names badge numbers etc...). Do not cause hysteria by yelling screaming or running. Remember the police will lie to you.

18.) if the cops show up in large numbers with riot gear etc... close the door, call lawyers, inform everyone inside of the situation as accurately and calmly as you can. Get someone outside to ask what their intent is (remember they lie) and try to negotiate a peaceful settlement, but don't be bullied (even though you will be scared), remember you have a whole community that will back you up. Do not allow yourself to be used to carry out the cops wishes. Simply inform our people of what is going on and help make their decisions happen. Some options: are evacuating now or later, continue to occupy (and have an action now); evacuate those that want to leave or taking out peoples' stuff and having people stay.

19.) some things should not be tolerated at a gathering like this, such as ism behavior (you know racism, sexism, etc), threatening others or anything else that is seriously disruptive (not just stuff that makes you uncomfortable or upset.). First get all of the information, especially if you did not witness the disruption. Do not make assumptions based on race, age, gender, clothing etc... Do believe people reporting racist, sexist etc behavior especially if who they are makes them a better judge of it than you are. If there is time agree with your partner on a course of action.

Possible options are:

A.) mediation between individuals in a dispute by yourself or preferably skilled people not involved.

B.) deescalating someones anger by redirecting them toward yourself and listening. People often will calm down, when they are really being listened to.

C.) If the person is really out of control, don't be alone with them. Keep hands up, palms out. Use a calm tone and relaxed non-threatening posture. Breathe deep. Make no sudden motions. Don't visibly use a walkie-talkie or other object that could identify you as an authority figure and escalate someone further. Don't surround the person. Other security should ask people to keep moving so as not to cause a mob scene. Using physical contact should be a last resort only. Don't allow yourself to take too much abuse. Let the person know that they are

going too far. Tag team with another security person if you need a break.

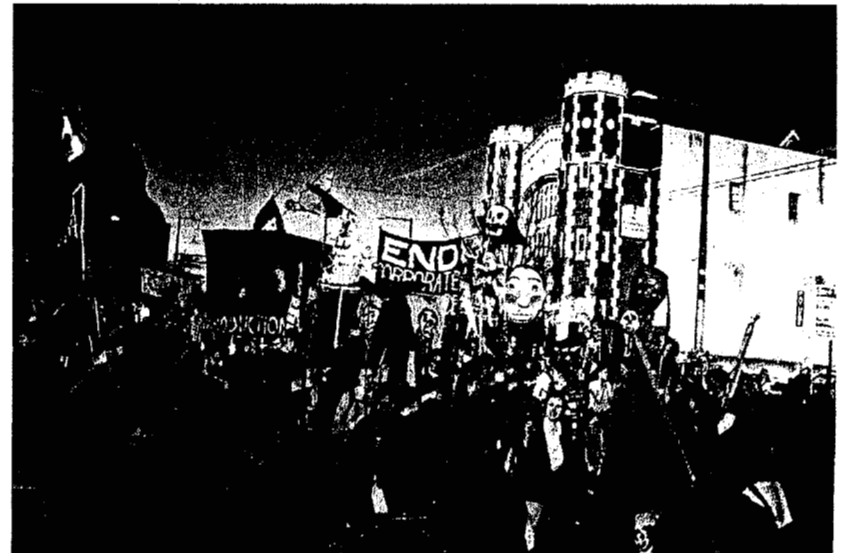
D.) Asking the person or persons to leave (for a day, 2 days or for good) the conference. This is a serious decision (usually followed by the political analysis of countless uninvolved people regarding the ethics of such an action) and hard to enforce (unless we have a picture of them for all security people), but sometimes necessary. Ask yourself primarily if this was a single incident or if you think this problem will continue if the person or persons stays. If you don't ask them to leave because it is uncomfortable for you, you may just be passing the task to the next shift.

E.) After an intense situation, take a little while off, if possible. Having the shakes or tears is a normal reaction. Calling the cops for help should not happen, except for maybe in the most extreme emergencies i.e. life & death stuff.

20.) be supportive of each others' decisions. This can be hard, but no one has perfect answers in most situations, so cut each other some slack. Give each other feedback and develop some trust.

21.) always check your own behavior in relation to your work partners for sexism, racism, ageism etc. This kind of behavior is most likely to come out in unfamiliar situations and under stress. Watch yourself and be ready to hear peoples' feedback. This needs to be a safe place to organize for all people.

22.) in spite of all the intense things discussed at this training, it is unlikely you will have to do most of those things and far more likely that you will occasionally deal with annoying people but mostly make new friends and perform an important function for our community. Have fun, know your limits, ask for help, do your best and no one can expect more than that.



Security Sign Up Sheet

|            | Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 | Day 4 |
|------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 6am - 12pm |       |       |       |       |
| 8am - 2pm  |       |       |       |       |
| 8am - 2pm  |       |       |       |       |
| 12pm - 6pm |       |       |       |       |
| 12pm - 6pm |       |       |       |       |
| 2pm - 8pm  |       |       |       |       |
| 6pm - 12am |       |       |       |       |
| 6pm - 12am |       |       |       |       |
| 8pm - 2am  |       |       |       |       |
| 12am - 6am |       |       |       |       |
| 12am - 6am |       |       |       |       |
| 2am - 8am  |       |       |       |       |

|            | Day 5 | Day 6 | Day 7 | Day 8 |
|------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 6am - 12pm |       |       |       |       |
| 8am - 2pm  |       |       |       |       |
| 8am - 2pm  |       |       |       |       |
| 12pm - 6pm |       |       |       |       |
| 12pm - 6pm |       |       |       |       |
| 2pm - 8pm  |       |       |       |       |
| 6pm - 12am |       |       |       |       |
| 6pm - 12am |       |       |       |       |
| 8pm - 2am  |       |       |       |       |
| 12am - 6am |       |       |       |       |
| 12am - 6am |       |       |       |       |
| 2am - 8am  |       |       |       |       |

## Police/Warrants

If the police or other agents of the state appear at the door one of you should meet them outside with the appropriate paperwork (insurance and lease papers). Close the door behind you. Someone else should lock the door at this point, if possible. Turn on the hand held tape recorder, letting the police know that you have done so. You can also turn on your radio so folks inside can hear some of what's going on. Identify yourself as security and inform them that they are not welcome inside and that we do not consent to any search of the premises. The other security people should call the lawyers, and should inform the people inside as needed.

Ask them why they're there. Remember the police will lie to you. If they want to come inside, ask if they have a search warrant. If not, reiterate that we do not consent to any search of the premises. If they have a proper search warrant (with correct address, judge's signature, and it's dated within two weeks), tell them we still do not consent to any search of the premises. Stay calm. The door will be locked at this point and you have no key to open it. If they want to come in, they will have to make a decision to break down the door. Do not physically put yourself in the way of the police.

If the cops show up in large numbers with riot gear etc, close and lock the door, call lawyers, inform everyone inside of the situation as accurately and calmly as you can. Get someone outside to ask what their intent is (remember they lie) and try to negotiate a peaceful settlement, allowing people inside a chance to leave, but don't be bullied (even though you will be scared), remember you have a whole community that will back you up. Do not allow yourself to be used to carry out the cops' wishes. Simply inform our people of what is going on and help make their decisions happen. Some options are evacuating now or later, continue to occupy (and have an action now), evacuate those that want to leave or taking out peoples' stuff and having people stay.

If the police show up with an arrest warrant for someone, tell them we do not consent to their entering or a search of the premises. Tell them the person they are looking for is not there. If they are still insistent on coming in, you can offer to have other security people look for the person. If they are still insistent, they should be escorted in, after once again telling them we do not consent to their entering or to a search of the premises and all their activities should be recorded.

They may also claim exigent circumstances, which means that they are following a fugitive who would be able to escape if they took the time to get a warrant. Once again tell them we do not consent to their entering or to a search of the premises. Offer to have someone look for the person and if they are there, ask them to come out to keep from having the entire space opened to cops. If they are still insistent, they should be escorted in, after once again telling them we do not consent to their entering or to a search of the premises and all their activities recorded.

The most important things to remember are:

1. Keep repeating we do not consent to their entering or to a search of the premises. This will be necessary in later court cases if they do come in.

2. Stay calm. Your job is not only to negotiate with the police but to be able to make quick decisions and to facilitate others making quick decisions.
3. Do not put yourself in a position of physically restraining the police from entering.
4. Never touch the police or their equipment (radios, weapons, dogs, cars) because you can be charged with assault on an officer, no matter how light the touch. They can touch you; you can't touch them.





## Space Coordination

>> gabriel.

this section will be about the coordination of the physical space that the convergence took place in- 420 East Denny Ave., or Denny Space. we rented the space for one month- thus it was 'legal' as far as paperwork is concerned. the purpose of this section is a functional assessment of what worked, what didn't work, and things we can do better next time. the intent here is only to review how the space operated in relation to one part of the logistical team- the space coordinators. this is not a review of the convergence itself nor is it an analysis of the experience. this information will hopefully offer some reference points for others who are organizing similar gatherings of intent.

for context, the convergence began on 20 November 1999. we got into Denny space on Monday 15 November, just five days before the convergence was to begin. despite the great disarray and disrepair of the building, Denny was ready in five days. during this set-up period, the function of 'space coordinator' was largely to maintain communication with other logistical teams (food, security, health clinic, welcome center, trainers, puppet folks) to see that the space was arranged to best accommodate all that would take place there. during the actions, Denny space became the center for communications, the legal team, and an emergency health clinic (one entire section of Denny was designated as a medical zone for the influx of patients). the space coordinators worked with security to best accommodate every one's needs as safely as possible.

### what was the 'space coordinator'?

the space coordinators were the people working solely to facilitate healthy, human, efficient operation of the space in order to make the convergence as effective as possible.

### what did the space coordinators do, exactly?

summed up, the responsibility of space coordination was one of support work, both of people and the building. it was also, as the name implies, a job of coordination: of people, projects, and needs, among other things. specifically, some of the things we did (or tried to do) included: communicate, with trainers, convergence participants, and the other logistical teams; daily clean-up; answering questions; re-arranging the way the space and how it was used; coordinating foot traffic; keeping exits/walkways clear; conflict resolution; luggage arrangement; coordinating volunteers; assisting the front desk; answering a barrage of questions; rumor control; outreach to the other building occupants and businesses/neighbors in the neighborhood; answering questions; and etc., etc., etc. our roles became defined as we went along, though we were not confined to those definitions. rather, the definitions of our duties suggested what types of

tasks to take responsibility for. there was no defined 'task description' to read from, so we just adapted as was necessary, though not always successfully. being dedicated specifically to the space made possible our task of re-shaping the physical space according to need. the work was relentlessly demanding, because many nuts-and-bolts questions, functional necessities and personal quarrels that ensued were often dealt with by the space coordinators. as the needs and demands of the convergence changed, we worked quite hard to adapt the space to fit the convergence, because the convergence never adapted to fit the space.

there was a lot of extra work to be done by way of cleaning up and paying mind after folks who didn't do it for themselves. part of our job was also to take care of shit that often didn't get done, like cleaning bathrooms, vacuuming, sweeping, garbage removal, or covering the shifts of volunteers who didn't show (or never signed up). so much of the work consisted dealing with unforeseeable events/problems/issues/fuck-ups, that it was necessary to be as flexible as Denny was chaotic. this task was much larger than two people could handle; a team of two as space coordinators turned out to be a serious underestimation. luckily we never did the task entirely by ourselves; folks from Security and from the Welcome Center really busted ass and took on a great deal of extra work, even though they themselves were over-extended. other volunteers (though never enough) committed lots of their time to various projects. people with construction expertise fixed, mended, repaired, built, re-wired, cut, welded, and plumbed Denny space wherever necessary (there were four in particular, without whom Denny literally would have fallen apart- ya'll know who you are, and i thank you). the titles were rather misleading because the work of space coordination, security, welcome center and scheduling were shared out of necessity, so there was a great overlapping of responsibilities wherein the definition of 'space coordinator' was not limited to the two of us charged with that task. we all had our particular focuses, but we certainly worked in tandem with each other, and quite well, too.

### --what worked--

some of the things we did worked well; these are listed below. the points are basic enough to be applicable in other settings.

### \*talking to people in the neighborhood\*:

throughout Denny's three-week existence, effort was made to respect and involve the neighborhood around us. before the convergence began there was a good deal of outreach done in the neighborhood: letting businesses and residents know what we were doing at Denny, inviting them to participate, and putting faces onto the activity. the everyday-world of businesses and homes are going to be affected when thousands of activists descended upon a neighborhood, and great care needs to be taken to respect the neighborhoods and communities we work in, and to work with them. it . outreach gave folks a heads-up, and also personalized things. almost everyone in the neighborhood, the small business owners and residents, were very supportive of our work and very appreciative of our efforts to

make contact with them. many came to Denny to observe, then stayed to participate. some of the neighborhood businesses gave 'WTO protestors' special discounts. only one business owner made formal complaints with us, but he was a free-trade enthusiast and an asshole anyhow; his problems with Denny Space arose out of sheer disdain for anything fun.

### **\*\*space guidelines\*\***

operational guidelines were set up at Denny space. the purpose of the guidelines was to hold the building as long as we needed it without molestation by the city, police, landlord, or infiltrators, and make sure the logistical teams were not so stretched out that they burned out. the guidelines were short and simple:

- Denny would be open from 8:00 a.m. to midnight
- all persons not working with a logistical team had to be out by midnight (the housing working group organized housing, and thus people did not need to stay at Denny space- sleeping there would have overcrowded the facility)
- no drugs or alcohol on-site
- affinity group or individuals wanting to utilize the space after midnight should arrange it with the space coordinators

coordinators from the space/security/welcome center working groups were always on-site. at night, a security team was always working, and the space coordinators were up so long as people were in the space working on various projects. since we were quite shorthanded, this meant sleep was rare.

### **\*\*baggage storage\*\***

baggage storage was an unavoidable necessity. in the first few days of the convergence there were vain attempts made to keep large travel bags out of Denny space altogether, because there was simply no space to devote strictly to bags. most people, however, came with all their belongings with them, and asking them to take their bags away was ludicrous on our part. when people came in the thousands, the small corner that had been set aside for property storage disappeared under a growing sea of bags. thus, one of the meetings spaces (a defunct walk-in freezer) was requisitioned as a storage area. the folks at the Welcome Center made bag-tags and checked bags in/out as needed. during the week of protests, the secure baggage storage would prove to be invaluable: when people got arrested, their items were relatively safe until their release.

~we suggest setting up a large preferably secure area, where bags can be stored safely. arrange a storing system, e.g. bag tags, or something similar, for security purposes.

### **\*\*daily check-in's\*\***

to make sure all the logistical folks were on the same page, and to assure that we were working effectively together, daily morning check-in's were held

between logistical working groups. at this check-in we discussed what was working, what wasn't working, and what the coming day was going to require of us, both as individual teams and as a group. it was a time and space to communicate. people had different needs for different days, and the check-in was the place to discuss how our needs were changing and how we could meet those needs. the daily check-in's, when we had them, were enormously beneficial. by the middle of the convergence however, we stopped holding the daily meetings— this created new problems, exasperated existing problems, and placed unnecessary strain on the entire logistical effort. my recommendation is to get all the logistical people together every morning, before the day gets underway. no matter how hectic shit gets, be sure these meetings take place. your convergence will be the better for it— the work will be more effective, mistakes will not necessarily be repeated, work will become more harmonious, and issues can be dealt with before they turn into problems.

### **\*\*grievance council\*\***

a separate body, dubbed the 'Grievance Council', was created to assist, mediate, do crisis intervention, facilitate, and/or aid people when interpersonal and community conflicts arose. the Grievance Council did not mimic Security; rather, it served to facilitate processing between people, that healthy solutions could be found and a sustainable community maintained. the Council was a small group of 8 people who were physical points community members could go to with problems. some people had issues with how the space was operating, or problems with someone in particular at Denny; other folks wanted some assistance around relationship issues, or just to talk with someone about the intensity of the actions. for those on the Council (anyone could be on it if they wanted to) good listening skills were paramount— often times, folks just needed someone to listen to them for five minutes. in other instances, people requested a mediator to assist in the communication process. in the event the problem was something severe, presenting a danger to the person, the people in the space, or the space itself, a process was developed to handle this. the process was:

- 1) listen to concerns/problems people were having, find out the specifics,
- 2) if the problem couldn't be worked out through the initial discussion, then other Council members would get involved,
- 3) work with all involved parties to develop appropriate solutions.

in the event of abuse, rape, and/or other physical violence, or other problems which physically threatened the safety of our community, there was a fourth step:

- 4) the Council would bring the issue to an emergency meeting of the entire logistical team to facilitate some kind of resolution.

when the Council was utilized, i believe it was useful to the convergence community. generally, it's good to have a place for people to vent concerns and to be heard.

### **\*\*child care facility\*\***

it was very important to have a separate space designated specifically to childcare- everyone was safer that way. at first the childcare space was going to be within the main Denny space; luckily, another part of the Denny building was available and we rented it out- this was the space used for childcare. the childcare folks worked amazingly hard to arrange people and supplies for excellent childcare. as a result, many parents were able to bring their children and participate in the convergence as well as the actions.

### **\*\*porta-potties\*\***

these saved our asses, and everyone else's asses, too. people gotta do their thing; make sure they've got a place to do it in.

### **\*\*hand washing station\*\***

it was cold and wet during the convergence. wet, crowded people made for a dirty environment, and when up to 5000 people were using a space designed for perhaps 1000, illness was passed about easily. the water heater had broken so there was no running hot water in the building. luckily, the Kitchen Crew (Seeds of Peace and others) installed a hand-washing station; they boiled water and set out soap for folks to use. this was the only way for hands to get clean which helped curtail the passing of sickness around the building. if there's porta-potties, there's probably no sinks for folks to use. make sure folks can wash up somewhere. always keep hot water available for sanitation purposes.

### **\*\*ride/message board\*\***

this is a given at most any gathering- some area designated specifically for rides and messages to be posted. setting up the board in a low-traffic area will save time and energy. the ride board at Denny was moved twice before it found a place where people could crowd without blocking doorways and walkways. include scrap paper, pens, and tape or pins so the messages can be posted.

### **\*\*contingency plan\*\***

to frame how to work together in the event of a raid, a written plan was drafted and distributed to affinity groups and logistical people. many people were prepared to hold the space with lockdowns and barricades. the cops never raided the space (they did stop by frequently) but if they had tried to raid us we'd have been ready to hold our space. make a plan that everyone knows, one that addresses what to do if the space is raided by the cops, the fire marshal, city inspectors, health people, or whomever.(see example in *Security*)

### **\*\*playing\*\***

whenever possible, we (as in some of the logistical people) played around. playing was/is paramount. the logistical work had to be done responsibly;

it also needed to be fun. the high-stress moments at Denny, of which there were many, were dealt with by a goofing around. it needs to be fun, right? playing should happen more often. and not just at activist convergence's, but all the time. if you don't play often enough you risk becoming a real bore and a big jerk, too.

\*\*\*

### **\*\*taking care of each other, taking care of ourselves\*\***

the convergence proved to be very taxing, both emotionally and psychologically. for us to be sustainable and continue to be effective, we needed to take care of ourselves, i.e., getting away from the convergence for a break: to decompress, ground, and rest. though taking care of ourselves was a well-understood need, we did not do a very good job of it. as a result, we met with extreme exhaustion, high stress and emotional anxiety; we got very little sleep, had poor eating habits, and were often crabby. some(logistical) folks broke down, became short of patience, got sick, and freaked out. most of us ended up operating in crisis mode, for which the only outcome is burnout. where we lacked in taking care of ourselves, we excelled in taking care of each other. we formed an incredible network of support, the likes of which i've not experienced before. this network consisted of people within the logistical team, and we supported each other, took care of one another, made sure one another were fed, rested, loved. it was usually by the demand of others that we took care of ourselves. our emotional and physical (as in hugs and touching and such) intimacy was so sustaining that it enabled us to work under very crazy conditions. writing about this support network, taking care of one another and ourselves, warrants an entire section in and of itself. it was one of the most amazing parts about the entire experience because i felt like we were living the types of communities that are possible to us.

however you form your own support networks will be up to you; just be sure to do it. remember to take care of yourselves, to make down time. don't take on everything- be sure to share the responsibilities. like bob dylan said: 'may you always do for others, and let others do for you.' and like mom says, get good food, at least some sleep, and lots of liquids. remember that if you don't take care of yourself, emotionally, mentally, physically, you'll be much less effective; you'll freak out, burn out, die out. then the movement will be less one, and we can't have that now.

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### **--what didn't work--**

**\*important note:** there are always steps we can take to improve the activism and work we do. to begin, we need to identify and be clear about what doesn't work, and use that as a point of departure towards something that does. Denny was not an isolated experience- it was a loud reflection of all parts of DAN: the pieces that worked as well as the pieces that needed (some desperately) to be challenged and changed. this makes sense, as the convergence and where it took place (Denny) was a DAN function, largely organized by DAN people, operating a DAN 'agenda'. so structural and processing problems within DAN were also very much a component of the convergence at Denny space.

of one very specific example: the structural and internalized racism within DAN

was part of Denny Space (and the convergence, if the two can be separated) as well. in the same way that DAN was primarily white, Denny space was a primarily white phenomenon. this demands a great deal of self-examination for DAN-ites, and that reflection should not take place here (it needs and deserves a larger dialogue/analysis committed specifically to racism within DAN, as well as other forms of oppression). it is noted, however, as an example of a problem within DAN which the space/convergence reflected. some of the problems listed below are linked directly to DAN itself, as the example above, and some were convergence space-specific. i'm will not attempt to identify which is which. possible solutions follow each problem.

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#### **\*\*problems with finding space\*\***

Denny space was not secured until about two weeks before the convergence was to begin, which made things somewhat hurried and confusing. other spaces secured for the convergence were restricted-use only and could not function as 'central locations'. *serious* searches for central convergence locations did not begin until late-october— much later than we should have. by the time the convergence rolled around, last ditch efforts to secure other warehouses failed and Denny became the central hub for almost all convergence activity, thus creating a scramble for logistical people to fit an entire 12 course meal onto one small plate. many problems were born out of our needing to use Denny as a central arena.

#### *\*suggestion\**

---secure a space (or spaces) well in advance(if possible). be sure to plan accordingly for numbers. don't underestimate your outreach efforts, either. there may be more people than you were expecting. be prepared for this; secure other spaces to use should that become necessary. don't get caught trying to fit 5000 people in a space maxxed out at 1000. as 'the movement' grows, the spaces will need to grow as well.

#### **\*\*poor use of available spaces(no shuttle)\*\***

except for Denny, spaces secured for DANs use for the convergence were not efficiently utilized. over four other locations were secured for convergence use; at least two of these sites remained under-utilized because they were beyond short walking distance and there was no efficient way to transport people to them (we tried, and tried, to secure a shuttle, to no avail). public trans was an option, but it didn't seem to work out— perhaps that is just an issue with Seattle pub trans. some folks pulled a gaggle of bikes together and repaired them for use, but there were many more people than bikes. since the other spaces weren't very accessible for training's/workshops, Denny became the central hub for almost everything DAN was doing, contributing to the unbearable overcrowding Denny experienced.

#### *\*suggestion\**

—don't spread workshops/trainings out over great distances. if events/

training's will be held in multiple locations, work to get multiple spaces within walking distance of one another. if that can't happen, perhaps public transportation is easily accessible, affordable (it should be free, dammit) and efficient. otherwise, see about securing a shuttle for transport; you'll avoid unneeded stress and heartache. the more easily accessible the locations the more likely they are to be utilized, the more effective the convergence will be, and less energy will be wasted. don't have a central location, or a shuttle, or public transit, or walk-able distances? take over a park or the city center, and be prepared for police harassment.



#### **\*\*too small a space for so many people\*\***

being compact, Denny could snugly fit at least 1000 people. we knew Denny was going to be used extensively, and tried to plan the best we could. the first few days of the convergence were relatively slow, but everyday the numbers increased— from 100 the first day, 300 the second, leading up to un-thanksgiving when the number increased to over 2000 a day. the weekend following thanksgiving saw 3500-5000 people coming through Denny Space *every day*. (these numbers represent estimations made by Seeds of Peace during the twice-a-day meals). this enormous influx of heads set quite a strain upon the logistical team, upon the space itself, and eventually upon many participating in the convergence: with so many people packed in tight quarters it made movement almost impossible, the air often became suffocating, and sickness spread rapidly. also, the sheer number of persons inside Denny caused access to doorways/exits to be blocked

by stagnant traffic; there was never enough space to move. workshops became less effective as overcrowding spread— there simply was not enough room. security made sure doorways were accessible, but if some emergency had arisen it could have been disastrous because so many people may not have been able use the emergency exits.

*\*suggestion\**

—go for a big space, and maybe even more than one. really, its just no fun to have thousands of folks crammed in a small area. take over a park if necessary (see above). be aware of escape routes and keep access to those routes open. be sure people know how to get out of the building in an emergency.

**\*\*no quiet place\*\***

the convergence and the week of WTO festivities were highly intense, especially during the week when the cops went totally fucking haywire. we had no place to designated as a safe area where people could decompress and have calm— one spot was carved out for a day but due to overcrowding it was totally ineffective in providing a safe-place for decompression. the craziness of the convergence and the action took its toll on people, and this showed; it was an emotionally and psychologically impacting experience. there needed to be some area where people could be together, to share and support one another and collect themselves again.

**\*\*suggestion\*\***

—safe spaces- as the Establishment realizes that we're not going away— they will use dirtier and dirtier tactics to suppress us, and this will take it's toll on our minds and hearts. people need a safe space ground in, with calm lighting and blankets if it's cool and soft things to lay on; perhaps even some tea. provide this space— designate some safe area for people, some quiet spot, a place to re-center. let us take care of each other genuinely.

**\*\*lack of communication and process\*\***

lack of communication was a constant source of confusion, frustration, and resentment. it fed inter-personal tensions and made logistical work more difficult because of conflicting understandings of how the space was to be utilized. our shoddy processing let the angers of poor communication steep and stew and sometimes things got ugly as a result.

*\*suggestions\**

—communicate! hold daily morning check-in's in the morning, before the day gets underway. *make time for these meetings*, even if it seems like there is no time to spare. get the logistical team there to discuss what's working, what isn't working, and what is needed.

—process! *give enough time for real process to occur*. it's time consuming, necessary, and worth it.

—communicate some more! let's not unravel ourselves by not communicating

with one another. the ruling class will try hard enough to unravel us without us doing it to ourselves.

**\*\*problems with volunteer coordination\*\***

the backbone of the convergence was the logistics folks (volunteers), and there was a heavy workload to bear. there were never enough volunteers at the convergence- there was always more work than there were people volunteering to do it.

*\*suggestion\**

—recruit volunteers: people want to contribute something, want to be involved; they may not know where or how. be clear about responsibilities and tasks. show people where they can plug in. a convergence shouldn't be an event; an event is something that people observe, and there are too many observers. see the 'Volunteer' section in this zine.

**\*\*no community meeting time\*\***

the only time the convergence community came together as a community was during the Spokes Council meetings, which dealt specifically with the N30 action itself. there was no time when the convergence community came together to discuss what was happening, what we were all learning, other events/projects going on, public announcements, etc. also, many people had common questions about the convergence that would have been helpful to discuss as a community.

*\*suggestion\**

—hold community meeting periods. set aside a time when people know announcements will be made and questions can be asked, a space where discussion can take place. some type of daily introduction session, perhaps covering 'This is what's going on, this is what you can do, etc., ' might be very useful. its disappointing to think of all the hands and minds that were not utilized simply because they had to spend 2 days figuring the convergence out, especially when we could have done a 20 minute meeting twice a day to orient new people to the space and let them know what was going on.

**-- other suggestions --**

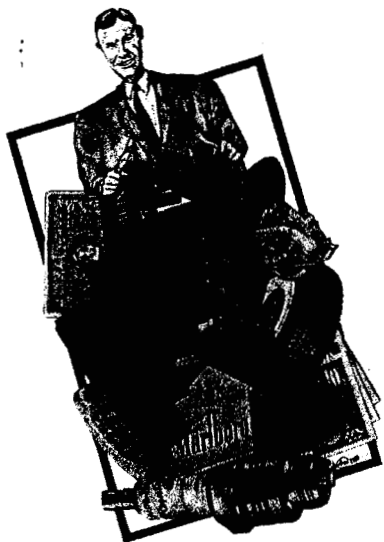
---be sure to define who will be present at the space while the actions are taking place. if you close the space down during the action then this is a mute point but if the space is kept open, someone should also be there to bottom line the space.

—set up your garbage/recycling/composting areas before things get started. set up garbage pick-up (like by the city, or someone with a truck) well in advance so the service can begin when necessary. we tried to set up garbage/recycling while the N30 convergence was already underway, and it was a bad scene...

—before the activities end and everyone departs, get a clean-up crew together who will be dedicated to helping break down and clean up the space. arrange this before the actions end. coordinators may be too frazzled or exhausted to do this work by themselves....

---check out the above to see what worked, and be sure to note what didn't. whatever it is that you're going to do, remember that it will reflect your group/ organization/conglomeration-of-individuals. so take time for process. communicate. make evaluation vital. try to learn from previous successes and mistakes and take note on how those successes/failures came to be. remember, insanity is often defined by doing the same thing over and over again and expecting to get different results.

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this was the first time i'd experienced anything quite like the convergence; maybe something like this zine would have helped to navigate the unknown areas. again i want to say that it was only by working together with an amazing group of people that Denny lasted those two weeks. you know who you are; thanks to all of you.



## Volunteer Coordinator

>> Mike E.

A problem that always exists at large gatherings is that there is a significant population increase as the action gets closer. In Seattle we nearly doubled our population every day until the action started. The ratio of people, who know what is going on to the folks that are just arriving and are therefore clueless is high. This makes for a large population every day that needs much support and are unable to offer much help. So it becomes vital to plug all people present into support roles. Sign up sheets usually are not enough, since many people don't understand that everyone needs to spend some chunk of their time doing their time doing support work. Oftentimes people are so over stimulated and have so many other demands on their time that this work is not their first priority. These factors generally result in a few people working their butt off to support everyone else. In Seattle the sheer numbers needed for support roles, meant that usual few people dedicated to that work were not going to be enough.

So we had volunteer coordinators. We would meet in the morning with the coordinators of all the other work groups and find out how many people they needed at what time that day. We would also find out if those people needed to have any particular resources or skills (such as carpentry skills or have a car). At mealtimes, spokes council or at any other large gathering of people we would then politely, but loudly get people's attention and fill those needs. We would then report back to the other coordinators what or whom we had come up with and see if they had any further needs.



## 918 Virginia St.

>>The Pollinators

*Human rights for shelter? We were working for a community that would melt the soldered circuits of work/spend living imbedded into our culture, in effort to experience and broadcast the alternatives. A renters time is stolen for the purpose of accumulating capital that is then handed over to a landlord who more often than not, disallows the renter any rights to their home; the renter is merely turning the hamster wheel. Native peoples, and homeless folk experience similar injustices that renters do as the government and police continue to remove them from their homes, land, and communities. This occurs from the four sacred Dine comers in the southwest to Guerrero St. in the mission district of SF.*

The first major anti-WTO action, in Seattle of November, 1999, turned a vacant building into a home for hundreds of folk. The action aimed to create a temporary community throughout the WTO ministerial, and to house anyone who needed a place to stay. The action, perpetrated by a group that came to be known as the Seattle Anonymous Roofers (SAR), was massive and public, housing between fifty to two hundred people every night. This housing action voiced great opposition to tyrannical private property owners and the parallel classism in the world at large.

Numerous tactics exist to collectively occupy a building as a public action. The following are some essentials:

- ◆ **Researching Building Status and History**
- ◆ **Barricading windows and doors**
- ◆ **Feeding the Squatters**
- ◆ **Communications**
- ◆ **Waste**
- ◆ **Affinity Groups and Spokespeople**
- ◆ **Media**

### --Researching Building Status and History

Property ownership, value, and history can be accessed at the County Assessor's room, located in the government buildings of any city; the address, room and phone number of the County Assessor is listed in the government pages (blue pages) of a city's phone book. You can also call information. Once there, the address of the building you want to squat will get you access to info stored in the city's databases.

### --Barricading Windows and Doors

Barricading windows and doors should be one of the first steps performed to show that the squatters are in control of the building. It is also necessary for safety measures. Wooden pallets can be broken down into singular 2x4 pieces. 2x4's can be fastened horizontally across a door as an initial barricade. A sturdier tactic is to find long 4x4's that can be diagonally lodged against the door and the opposite wall. The structure opposite to the door may be a stairwell which will also act as a surface to support a long 4x4. Windows can be barricaded by broken down pallets as well. another security measure can be to nail fabric over the windows to at least protect the identity of the squatters.

### --Feeding the Squatters

There's different ways to meet the basic need of food. Paruse the city's alley's and back streets for food dumpsters; Starbucks, Pizza Joints, Trader Joe's & Whole Foods are businesses that don't lock up their dumpsters, or do not greatly secure their products. IF this is not an option, try to locate a local Food not Bombs, Hari Krishna, Salvation Army or other religious group that serves food on a regular basis. Food not Bombs (most likely) are the more politically geared of these but keep an open mind- when getting a meal maybe you can communicate ideas about homeless issues with groups you don't often come in contact with.

### --Waste

If there's a toilet connected to the sewer system, people can manually use(flush) it. in just about every squat, the wax seal under the toilet bowl will need to be replaced. These are approx. \$2.00 at any hardware store and usually include instructions. Also, check sewer pipe with water first; some asshole landlords plug them with cement or they can clog on their own.

Alright, you've got a sewer line? Now one can re-use water to manually flush the toilet. Approx. 3L of water poured directly into the bowl creates a gravitational pull for shit in the toilet. People should not push tissue in the toilet. This will only allow the piss to sit without clogging problems. But, the shit is what needs the grey (dirty) water. As simple as it seems, it is un-traditional toileting, so if squatters aren't responsible for flushing their shit, a bucket specifically for crap is useful. Dump it outside daily. Maybe the city will give you your very own porta-pot like they did for 918 Virginia (with a little coercing!).

### --Communications

--Two way radios: Most have up to 14 channels; some (like Kenwoods) have intermediate channels at a smaller range of hertz for more private communication, such as security. Two way radios are also used by those who need immediate communication. These are mostly for security if the squat is public. a control receiver can be put in a central area with amp for public consumption.

--Bulletin Boards: These can be used for intermediate communication and can be divided to pertinent subjects. Boards can be utilized by everyone until discussion

can be brought about at a general assembly. Posting should be encouraged for everyone involved, secondary to radio communications.

examples of posting subjects: building projects, sanitation, food, security.

These two used in conjunction with consensus meetings will help people be informed, stop rumors, be aware of police presence, and understand problems/solutions as soon as they occur.

### **Affinity Groups and Spokespeople--**

One way the economically margined people of this country can empower ourselves is to unite. It was inspiring to be a part of a spontaneous group action formed of small affinity groups and individuals devoted to free housing. Several people who'd been active in the Minnehaha Free State struggle brought in two way radios, and knew how to use them effectively. It was evident these activists had an affinity with each other; there was trust, similar objectives, and a common perspective that all people have rights to home and land. Personally speaking, my sporadic diet and sleep, combined with cerebral overdrive was only bearable because of my affinity to the Pollinators. Without our mutual goals of keeping the squat open (ultimately turning it into a shelter), and our common values of communication, I'd have had a physical and mental avalanche.

Walking in the dusk, only flashighting the necessary corners of our two story home, in effort to save battery fluid, en route to SPIV, the room designated for unemployed people who survive through their wits, we'd talk. "Alright, the rope in back is secured for an escape route, but I wanna stay. You're stayin' right?" "Who's got word about outside negotiations with the owner, cause the roof just spotted three buses with riot cops in them, and folx are certain there's two infiltrators remaining inside." "No one's got word right now, even if those cops are on the way, if we got supporters in front of the squat we have more power. I'm stayin' as long as there are numbers." "I got yer back."

This conversation models the type of communication which was one part of many grounding bits that sustained our affinity group. What's more, people who came to the action as part of affinity groups had experience working with each other, and made use of that experience to work more effectively on projects inside the building. Another asset to working in an affinity group is that affinities can select a rotating spokesperson to attend large meetings. If the action had run on a spokesperson model of affinity groups, rather than having a 150-person consensus, much time could have been put into other house projects. In the grand scheme of things, experience working with affinity groups is experience creating alternative social, political, and economic systems. In the squat, folx who didn't come with an affinity group or have history with other squatters were met with skepticism, be-

cause of security issues. Who wants to work with an infiltrator? Some of these folk also appeared to view the squat as a crash pad, and house rules (established earlier by consensus) of no weapons, no drugs or alcohol, no property destruction, and no engagement with the police were ignored. These folk never seemed to view the building as their home, cultivate it as such, or realize that creating a communal living space, free of hierarchy, class, or other oppressive structures was direct action. When laws and military are removed, personal responsibility for ones lunch, sleeping bag, and feces must step in. The plumbing system was a case in point. The original organizers brought in four toilets and four sinks and some of them were hooked up and running within hours after folx entered on Sunday. They worked great until the SPD illegally turned of the power and water supply to the building. Gray water stepped in. Some folk were familiar with the intricacies of this alternative plumbing, and another person had plans to harvest rainwater using a tarp and a bucket to wash dishes and flush the toilets. However, so many people were incapable of pouring a bucket of piss, or gray water into the toilet bowl that the energy for these projects went, instead, into cleaning the bathrooms again and again. As a result, a core of 20 or so ran themselves into the ground bottomlining security, construction projects, and negotiations with the property owner. It was frustrating as hell to work a nine hour security shift while rebuilding a barricade and talking with other tenants of the building threatening to blowtorch a hole in the backdoor because their power got shut off by the cops and they couldn't run their small business for three days. Then I'd climb the ladder to the roof,;and find a bunch of drunk kids saying indiscreet things on the radio. By the middle of the week we were so caught up in keeping the building secure and the shit flowing down the toilet that we didn't have time to live in and out of the autonomous home, to have shows there and games of tackle basketball and water harvesting workshops, make big banners, broadcasting radio, or even SLEEP; nor was there time to hold workshops that would have built up the community, like acquiring/growing food in the city, controlling one's news sources, consensus decision making and facilitation of meetings. We decided to call the squat HOME but had built barricades in our minds that kept us from really making it that.

### **--Media**

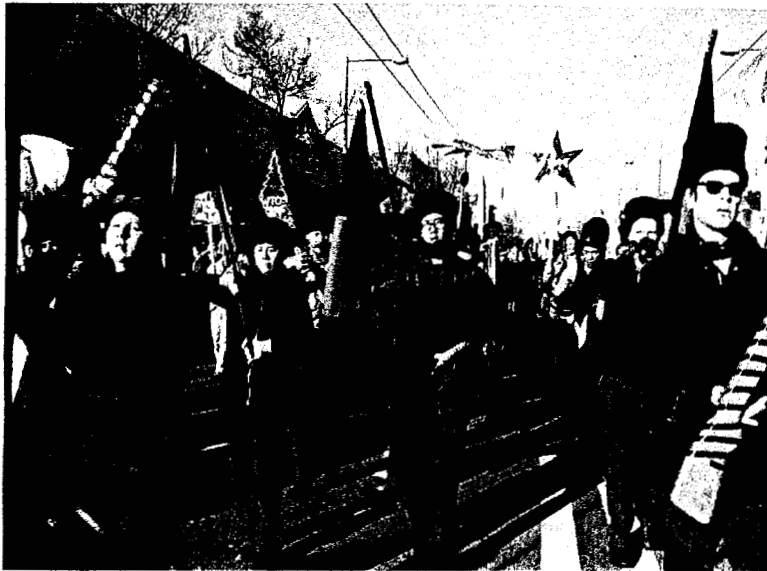
The action was public, and the activists hoped the media could be a tool to reach the greater public. Original organizers of the action made consensus on who would be media liaisons. Those liaisons wore red bandanas(or whatever red material was available) around their arms to identify themselves as media liaisons to the media and other squatters. A similar tactic was used for a police & general 'outside' liason, as well. In all aforementioned situations such liaisons worked effectively are prevented additional friction in an already heated situation.

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In retrospect, 918 Virginia was skool for many people involved. Folx that came into the squat without previous experience working in large actions, truly experienced doors/tools for self initiation and determination. We learned how/how not



to respond to the volatile situation of police force, food instability, people en mass, hungry media, and a psychotic land owner. In future actions, media relations should be agreed upon ahead of time, mainstream TV media should not be allowed in the building, and all information going out to mainstream sources should be closely controlled. This could mean media packets created on a daily basis by those involved would grant those in action power over the public image being conveyed. Video interviews by independent media, live broadcasts on pirate radio stations, or articles created by those involved should be created. It's our action, we should document it! After the packets are created, they can be distributed however people choose. In tense housing action situations, the property should be treated as home. Run workshops, shows, and community dinners out of the home as much as possible! Considering youth were involved in the action, a long strong future of using abandoned property will continue to be seen.



## MEDICAL

>>The DAN medic team and the MASHH Collective

### *Health Insurance*

*We believe that health care should be available to all and that decisions regarding health should be made by individuals who have easy access to printed information, trainings, and well-trained providers who represent a broad spectrum of types and styles of health care. We want to take the decision-making process out of the hands of specialists and insurance companies, and we also strive to prevent low-income from meaning inadequate health care.*

The organizing of the Direct Action Network's medical team covered three primary functions. We provided a free health clinic during the convergence, trained activists in "guerilla first aid," and coordinated field medics to work with affinity groups and autonomously on the streets of downtown Seattle during the week of the WTO ministerial conference. Additionally, we provided a limited number of first aid kits to affinity groups, the Independent Media Center, the Seeds of Peace folks running the kitchen, and the housing action. Our goals included empowering people to care for themselves so they could remain in the streets despite the cops' dispersal attempts, and minimizing the need for hospital visits which are prohibitively expensive, often disempowering, and not safe for those doing arrestable actions.

A few months before the convergence I sought people who I thought might be interested in doing medical work—contacted nursing schools and a naturopathic school, massage students, and friends of mine that are health care providers and politically active. I also contacted the American Red Cross (a dead end), and made efforts with Physicians for Social Responsibility (never heard back from them), and somehow didn't get in touch with Doctors Without Borders—I imagine they might be a useful resource. As it turned out, many of the initial folks I contacted did not work directly with the team, but they were on the streets autonomously. I was given the names of two activist medics who were coming to Seattle, and after several phone conversations we became the core of the medic organizing team.

We published some basic health care information in the action packet (the information that was given out widely at the convergence) and also suggested that each affinity group have at least one member trained in first aid. We offered 5 trainings at the convergence, which were demonstration-specific, and focused on blood stoppage, anatomical splinting, safe procedures for moving the injured, recognizing signs of serious injury, and treatment of exposure to pepper spray and tear gas. We had printed information available about those chemicals as well. We made regular announcements at the spokescouncil meetings about the free clinic which opened a week prior to the action, and encouraged people to come to one of the

trainings.

The clinic was located at the primary convergence site, which was happily within walking distance from the action site, and in the neighborhood to which police herded people at night where they continued beating, gassing and pepper spraying. During the convergence, the clinic operated 12 hours a day, providing basic first aid as well as immune support, stress reduction and energy boosting, in the forms of bodywork and herbal medicine. Another key role of ours was to support the health of organizers by tracking them down and reminding them to eat and drink water, and giving them herbs, massage, and acupuncture.

Our team was loosely split into clinic staff and field workers, though many of us did both. The clinic was primarily staffed by herbalists, a naturopathic doctor, massage therapists, acupuncturists, while those working in the field were all of the above and RNs, EMTs, PAs, and more. Two medical doctors worked in the clinic and the field, and there were two MDs on call. There were two medical affinity groups which were extremely effective—in retrospect, I would have encouraged more of these.

Our strategy for the action was designed to saturate downtown with medics. We provided referrals to enable affinity groups and medics to link up, and encouraged every affinity group to either send someone to a training, or hook up with already-trained people. We did our best to coordinate the dispersal of medics throughout the zone in which we were focusing the demonstrations, particularly in "hot spots" such as the hotels where delegates were staying, and we provided a limited number of jump kits to each region of the zone. We also had a large number of roving medics working in pairs or teams, who followed the clouds of tear gas and the cries of "Medic!". A number of businesses invited us to set up temporary clinics inside, which allowed medics to work indoors when they needed a break from chasing and then being chased by the police. Unfortunately we were unable to publicize these clinics widely—only through word-of-mouth—as the business owners only offered in the heat of the moment. We found that before the convergence the attitude of most businesses was quite hostile to the idea of the WTO resisters, as the police saturated downtown with propaganda, warning against vandalism and sales loss. However, once it became clear who was really provoking the violence, many business owners had a rapid change of heart and were quite helpful.

Medics were heavily targeted by the police to the extent that most removed their red cross insignia, though that didn't prevent police from interrupting medical treatment to remove irrigation solution from the hands of medics and then pepper spraying them, confiscating medical supplies and strewing them on the ground (which of course rendered them non-sterile), shooting medics with plastic and wooden bullets, confiscating gas masks of medics (who were therefore exposed to several hours of carcinogenic propellants and irritating chemicals), preventing access by

medics to injured people and generally interfering with treatment in every way imaginable.

Many medics were on radios (separate from the tactical radios system, so we were able to continue functioning when their radios were jammed), and/or had cell phones. There was a dispatch person at our convergence site and people on the street went through her to call for reinforcements. This worked extremely well, and in retrospect, we should have had more radio coordination, however, those of us without radios were easily able to find where we were needed, and we caution against being too reliant on a system that is so easily sabotaged.

We were asked frequently, in the planning stages, how many medics we would need, and what quantity of supplies, and it is still difficult to answer. We have no idea what the medic-to-protester ratio was, but it was overwhelming to see how many folks were out providing basic care, and were well stocked with supplies. There were at least 75 medics already trained with whom we coordinated, and then we trained around 300 people, and that information was then passed on to affinity groups and other friends. We were also supported by some small businesses (particularly in Pike Place Market, where a temporary clinic was established and the farmers donated limes, water and snacks as well as their time and first aid skills) and joined by many medics of all training backgrounds who came downtown after seeing the graphic news coverage.

During the action, we were minimally staffed in the clinic during the day, focusing our attention on the streets. From around sundown until midnight we focused on the clinic, treating vast numbers of people suffering from police abuses. One of the biggest (unpredicted) challenges was decontaminating those who were heavily dosed with pepper spray, and minimizing contamination of the clinic and ourselves. To that end, we bagged and sealed the outer layer of clothing of those heavily sprayed before they were admitted to our triage area, rigged a makeshift shower and assisted our often temporarily-blinded clients with washing. This was done quite haphazardly, as there were frequently emergency situations that did not allow for time lost removing clothing, and as our shower conditions were far less than ideal.

#### **More things we will do differently next time:**

limit clinic hours. we were open 12-16 hours a day for ten days. This is clearly not sustainable.

have the security team page us for emergencies during off hours, enabling us to have off hours!

have a complete and concise, written set of policies and procedures  
develop a method of volunteer skill assessment before they staff the clinic  
find a volunteer coordinator a few weeks before the clinic opens

have active security procedures, especially during busy hours  
increase awareness of and consider a policy to protect against potential infiltrators and freaks who may sabotage the clinic, intentionally or otherwise  
coordinate more efficient distribution of first aid kits to affinity groups  
have clear contingency plans for decontamination—labeling bags of clothing, have towels available for post-shower, etc  
have more printed information available about chemical weapons  
offer more workshops, including a workshop that covers chemical weapon issues and treatment exclusively  
establish in advance and publicize mental-health check-ins (one exclusively for medics and another one for all activists) for the evenings of action days for post-traumatic stress and more  
establish a systematic process for documenting injuries at the hands of police which would be thorough enough to use in court  
politicize our style of work more overtly by providing information on the effects that capitalism and globalization have on health care methods, costs, availability etc.

#### **Other information to spread widely among activists:**

If you are risking arrest and have any health condition that might pose serious health problems if your medication is interrupted (such as: behavioral disorders, retroviruses, diabetes, hypertension), you should be aware that you may not have access to proper medication while you are in jail. A letter from a doctor will help. Three copies of the letter are needed, one for the legal team, one for the medical team (these will be kept completely confidential) and one for you. It should include the following information: your name, diagnosis, that you must have access at all times to your medication, a list of all meds, that you must be allowed to keep meds on your person so that they can be properly administered, and that no substitutions are acceptable. Since your name must be on the document, you may want to hide it on your body as a sort of insurance policy—perhaps you won't need it and then could eat it and utilize solidarity tactics, but perhaps you'll be worn out already at the time of arrest and will want to cite out in order to take care of yourself. Better to cite out than pass out. Please make sure that your affinity group and the legal team is aware of your needs so they can help care and advocate for you.

some lists...

#### **JUMP KIT (for the street)**

.35 cents, paper, pen, latex gloves (protect against blood AND pepper spray), Band-aids, CPR masks, as much water as you can carry, 2x2 & 4x4 bandages, menstrual pads (good as bandage), 1st aid tape, ace bandages, eye irrigation, mineral oil, rubbing alcohol, clean rags, bandanas etc., tampons (good for nose bleeds), SAM splints (if possible), instant ice, sun screen, Emergen-C (or other

electrolyte mix), Rescue Remedy (good for shock, trauma), duct tape, marker, cliff or power bars, dried fruit, nuts, general snacks for raising blood sugar levels, \*\*\*for qualified folks: (stethoscope, epi kits, benadryl, inhalers, adjuncts, bag valve mask, b.p. cuff)

#### **CLINIC SUPPLIES**

the above listed things, and: Bacitracin, antiseptic soap, eyewash cups, ace bandages, rubbing alcohol, hydrogen peroxide, contact solution, cots, massage table, sheets, blankets, pillows, clean towels, rags or flannel, small pump spray bottles (1-3oz size, preferably), trash bags, castile soap, baking soda, paper towels, scissors, electric tea pot, tampons, menstrual pads, acetaminophine, naproxen (Aleve)

#### **essential oils**

tea tree, peppermint, lavender, arnica

#### **bulk herbs**

licorice root, peppermint, comfrey, mullein, red clover, nettles, yerba mate

#### **tinctures**

burdock, echinacea, osha, lomatium, dandelion, passionflower, valerian, oregon grape, shepherd's purse, cramp bark, white willow bark

#### **misc. natural stuff**

charcoal tablets, Calms Forte, Traumed, moxa sticks, spirulina, LOTS of chewable vitamin C, lip balm, Olbas oil/other analgesic liniments, Oriental medicine bum cream (name to follow)

**homeopathics:** arnica, bruises, bones, trauma, headache, muscle cramps, PMS, menstrual cramps



### So, you're concerned about pepper spray and tear gas.

The first thing to remember about exposure to these chemical weapons is that it is not the worst thing that could happen to you. The hype and fear surrounding them is enormous, but in reality, if you are careful and smart, you should survive it with little problem. The information presented here is the result of conversation with a doctor who has done extensive research on the subject, an ex-member of the military who has been on the giving and the receiving end of these weapons, and the combined experiences of the Direct Action Network's medical team which treated several thousand people for pepper and gas exposure during the World Trade Organization conference in Seattle, 1999. To our knowledge, this is the best information available.

#### IMPORTANT: HIGH RISK EXPOSURE SCENARIOS

asthmatics risk permanent damage or even death if exposed  
reaction to exposure will be greater with the presence of some skin conditions such as acne or severe eczema.  
contact lenses trap the irritating gases and chemical compounds underneath them and will increase the amount of damage and irritation.  
vulnerable humans such as infants, the elderly, the immune deficient, and women who are or may be pregnant are at a much greater risk as shown below.

**please be aware that in intense actions, police behavior can be unpredictable, and avoidance is not always possible**

Pepper spray and CS or CN (tear) gas are delivered in "inert" chemicals through the use of propellants, both of which can cause cancer, birth defects and genetic mutations. According to the US Army, and recent biomedical research the active

agents in each of these chemical weapons also have the potential to cause mutations and cancer. In addition, the production of clouds of CS gas is accompanied by the production of carbon monoxide, and smaller amounts of hydrogen and cyanide gases. Lesser amounts of heavily regulated carcinogens are present as well. High doses, such as seen in Seattle, can result in cognitive dysfunction, disorientation, tachycardia, digestive trouble, irregular menstruation, and severe respiratory dysfunction for up to 3 months.

#### how to prevent & treat exposure

There are many myths about treatment and prevention. Far too many to go into here. Much of this misinformation is potentially dangerous. Some of it, if applied, could greatly increase or prolong a person's reaction to exposure, or at the very least provide a false sense of security. Feel free to try any of this before the action—a habanero can burn the skin (please don't test it in your eyes though...) in much the same way as an angry cop.

#### protection via hygiene:

Avoid all detergents. Detergents provide a chemical link between the oily base of the chemical weapon and your skin, allowing the chemicals to dissolve and get to work. Wash the clothes you will wear **several times** in washing soap that is detergent-free (such as Dr. Bronner's or most eco-friendly soap). Avoid newly purchased clothes which generally have a substantial detergent residue. Wash your scalp (and your dreads...) thoroughly (rinse twice if you use shampoo which contains detergent). Washing your body thoroughly with castile soap is essential on the day of the action to rid your skin of oils, dead skin cells, and microscopic debris, which also provide the chemical link for the weapons. Be sure to avoid topical use of all vegetable or mineral oils—this means moisturizers, lotions, baby-wipes etc.

#### protection via topical barriers:

there are several barriers that might provide protection—however, given the likelihood of rain, sweat, the use of water cannons/fire department hoses, the integrity of the barrier is likely to be compromised. Do not use vaseline or mineral oil as an attempted barrier—this is a commonly spread myth of a barrier that would cause much more harm than good.

#### protection via gear:

Wearing a bottom layer of tight clothing can prevent the irritant from getting to much of your skin. Rain gear will do the same. Fleece will absorb a great deal and makes a good outer layer, weather permitting. Gloves are good. Remember that you will want to wash (this time **with** detergent to dissolve the chemicals) or dispose of contaminated clothing. Gas masks provide the best facial protection, if properly fitted and sealed. Alternatively, goggles, respirators, even a wet cloth over the nose and mouth will buy you some extra time. **Be aware** that tear gas and pep-

per spray contain oily solvents that will slowly dissolve rubber and plastic, so don't buy really expensive gear. This means that your goggles will provide only temporary protection. Also remember that the straps of your gear will absorb the chemicals and eventually begin to irritate the skin beneath.

#### how it is deployed:

Pepper spray is applied to crowds via spray bottles, and is often directly applied to the eyes and other sensitive membranes. It can come in small, hand-held dispensers (like mace), but in large crowd situations, police prefer large tanks of the stuff. It also can be deployed as a gas, as happened in Seattle on some buses which were holding arrestees. CN gas comes in these hand-held varieties of dispersal as well. CS gas is emitted from canisters which are fired into crowds, sometimes directly at people. You should, under no circumstances, attempt to pick up the canisters with unprotected hands. They are extremely hot. A good pair of gloves is required in order to hurl the thing away from you and your friends. Be extremely careful that you don't throw it into a group of your allies. And be aware that the time it takes you to throw it will allow you to be heavily exposed.

#### how it affects:

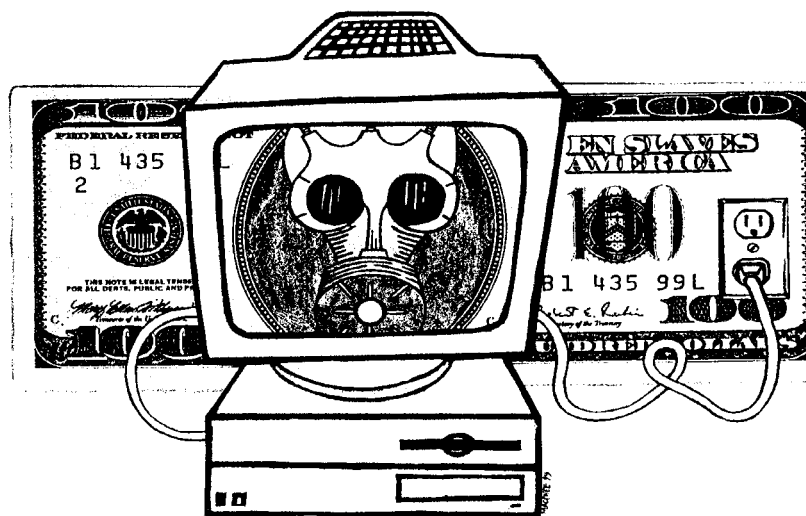
Both are skin irritants. CS/CN gas creates painful acid molecules on the skin. The moister our body is, the faster the acid is created and tissues are damaged, causing pain. Pepper spray causes pain by stimulating chemical receptors in the skin, causing the release of a pain-causing chemical called "Substance P". Pepper spray is more popular with authorities. It is harder to remove from the skin. Both forms of chemical warfare have their most powerful effect on the eyes, nose, mouth and breathing passages. Pepper spray has such a toxic effect that one in 600 people sprayed by police will die, usually of breathing or "respiratory failure" according to the ACLU.

In an enclosed space with no ventilation, you have about a minute before your body starts to react severely. Being outside will obviously give us more time. Your eyes will water, causing your vision to blur, and your nose will run. Breathing will become difficult. Disorientation and confusion is possible. Intense anger is quite common, and can be useful if you are prepared and able to focus it. Pepper spray is not used as bear repellent because of the common anger response. The police have documented the high chances that a situation where pepper spray is used will escalate. Maybe you can use your anger to motivate you to recover faster and get back in the action again. Maybe it will provide you with just enough energy to get out to a safe space. The good news is that this is temporary. After 45 minutes to 2 hours (with pepper spray, much less time for CN/CS), the symptoms will subside, and you can return to the action, assuming you take care of yourself in the meantime.

#### how to deal:

If you see it coming or get a warning, you can put on protective gear, remove your contacts, and/or try to get away. Often warnings are not given verbally, but you

may see the police deploy their gas masks, or some other cue. Moving away from the source, or moving upwind is key. **DO NOT RUB IT IN.** Try to stay calm. When your body heats up (from running or panicking, for example), the irritation will increase. Make your way to a safe space with fresh air where unexposed folks can help you, or at least ensure your safety while you treat yourself. Rinse your eyes with water that has a few drops of Rescue Remedy (by Bach Flower Remedies, available at natural food stores) added. A water bottle that has a squirt cap works well for this. To get CS/CN gas off the skin, apply mineral oil, immediately followed by rubbing alcohol. Repeat until irritation subsides. Be certain to thoroughly remove mineral oil with alcohol. To clean pepper spray off the skin, a solution of diluted castile soap, olive or other veg. oil, water, and baking soda followed by thorough rinsing works well—remember that pepper spray is more difficult to remove. Some folks have had good luck rinsing with a simple solution of water and baking soda. Blowing your nose, rinsing your mouth and spitting can help to clear air passages. Take slow deep breaths, assuming you've found clean air. Walking around with your arms outstretched, removing contaminated clothing, and taking a COLD shower are all excellent secondary treatments, once you've gotten your head clear. In fact, it is essential to shower and wash your clothes (this time in real detergents—no eco-friendly stuff here) as soon as you are able. Remember, this shit is toxic, and will contaminate you and everyone around you until you get rid of it. Until then, try not to touch your eyes or your face, or other people, furniture, carpets etc. to avoid further contamination. Remember, it is only temporary, and we are extremely strong.



### **POST-ACTION DETOX**

Over-exposure to "incapacitating agents" such as tear gas and/or pepper spray can lead to lingering health problems, particularly respiratory. In theory, these agents damage or destroy the protective bronchial lining in the lungs, allowing the bacterial flora which normally resides there to take over. This also weakens our immune system, increasing our susceptibility to infection from outside pathogens.

#### ***Things to do about it:***

If you have not done so already, wash your hair and all contaminated clothing in detergent. None of that eco-friendly stuff here, this requires seriously powerful detergents to break down the residue of the gas.

Treat any sinus or respiratory symptoms as you normally would. Avoiding dairy and wheat (mucous producing). Taking hot baths or steam inhalations with a bit of eucalyptus oil, and using your favorite herbal (or other) remedy followed by a day in bed with tea and a good book can do wonders.

We highly recommend that you seek further medical treatment as needed. Respiratory infection can become quite serious if left untreated. Keeping a copy of your doctor's report may be useful in the future if you plan to take legal action against the police. However, there are several things that you can easily do yourself to help detox.

Intensive detoxification may aggravate or reproduce symptoms, as the chemicals are re-released into the bloodstream from storage in fat cells. For this reason, we suggest a slow and steady detox which can include the following elements:

**water:** Drink 2 liters a day or more.

**liver support:** Increase your intake of bitter foods such as grapefruit and dandelion leaves. Add 1/8th teaspoon of turmeric to your food or water daily. Try herbs such as organ grape root, burdock, dandelion root, milk thistle. Talk to an herbalist for more suggestions.

**Immune support:** as mentioned above, you will be more susceptible to infection post-exposure. Vitamin C can help tissue repair in addition to boosting immune function. Lomatium or echinacea are good immune protectors. Osha or mullein will help your overtaxed lungs. Again, talk with an herbalist for preparation and dosage info.

**high fiber diet:** Whole grains or psyllium husk can help clean you out.

**reduction of liver stressors:** Your liver must work overtime to filter out these new toxins. Avoiding alcohol, cigarettes, caffeine, fried or high fat foods will make its job easier.

**epsom salt rub:** A hot shower, followed by a thorough scrubbing with epsom salts which are then left on the skin for 10-15 minutes before a thorough follow-up wash can help draw toxins from the body. Be sure to accompany

this with much water consumption.

**charcoal:** will absorb and enable elimination of chemicals. inexpensive tablets are sold at most natural food stores, or you can burn your toast

**potassium & magnesium**

**nettle tea**



## WTO Communications Debrief

»Longwire

\*\*It should also be noted that this debrief is incomplete: it only reflects my opinions and my interpretations of the opinions of others. I was net control for the operation, and had a (often overwhelming!) "big picture" of the activities. But I was NOT on the streets, only in a tiny com center filled with scanners and radios. I urge other participants (especially those who were on the streets!) to contribute their observations, either as a response to this document OR as your own unique de-brief.

\*\*It was the general opinion, that the main factor that enabled the activists in Seattle to shut down the first day of the WTO had little to do with specific technical factors such as communications, tactics and logistics. The main reason for the success of the activity was that there were THOUSANDS of committed activists clogging the streets of Seattle. Organizations such as Public Citizen, the Direct Action Network, Art and Revolution and Ruckus deserve a lot of credit for the year-long push to raise awareness of the threat that was represented by the WTO and their success in bringing people to Seattle. Having said that, there are some things that can be learned from our experience:

### I Assessment of Communications at the WTO Protests.

The original Com plan was to have a communications center that would enable the major elements of a spread out area of activity to share and receive information. The primary means of doing this to use UHF radios attached to remote com teams, with Nextels, text pagers and FRS radios as a backup. The center would also monitor relevant public service communications.

Individual affinity groups were to use FRS radios as needed for short distance communications. The Com center was to use an UHF channel that was accessible to both the FRS radios and the UHFs used by the com team. The Medical and legal teams would use Nextels to Coms with high power UHFs as a backup. The idea was to have redundancy at all key points of contact. There was a plan for Free radio to transmit "safety" information to the crowd. The plan to have two more com centers in case of arrest of Com1. One was to be another fixed location and the other would be in the street ready to control the coms and monitor, protected by the crowd.

### II. Modification/evolution of the plan prior to N30

The plan was revised to attach com people to individual AREAS instead of affinity groups; most of the affinity groups would be formed in the week before the action, therefore coordinating with individual groups would be chaotic at best. We concentrated on setting up a team that would cover areas as needed. Several entities took advantage of the Nextel network to create working groups. This included the legal team, which shared a talkgroup with DAN. The com center had a Nextel network that included Coms, Medical, Legal and three tactical teams. Other groups set up a

Nextel network the last week.

### III. 11th hour preparations

The people that made up the com team were not recruited until the week before the main event. Luckily, we had an experienced com person to help out. We were also fortunate to find two forest activists experienced in direct action who were willing to take on training and conducting "dry runs" for the team. Both were motivated, responsible and exhibited good leadership/people skills in building the team. A major problem was that there was severe anxiety amongst many organizers concerning "security issues" surrounding the establishment of a com center. After having "done battle" and lost on 3 separate occasions (twice at IMC once with DAN) to try to set up my post, I left the procurement of a space up to those who acknowledged the necessity of a com center but were not willing to have it in their midst.

The result was that 5 days before the main event, I still had no com center. I ended up finding a hotel room, which created its own set of problems:

- I was not able to externally mount the base antenna for the UHF (I used a magnetic mount antenna on a pizza pan on the windowsill!)
- The hotel's ancient PBX phone system wouldn't permit me to reliably send pages via a paging terminal or access the internet.
- The hotel was not conducive to bike messengers coming and going, which greatly impeded the use of that resource.

As it turned out, one of the com persons who was stationed at the 420 convergence space was able to have direct access to the legal and medical teams, which greatly facilitated rapid responses to the ever-changing tactical situation. This makes me think how much better it would have been if we had had the actual com center there, instead of a recently trained person "winging it". The 420 com person did an excellent job keeping on top of the situation and relaying info to and from the med and legal teams. I think that despite the fact that "They" were indeed out to get us, the magnitude of this action created paranoia among many participants. Security Culture is well and good, but "security on steroids" can often stifle creativity and cut the necessary flow of communication. IMHO, sometimes you just gotta go for it...

Another last minute change, was the decision of the spokes-council to do away with the geographic-affinity group partitions during the N30 march. The structure was built on the individual processions: com people would be assigned to each one and individual team members would split off with those who formed the new processions. It was also decided that the deployed com team would take more than just a back-up role in monitoring the SPD; 4 remote team members divided up 20 SPD radio channels among themselves in order to hear as much as possible.

### IV. Nov 30-Dec 1

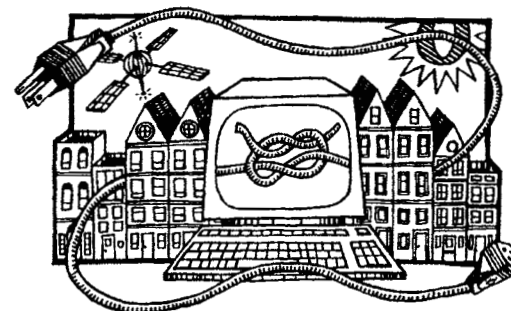
During the street action, the com structure functioned as envisioned in most ways. The UHF was the main channel for info gathering from the com team. The Nextels linked the tactical teams with each other and medical/legal. In my view, there were

some immediate problems with the creation of parallel com structures: at the com center the two tactical team members each were talking on the two separate Nextel Networks. Instead of redundancy we got repetition... They were getting/relaying the same information that the UHF net was; we had 3 networks relaying the same info to 3 sets of people, some over-lapping. The tac team was so busy communicating, they were not able to graphically record the information on the tactical map, much less digest the information and give a thoughtful suggested course of action. Maybe this was an unrealistic expectation in the first place... It could well be that we were overwhelmed by the flow of information and needed more people and more specialized training. It would have been good if there was a person whose specific job was to transfer information to the map as it was given by coms. After N30, there was no tactical team in place at coms. Since things were a bit slower, the phone operator and I were able to keep track of ours and SPD's positions on the map. This ability proved of value when we needed to establish eye wash stations, route eyewash re-supply and medics on Dec. 1. After the arrests of some of the tactical people (and their Nextels) on Wednesday, the com team began (by necessity) making some tactical decisions. On several occasions, we were able to get out information that prevented ambushes by the riot squad. Whenever possible, the com team tried to seek out DAN or affinity group tactical people on site and keep them informed of relevant information; often it turned out that we had to make immediate decisions based on information that could not wait being finessed by affinity groups. There were complaints from members of the tactical team that the com persons assigned to them "wandered off" and were separated from them for much of the morning of N30. Interestingly, one of the complaints during our face-to-face Com team debrief, was that the Tactical team people wandered off! Perhaps they were both right. Other people at the Ruckus de-brief were concerned that com team members attempted to take it upon themselves to make tactical decisions. I responded that this was often done due to the fact that much of the activity was done "organically" by the crowd and that the com people who had a source of "big-picture" information rightly attempted to utilize it to aid the crowd in the absence of any organized Tactical teams.

#### IV. After Dec 1

During the relatively drawn-out actions at the Westin and the Jail, the coms team worked in the background in support of the affinity groups that made the tactical decisions. We were able to help the flow of food, blankets and medical persons going to the two sites as well as scout SPD deployment and keep an eye on a small, separate action at 5th and Union. 420 was able to send observers to the Broadway area to relay reports via radio. The Com center in Belltown was too far to be able to hear the radios on Broadway, so 420 radio and the com team took over standing watch on the Capitol Hill events. The com people at 420 again did a very competent job at keeping an eye on things. Some of the DAN people pointed out that it was not their intent to provide logistic and com support AFTER

SUNDOWN and that this was not a role that was originally envisioned. It was felt that maintaining a "night watch" on the unplanned Capitol Hill activity drained valuable energy from the daytime activities.



#### V What worked/didn't work:

**Nextels-** Worked great, relatively secure. The problem was that they worked TOO good: it made it possible to create parallel lines of communications at the last minute on the fly, not a good thing as far as information sharing goes. Rental was expensive: \$85/wk/unit. Rural folks keep in mind that Nextel coverage out of major urban areas is nearly non-existent. A good way to go in the city, though. Many of the tactical teams REALLY liked the Nextels. They never lost service and were extremely reliable. Some of these same folks thought that the UHF system was useless or of little value (see below) High-power (5watt) UHF network- The 5-watt handhelds were able to reliably communicate between the entire downtown area. There was a "hole" where my com center was not able to hear the south Broadway/SCCC area; this was most probably due to the presence of a swath of sky scrapers blocking the path. There were some folks that thought that the UHF system (both high

power and FRS) was of little value. Interestingly enough, none of these folks were actually in the UHF Network, they had Nextels. I pointed out that much of the information that was passed to the Nextel networks was gathered from the UHF system (the main communications medium of the Com team). Several activists that I talked to (who were not members of a tactical or Com team) stated that most of the tactical information (such as locations of police, tear gas, and gaps in the Convention Center blockade) sent through the UHF system DID indeed filter down to the street level activists and played a major role in filling in weak points in the Convention Center blockade. **FRS Radios (low power, yellow Kenwoods)**

Worked reliably well for 4-5 blocks at street level. On Nov 30 the channels we used on the FRS (Kenwood) frequencies were severely jammed (intentionally, by a right wing adolescent scanner nerd), necessitating the Com center to change frequencies to a channel that was out of reach to the Kenwoods. This effectively cut off 25 radio users from access to the network; it was a necessary move that enabled the



remaining core com team's 25 radios to function. It was an omission worthy of note that we did NOT have some designated backup net control set up to keep the Kenwood users in the loop. There was a rumor circulating on the original FRS channel that the com center was raided! The FRS radios were especially vulnerable to arrest and/or confiscation since they were all yellow (\$20 cheaper!) and did not have speakermikes, they stood out and made untrained users targets. Black would've been better; they look like cell phones. There were major problems in the distribution of the Kenwoods and their use by the individual affinity groups. In most cases, the distribution of the Kenwoods was done the day or two before N30 and little or no planning and training was done in their use. There was no organized check-out/check-in procedures for the Kenwoods and as a result, approximately half were not returned after the week was over. It is likely that at least 7 of the radios (belonging to the Direct Action Fund) were stolen out of 420 on the 28th or 29th of November. There have been unconfirmed reports that some of these radios were loaned (without permission of the owners!) to direct action projects taking place in other states. It is worthy to note that the problems associated with the Kenwood FRS radios were more of an organizational/administrative nature. As far as being an inexpensive, effective communications device, they did the job.

**Text Pagers** We will never know if they would have worked during the action, since the com center's hotel phone would not do the job. They were surely handy as a means of folks keeping in touch during the preparations.

**Free Radio** Although I was approached by many free radio types in the months previous to N30, none of them approached the Com team with a specific request to create a means of contact with them as a means of broadcasting alerts to the crowd directly. I know that Radio Free Cascadia had an excellent signal to the central Puget Sound - all the way to Woodinville! I hope they had some source of info to relay... I suspect that "security paranoia" played a role in our lack of utilizing this potentially valuable tool. It would have been good if they were able to provide tactical information in addition to their "canned" presentations concerning WTO policies. This focus (combined with a concerted effort to get action participants to bring FM radios to tune in a well publicized frequency) would have made Free radio an effective tactical resource that could have reached the "person on the street" en masse.

**COM Center** The com center was able to keep up with the ongoing activities and do the requested relays and information requests. Due to the need of the team to have redundant teams, the center was reliant on one dispatcher, a monitor and a telephone op. After N30, the dispatcher did the monitoring. The flow of com info during the "thick" part of N30 was quite redundant within the com team. Often we would get a piece of scanner info at the same time as one of the remote scanners, I would hear it from my monitor and a second later via radio from the remote scanner. The only way around this would have been to put more monitors in the com center. With 20-20 hindsight I would question having more remote monitors on the street vs. more monitors at the active com center. At the time we were all concerned in maintaining a good flow of info in the event of the com center falling. Dis-

patching, listening to a scanner and using the Nextel was my max: I was not able to do the above and keep track on the other Nextel group. I had to pass it off to the tactical team. Several folks wanted to know why we didn't use repeaters (devices that relays low power handheld radios to a high power transmitter that simultaneously re-transmits the signal so all stations to hear each other). My response was that having a high power base station SELECTIVELY relay relevant information increased the efficiency of communications and cut down the possibility of jamming (by making it easier to change frequencies).

One observation that I heard was that it was not easy to get the tactical information to the crowd. Perhaps a person with a bullhorn accompanying the com person could relay important info to the crowd.

Come to think of it, the communication of our information to the participants was lacking. We can not assume that there will always be a tac team or a "chain of command" in a given situation (especially with anarchists!) which will process and act on our information.

Something to think about in the future: There has been some talk of utilizing and expanding our core group to create a highly experienced team that can plug into direct actions and demos as needed. This would enable planners to focus on issues surrounding deployment of the com teams and free us from having to "invent the wheel" (ie, recruiting and training) each time there is a major event.

#### **Organizational structure: DAN/Spokescouncil/Scenario/**

Although indecisive as to what to do about controversial items, such as the com center (and whether or not to have peacekeepers!), I did feel that DAN recognized the need for the coms system and I did receive lots of support aside from the question of the coms location. From my coms standpoint, dealing with a decentralized coalition of affinity groups with indefinite and/or secretive plans is not an ideal situation. Although my experience and preference goes toward a more structured structure, I did feel that we as a team were sensitive to the needs of affinity groups to call their own shots and the loose style of "governance" present.

#### **Post-event**

There has been difficulty getting ANY info from SPD on radios that were confiscated. As of January 23, there have been no radios accounted for by the SPD. They remain stolen property. Many were stolen from people without an arrest being made. Maybe we can look forward to cities trying to ban radios as well as gas masks. Also, disappointingly, many of those who were loaned FRS radios did not return them to the entity (DAN, DAF) loaning it to them. Right now there are 8 of 20 yellow FRS radios accounted for.

#### **LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE**

It is my (and others) opinion that serious thought needs to be given to uniting the function of the com and tactical teams. In the heat of the street action, the link between the tactical teams and the com teams was often broken. Since most of the Tactical people are "in the loop" at an earlier stage, the addition of radio training and doing integrated "dry runs" with the radios would be a powerful improvement

to an on-site tactical team. Another improvement I would make would be to streamline/simplify the communications structure. This would be done by establishing the Com center in the same physical location as the medical, legal and administrative entities. Much radio traffic can be eliminated while improving both communications security and efficiency. The addition of a Tactical team at the com center whose specific function was to take the incoming information from the remote teams and scanners and transfer it to an over-size map would enable all concerned to have a literal "big picture". These "Tacticans" would NOT have a radio or Nextel, they would relay specific information that needs to be broadcasted to the net control. Concerns as to the security of such a configuration could be addressed by having the backup coms done on the street protected (or hidden amongst) the crowd. In terms of utilizing the Nextels, I would have the system configured to have all the main entities (Legal and Medical) as separate talkgroups (as in Seattle) with the added ability for each group to talk individually among themselves AND have the capacity to talk to all at once. If I had Seattle to do over again, I would have the "united" Tactical/Com team on the SAME UHF channel, instead of giving them a separate Nextel network. This would enable them to get information from other entities as well as information that comes to com via scanners and phones. For this to be workable, the number of users on the UHF channel would have to be less than 25. I would have people using FRS radios use a separate channel with a separate on-the-street net control which could relay information to and from the main com center.

#### **FINAL THOUGHTS**

We should note that when the Federal, State and Local law enforcement officers conducted THEIR de-brief of the WTO, it was an object of some concern to them that our communications was "professional and effective". (This would account for their attempts to try and steal our radio equipment as they could!) Rest assured, that despite some obvious failings and confusion, WE KICKED SERIOUS ASS! Sometimes in the course of rigorous self-analysis, we can tend to be hyper-critical; which is OK as far as a learning process goes. But we should keep in mind that when all is said and done, we did an awesome job! In this spirit, I would like to encourage all who read this to add their own points and/or create their own critique to pass on. I would be glad to compile all I receive and forward them to the group.

## **Jail/Legal Support**

>>rahula janowski

Jail/legal support is a crucial aspect of direct action, which is sometimes overlooked and under appreciated. In recent years this has been changing, and the radical direct action movement seems to have a much broader recognition of the importance of this role. We haven't, however, reached the point where a workshop about providing jail support happens with the same frequency as nonviolence and solidarity workshops. These thoughts and reflections on jail support in general, and the role of the Dan Legal team in particular, are intended to share some information and tips for getting started with folks wanting to help provide jail/legal support.

To prepare to provide jail/legal support, the first step is to asses what you're offering, and how many people you're offering it to. Jail support is generally understood to mean direct support, and should be provided by a personal support person, not the main legal team. Jail support is things like calling someone's boss, or mom; or moving their cart or arranging their bail. In a small (less than fifty) action, the main legal support team can sometimes do this. For larger actions, the legal team should be clear that people need to set up their own direct support.

In a large action, each affinity group or cluster needs to have a support person. Support people should know their arrestees' real names and hold onto their identification if real names aren't being given. Support people need to be aware of their arrestees criminal histories, medical and emotional needs, and any special circumstances. Support people maintain daily contact with the legal support team, and offer needed information (but not random lists of names!) to the legal team as needed. Support people should be committed to sticking around until all of their arrestees are out of jail, going to their arraignments, visiting them in jail if possible, and meeting them when they're released. Legal support can offer trainings or information to affinity groups on how to set up their own support and that the legal team plays another role.

What is that role? In Seattle, the DAN legal team was assembled to coordinate and support jail and court solidarity, as well as offer trainings to familiarize people with those tactics. We did, to a certain extent, provide some direct support, but since the entire action (N30 and the following days) was based on an affinity group structure, we expected arrestees to have a member of their AG providing direct support. Our role was one of keeping track of the locations of arrestees and find people lost in the system (such as folks put in solitary, maximum security or otherwise separated from the larger group), and communicating demands and situational updates from one group of arrestees to another. We organized and dispatched lawyer teams (consisting of one attorney and one organizer as paralegal) to visit in the jails and holding areas to provide advice and support to people being held in custody. We also helped to document police abuses, although we could

have done a better job of this had we been prepared ahead of time and had volunteers trained specifically for this task.

A lot of work was done before N30 to prepare. Some of that work involved lawyer networking, contacting local attorneys sympathetic to our cause and enlisting their help. DAN Legal also provided trainings for the attorneys, to familiarize them with solidarity tactics, and paired each lawyer with an experienced organizer. It's important to have some lines of communications open between the action legal team and local legal agencies, such as the Public Defender's office, the National Lawyer's Guild, the ACLU, and others. These agencies can offer a lot of support, particularly with legal follow up and class action suits (if rights abuses occur).

If you have time before the action, ask a local well experienced criminal attorney to give a short workshop to your legal team about the local courts and jail; quirks in the legal process (i.e., release on personal recognizance, arraignment and pretrial procedures, good and bad judges, district attorneys, jail rules, etc. If this workshop isn't possible, at least have a conversation with a local lawyer and write a memo for your legal team. The more information you have about local politics the better a position you will be in to bargain for a good deal later on.

Another important preparatory task was conducting solidarity trainings. Trainings were offered every day in the week or so leading up to N30, and were extremely well attended. The trainings encompassed nonviolent resistance tactics, knowing your rights, solidarity tactics (what, how, why), and what it's like to be arrested and jailed. For many people, this was their first experience with being arrested and with jail solidarity. I expect that we'll be seeing a resurgence of these tactics in upcoming protests as a result of their success (although total success was not achieved in jail, court solidarity has pressured the prosecutor so much that cases are being dismissed left and right). To provide support for solidarity tactics, it's crucial that the legal team be well versed in them, and pretty important that the arrestees are trained or experienced.

Beyond these and other networking type preparations, preparing the office and the people for the action is the next step. Obviously, legal support needs to have an office and a widely disseminated phone number (get people to write it on their bodies in indelible ink, or hand out stickers with the number like we did in Seattle), and volunteers to staff the office and phones. Also good is a photocopier, but if one isn't available, locate the closest photocopy shop. For the WTO N30 action, DAN legal was loaned an office that was a great office in many senses, but which we had to vacate while people were still in custody. We managed, but it was hectic and would have been nice to avoid. The office should be available at least a day before the action, and for up to two weeks after. Ultimately, it would be good to have the office available a few days before the action so volunteers can be trained in the office environment before the craziness begins. It's also a good idea to have volunteers who plan to be around the whole time to help set up the office so they're familiar with the set. It's fairly important that the phone number not be changed while people are still

in jail.

We had a phone number that rolled over to three phones, meaning three people could be answering phones at once. In spite of this, the phones rang off the hook for days. Rather than having more phone lines, clearer communication about what to call DAN Legal for could have helped. If possible, setting up an info line, with a frequently checked answering machine and/or a person whose job it is to answer it, maybe even in the same office, would simplify things. Many of the calls we received were people asking what was going on, or if we knew where somebody was. If we'd had this separate line for this purpose, it would have reduced the stress load on the office crew and on folks wondering where their friends were, and freed up the phones for arrestees to call in.). While you're thinking about phone lines, also think about a line for faxes, or at least a fax machine that can be hooked up when needed.

Information is another important factor. What do you need to know from arrestees? In general, where and when they were arrested, what name, if any, they gave to the police, are they with a group, where are they being held, do they have any injuries that need immediate care? (if they've suffered injuries or abuses at the hands of authorities, tell them to be sure to give a declaration as soon as they get out (and tell them how to go about this.) (it would be great if there is a number they can call to do this over the phone-not the legal support phone though-while the event is still fresh in their mind). Also, if solidarity tactics are being used, find out what tactics are being used and what the demands are. Find out if the person has a direct support person, and if so get their contact information. Always be aware, and remind arrestees, that all calls from jail MUST be assumed to be monitored.

It's a good idea to create a form ahead of time that is relatively self-explanatory for volunteers who answer the phone. What you then do with the information is a tougher question. If charges are not dropped and people are forced to go to trial, it's crucial for the legal support team to have accurate and complete information about arrestees, including contact information for after they're released. A data-base was eventually created in Seattle, which has been very helpful to the legal team. Had it been created before the action, and updated as information came in, it would have been even more helpful. Affinity Group direct support people can be helpful in supplying some of this information, but beware of gathering more information than you actually need, or potentially dangerous information. In Seattle, many affinity groups gave us lists of mostly not useful, but potentially damaging information. AG support people need to be responsible for holding onto information about their AG's.

An idea for next time is that legal teams who go into jails and holding areas to meet with arrestees bring forms with them that ask for needed information. Lawyer client privilege should cover the confidentiality of these documents. Otherwise, the people answering the phones take down relevant information, and then pass the information on to someone whose task is to enter it into the data base.

During the arrest times in Seattle, the legal office had a "dispatcher". The dispatcher's job was to send attorney teams to places where arrestees were being held. The dispatcher also played a role of unofficial office manager, keeping an eye on everything and having a good overview of what was going on. I think this is a good idea, and I also think it's a good idea to articulate that there is an office manager, rather than letting it 'just happen'. The office manager's duties include such things as knowing what's up with finances; knowing who's where when and when more volunteers are needed; interacting with other people around (i.e., in Seattle there was a child care center in the same building as the legal support office. The director of the child care was initially rather freaked out, but once contact had been established and her fears put at ease, she was very helpful, and even showed us a great escape route to use, in case we got raided by the cops). Generally, the office manager keeps a good overview, knows the systems being used in the office and is able to clearly instruct volunteers about them, is available to answer questions and provide support and advice, and works too hard and is exhausted by the end of the action (as is everyone else).

A big problem DAN legal had during N30 and the following days was a shortage of well-oriented volunteers. One reason for this was that we had expected the action to last one day and have everyone out of jail within a couple days. Another was that things were so hectic that it was really hard to orient and use new volunteers. Although we were completely swamped, volunteers would sometimes be in the office for an hour or more before being plugged in, and some very competent people left because they didn't feel useful. Some potential solutions to this are: have an introductory fact sheet for volunteers to read over; to have a volunteer coordinator whose responsibility it is to orient and plug in volunteers; to have trainings before the action for core folks and for folks who will be able to stick around and see things through.

It's also important for core legal support team members to take breaks, eat food, and sleep. We definitely neglected this during the WTO, and it sometimes led to cranky behavior.

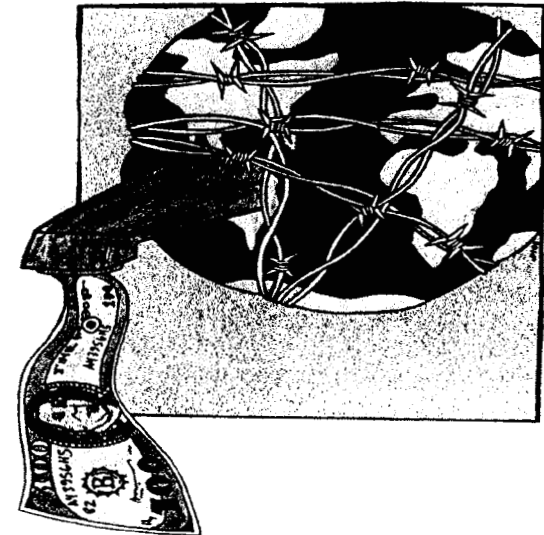
When you're setting up the office, think ahead. Imagine it with too many people and lots of phones ringing, and try to set it up in the most functional way possible. It's a good idea to have maps of the action areas and maps to the holding areas and jails. It may also be a good idea to have a dry erase board or bulletin board to post important information. Also, try to have a hot plate or something for making tea and coffee, and if you're not close to a food source, stock up! And remember to drink water!!!

Ok, so you've done as much prep work as you could, and now you're sitting in the office waiting for the phone to ring. Relax. In Seattle, the phone began ringing immediately, with people calling in updates of the action. Ultimately, I think this is not that helpful because it makes things crazy in the office, while there's little that can be done about it. I think it'd be better to have a liaison out at the action(s) who calls in report once an

hour or so, and who calls in once people have been arrested. At WTO, we had a separate line for legal team members to call in on. We also had radios, with which we were able to monitor the events as they unfolded. At times this was distracting and frustrating because there was little we could do about the things we were hearing, but it was also helpful to be able to gauge the feel of the action. Having people call in from the field also helps to keep the legal team up to date and prepared for the types of calls they may be getting (if legal knows people have been gassed or hurt, they will know to expect people to be disoriented and confused when they call in). It's also good to know if people are being taken to hospitals, so lawyers can be sent there.

Once arrest have been made, it's important for a lawyer to be on the scene as soon as possible. In Seattle, lawyers were denied access to the arrestees, but this isn't normal (or legal). The lawyers should be able to talk to the arrestees privately, and then communicate with the authorities, telling them what they're into if they don't cave in to the arrestees demands (i.e., they're all going to go limp and clog up your jail), and telling other arrestees what each group's solidarity demands are.

Once arrests have been made, the basic job of the legal support office is to keep track of where arrestees are, make sure lawyers are at each holding area, coordinate lawyers and other core and communicate solidarity demands between groups of arrestees and lawyers. The people in the office also need to be calm, collected and supportive when talking to arrestees, and to keep accurate information. This can be hard to do when things get hectic; but remember, not all information is needed. Be clear about what you do and don't need to know, and only put energy into the important things.



## SETTING UP A LEGAL SUPPORT OFFICE DURING AN ACTION CHECKLIST

### *Asses the Situation*

#### *What is your role?*

- Are you providing personal support for arrestees (like, calling their mom, moving their car, arranging bail)
- Are you coordinating in-jail solidarity?
- How long will your support role continue? Will you also be providing or coordinating legal support until all cases are resolved?
- Are you responsible for legal observing during the action? If so, do you have enough volunteers? If not, are you in contact with whoever is?
- Are you responsible for any following civil action? (especially taking of declarations from people who see or experience police abuses)?

#### *What resources are available to you?*

- Are you familiar with the action plan? have a spokes at the last few meetings so legal is familiar with what will be happening. Also so arrestees know.

### **Legal Personnel**

#### *Lawyers*

- How many lawyers are available to you?
- Are the lawyers familiar with solidarity tactics? If not, will they take direction from you? Or can you train them?
- Are lawyers available for in-custody visits?
- How long are the lawyers available? Can they do follow up appearances, and if necessary, trials?
- Have you made contact with local public defenders offices, NLG, ACLU?

#### *Volunteers*

- How many core volunteers do you have?
- How many volunteers do you expect during the action?
- Are there volunteers who have done this kind of thing before?
- Is there a good pool of local volunteers and or volunteers prepared to stick around long term?
- Can you set up a volunteer training ahead of time, so that you have a pool of prepared volunteers if you need them, or prepare an intro to legal support document for volunteers? (You'll need at least three shifts worth of people prepped to run the office (in case the action goes long) and it's a good idea to set up the shifts and shift rotation ahead of time, making sure that each key role is filled at all times)

#### *Work space*

- Do you have an office? (you'd better!)
- Do you have access to helpful technology (fax, copier, computers), or do you know where the closest place to access these is?
- Is there a different room for data entry, meetings, and other non-phone oriented tasks? (not absolutely necessary, but very very nice)
- Where is the bathroom?
- How long is it yours? (ideally, you'll have it for at least one day before the action (to get organized) and until the action is over (which could be two weeks if solidarity tactics are being used.) It's ideal to have the office until all cases are finished, but if you need to move it's better if that doesn't happen until everyone is out of jail.
- Is there enough room in the office?
- Is there wall space for maps, bulletin boards? (you'll need maps of the action area and of holding areas)
- Is your work space reasonably secure?

#### *Trainings*

- It's a good idea to be familiar with the level of training people have had. Have they had any training?
- Solidarity?? I wouldn't recommend doing solidarity support for a group unless the majority of them have gone through a training or have direct experience.
- If possible, set up trainings for the week or so leading up to the action. Also, have the trainers be people on the team, so arrestees will be familiar with the legal team.
- Special trainings for special needs (juveniles, Internationals)

#### *Special legal needs*

- Are you familiar with possible consequences for juveniles /internationals?
- Do you have contact with lawyers who specialize? Can they come to trainings to be familiar with potential arrestees and available to answer questions?
- Do you have consent forms for juveniles, so they can be released?
- Do you know the location of special holding areas (like INS or juvenile hall)?

#### *Media*

- Is there an office media spokes to handle calls?
- Do you have numbers for local media contacts?
- If there is a media office for the action, establish contact with them to share regular updates and to refer general media stuff to

#### *Phones*

- How many incoming lines are there?
- Can you have several phones answer to the same number? you'll need two

lines if you're dealing with more than fifty to 100 arrestees)(it's also good to get a set up where a line can roll over to two or three phones, ie, three phones that answer to the same number)

- Outgoing lines? Lines for lawyers only? Info request line?
- Do you have or need cell phones? (they are expensive and, I think, less necessary than most people think) (although it's good for the attorneys in the field to have them)
- If you need cell phones and the action is going to be BIG, get them early (they were a hot commodity in Seattle and hard to find!) Also, long distance walkie-talkies are more useful for the office team to keep in touch with the people in the field.

#### *Intake info*

- What info do you need from arrestees?
- What do you need beforehand?
- What will you need for ongoing court support?
- Have you prepared phone intake forms that include all relevant information?
- Do not use the term alias; it is a potentially damaging legal term. If people give names not their own, use the term nickname, or forest name. Also be aware, and alert arrestees, that it must be assumed that all jail phones are monitored (for quality, of course)

#### *Local info*

- Do you have phone numbers of local politicians to hassle them or negotiate with them?
- Do you have phone numbers of the jails, holding areas, juvenile hall, etc?
- Do you have the phone numbers of other legal groups (ACLU, public defender, NLG)?
- Do you have numbers for local watch dog groups/community groups?
- Do you have cell phone numbers for people doing action logistics? How about medical support?

#### *Sustainability*

- What's your financial situation?
- Have food, tea, and a resting place available.
- Do not work more than 15 hours in a row no matter what!!! Work out a schedule that allows everyone a few hours of personal time during the action.
- Be sure that one person or one team are not stuck inside for the whole action while everyone else is in the streets. It makes those people sad to know they missed the whole action.
- Support each other!
- Ask for help when it's needed!
- Demand praise! Jail/legal support teams kick ass!

## The Scenario and Tactics that made it happen!

>>Top Gun

### I. Original Plan

During the Ruckus WTO Action Camp in Washington State, the original plan of the "pie slices" was developed to shut down the meetings of the World Trade Organization on November 30. Because of the numerous uncertainties regarding police actions and reactions and where they would set up their hard lines, we developed a plan that could be flexible and fluid while staying strong and effective. The city streets were cut into eight slices outwards from the Paramount Hotel, the site of President Clinton's opening speech. Our primary purpose was to hold the streets and keep a constant presence and barrier around the Paramount, keeping out all delegates and support services. The pie-slice plan had a couple of purposes. First, each slice would be controlled by a collective of affinity groups. This collective would develop their own strategy for holding the area, empowering them to design their own ways to move and flow like a tide to hold the streets. The tide would close on the center, holding one or two intersections or flow back in the face of police attacks to hold several others, hopefully never breaking our circle of protest. Second, each slice was to have its own flavor, from prayer vigils to tripods and other technical blockading equipment. The organizers hoped that this vision would allow autonomy and independence for the collectives within the pie-slices, giving all of the diverse groups converging on Seattle a way to express themselves and to stand in solidarity.

The original plan began with two parades, one from Steinbrueck Park on the waterfront and the other Central Community College in Capital Hill, weaving through the financial/ shopper district and the neighborhoods gathering supporters. The parades were planned to include a mixture of tactics, such as using mass numbers to refortify intersections and support arrestables and giving a safe space to the people and children who wanted to show solidarity but were uninterested or unable to risk arrest.

The original plan laid out an extremely helpful outline for the day of events for the Seattle organizers and incoming affinity groups. However, the organizers left a number of pieces of this plan incomplete in order to involve the affinity groups in the decision process. Some of the holes included the exact how the parades would support and interact with the affinity groups which were holding positions, as well as how the pie slices would interact and control the circle of protest. We hoped that much of these details would be worked out during the Convergence, a week of trainings, affinity group formation and meetings and large spokes council meetings in the evenings.

### II. The Convergence and Final Planning

As the day got closer, and the Convergence was underway, the scenario and

its outline underwent immense scrutiny and changes. The pie-slice concept was reconstructed to expand to 13 slices for increased strength, including a single slice for Interstate 5. During the spokes council meetings, affinity groups were slow to step up to commit to pie-slices, as there were more unorganized groups and individuals than there were organizers. It made the meetings more difficult and more dominated by the organizers, because the spokes council never stepped up to take control and left much of the fine tuning of the plan up to the scenario and tactical committees. It is still not clear

if this was a mistaken attempt by organizers to engage the supports coming to Seattle or simply an insurmountable task for a spokes council filled with non-native Seattle protestors. Either way, the entire process was an incredible learning curve for all of those involved.

The scenario collective continued to meet outside of the spokescouncil meetings in order to figure ways to implement and strengthen the plan. New committees were also created, a communication team who were trained to do the on-the-ground radio work and a tactical team to help facilitate the chaos in the streets. The tactical teams were developed to make fast on-the-ground decisions with the most information available. They would be in touch from the field with the communication centers, which was gathering all of the information and attempting to make the best overview tactical suggestions. The difficulty lied with how these teams would interact with the autonomous affinity collectives and groups.

Finally, the scenario collective, looking to the weaknesses of the parades and how they were going to support the pie-slices, drew upon past labor actions and created new groups called "flying squads." These squads would loosely support the affinity groups and fill holes as they developed. Some of these groups were formed prior to N30, such as the Radical Cheerleaders and the Anarchist Marching Band, but most were formed ad-hoc through out the day. Directed as the needs arose, they filled an immensely important role and kept the circle strong in the face intense police brutality on N30.

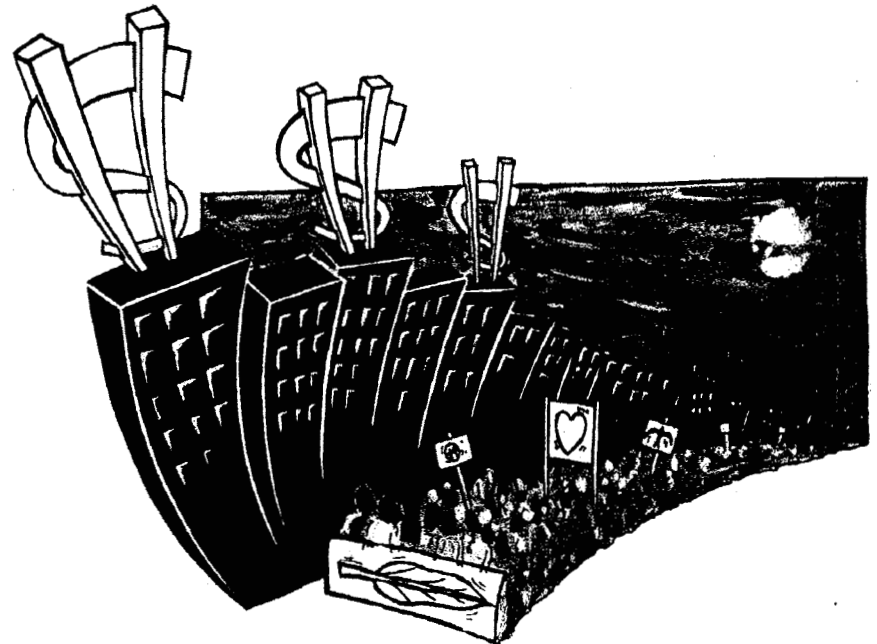
### III. N30 and The Uprising in Seattle

Regardless of all of our preparations, N30 and the week following was inconceivable. Many people have written their experience, some trying to tell it all while others accepted reality and told only what they saw firsthand. The events of the day were so varied depending on which corner and at what time. Stories are told of dancing in celebration one moment, getting tear gassed the next, going inside to wash and get a free breath and by the time they returned the street was again engulfed in festivities. Many of the streets held throughout the day, lines of activists holding hands across from police in riot gear. Some streets experienced peaceful altercations with delegates with limited violence, while others were embalmed with tear gas, brutalizing locked-down activists and suffocating by-standers. There will never be the "true" story of Seattle unless it

interviews the tens of thousands of engaged Americans who ventured out on the

streets of Seattle to voice their right to the First Amendment.

The morning of N30 was filled with contrast. At first the gathering on the west side of town at Steinbreuck Park was disrupted by police, while the gathering in the eastern hills was quiet and peaceful. In the west, the police waded through our growing numbers to target objects that appeared to be blockade-type materials. Several of the tripods were striped of their camouflage and taken away, but most of our gear was carried onwards. Their actions caused initial chaos and disruption, but the parade was quickly formed and moved ahead into the financial district. In the east, where the parade started peaceful, things got chaotic when communications with some of the radios failed and backup roving tactical support was the only means of information. While a few of the affinity groups moved into position early, some encountering police, most moved with the parades and built upon the strength of numbers to take over their intersections.



Throughout the day, the tide ebbed and flowed, more in some areas and less in others. Peaceful protesters were met with anything from quiet, dark stares from behind riot gear to swinging bully clubs, rubber bullets, tear gas and enormous amounts of pepper spray. The affinity groups displayed incredible courage as they held their ground, even when forced to give way, they moved back in as soon as the gas dispersed. Another key to holding the streets on N30 was the flying squads. At important moments, when help was requested, a group of cou-

rageous people would form and race off to support the holes and charge into the billowing gas. It was an amazing experience, once in a lifetime for many, whose lives will never be the same because of their transformation on the streets of Seattle.

The rest of the week continued to be amazing. As the police and the mayor drew their lines and gagged the city with the no-protest zone, people from all walks of life came out to show solidarity with the activists and innocent bystanders in jail. Mothers and friends of people who were just nabbed on the streets for no reason, as well as the growing numbers of enraged citizens of Seattle, kept the numbers high through the rain and cold nights. It is the opinion of this writer that these are the true victors of Seattle, the true heroes and heroines. With 600 strong behind bars, including many of the long-term organizers, it was the people, radically transformed by their experiences in the streets, who stepped up to plate against the mayor's tyranny and kept the movement alive. It was inspirational to watch as new activists stepped up and lead marches and actions to take our message back out on the street and into the heart of the city, surrounding the jailhouse, and challenging the feeble attempts of continued intimidation by the police. As a final note, as we look forward to more mass actions and more opportunities to take back the streets, we need to recognize the need to generate transformative experiences. No speech or vigorous rallying can so radically change a person or the playing field as experience. Drawing on such experiences, we will continue to grow in strength and numbers, as the ripples of change spread wider and wider.

## WTO Tactical Team; What Worked & What Didn't

>> Thomas Assante Riverwind

As the Ruckus Gathering began in September, 1999, just north of Seattle, the basic structure and vision of events to come was already well in motion. During the gathering, the decision to not be "just another protest" but to actually shut the WTO meeting down was consented upon by well over 100 activists representing thousands of people. The logistical reality of how to actually shut down the WTO's meetings continued to evolve, during and after Ruckus. Reconnaissance of Seattle's Convention and Trade Center and the surrounding areas of downtown, first and capitol hills continued. Reconnaissance, brainstorming, streets, visions, and dreams congealed into a creative, clear plan. We surmised that, given the tight security likely at the Convention and Trade Center:

1. It would be improbable for very many activists to gain access during the WTO, or get very close without being met by a wall of armed police.
2. That blockading entrances to the building itself would be improbable given # 1.
3. That blockading the numerous streets and building access routes in the Center had the greatest likelihood of successfully disrupting and preventing the meetings occurrence.
4. That such a large perimeter blockade circling the Center would only be as strong as its weakest links. Every part of the circle (or piece of the pie as it became later known) would be equally important in achieving success. If an area was not covered, however obscure it may seem in visibility and location, it could be utilized by WTO security and police as potential access for some of the many WTO ministerial delegates.
5. That some areas surrounding the Convention and Trade Center would naturally be extreme "hot spots." These hot areas would require more people in cooperating clusters of affinity groups to successfully hold them.
6. To facilitate ensuring every area of the Center's perimeter was covered by blockading affinity groups, we decided to divide the surrounding circumference into sections. The Convention and Trade Center and Paramount Theater were located in the circle's center—at ground zero. The resulting sectioned circle looked like a pie divided into alphabetized slices (for clarity of logistical communication). We divided this 350 degree area of Seattle surrounding the Center into 13 pie slices. This number was chosen as much by an earth-rooted mythic numerical reference as by practical necessity. The idea was for clusters of affinity groups (each affinity group being made up of approximately 8 to 20 people) to pick a pie slice as their own. They would be responsible for reconnaissance (with tactical team help available), deciding the type, locations and action "flavor" of that slice's blockades. Most importantly, they were the people bottom-lining that section of the Center's perimeter; ensuring that its road and building access points to the Center would be blocked.



7. There was a possibility that the police might try to prevent people marching to the WTO meeting Center from arriving. One possibility was that they might close the bridges from Capitol and First Hills into the downtown area—as well as close exit ramps off and on to I-5. Another possibility was that they may try and contain marchers gathering downtown within the park staging area. To counter these possibilities we decided to have two marches gathering at both downtown's Victor Stenbrueck Park and Capitol Hill's Seattle Central Community College. This way we would be arriving simultaneously from both the East and West sides of the WTO's meeting places. Any police attempt to corral marchers in at a staging area, or to seal off downtown bridges, would divide police forces in at least two, this weakened, sections. We also had back-up contingency plans for both of the gathering/staging area locations (nearby parks and routes), as well as Denny Park (to the north of downtown) as a back-up gathering area from which to march. We felt these were necessary precautions in the event our gathering locations ran into logistically prohibitive problems from police. We felt, given our strategy it was more likely the police would deploy around the Convention and Trade Center/Paramount Theater area, and at least one, possibly both, of the marches could get relatively close to the WTO's meetings. At that point the marches could take a range of different action options as needed, from:
  - a. spreading out around the Center/Theater
  - b. splitting marches into two or more processions which could snake dance through the streets, taking intersections, blocking traffic, and bolstering weak spots in the "pie slices" blockades
  - c. remaining in a couple of string visible "hot spots" near the Center's and Theater's entrances
  - d. if necessary for those unable to risk arrest, being able to fall back to either Westlake Mall, Freeway Park, the Park along Pike St. and the stern side of I-5, or to the staging areas themselves if police attack became extremely severe
8. That some part of each pie slice's affinity groups should be in place with the early dawn's arrival. This would help assure that affinity groups would not be blocked from reaching their designated area. Other parts of each slice's affinity groups from both the east and west. The different timings of blockade deployment, both early morning and within the march, would give added insurance that blockades could hopefully survive either early pre-emptive police interference or being stopped by arriving too late.
9. That flying squads—mobile groups of up to a couple hundred people would be formed, capable of moving to hot spots and weak points in the blockades as needed to help hold the area(s). Flying squads could work by:
  - a. adding numbers to an intersection blockade under police

siege,

- b. acting as a diversion, drawing police to another area,
- c. circumventing police and retaking an intersection/blockade area we had lost,
- d. setting up the next "fall back" layer of blockades within the various pie slices as needed (eg: if the police bust through a closer perimeter blockade within a pie slice(s)).

The flying squads were to be composed of a core group(s) with tactical team and communication team members helping to stay in radio contact with both central communications and the 13 pie slice clusters of affinity groups. The bulk of flying squad members were to come from the marches—spontaneously bringing along those inspired by events to help hold the blockades. There were flag pennants for each flying squad. People could follow the flags for visible communication to large numbers of people as to direction and timing when breaking off from the main march or gathering spots. Flag bearers were recruited to work closely with communications and tactical team members. The decisions/suggestions as to when and where to go were to be decided based upon communication information from central, pie slice affinity groups calls for help, and the tactical reality in the streets.

The action itself was to be a celebration of life, a festival of resistance and carnival in Seattle's streets. Art and Revolution as well as Bread and Puppet's giant puppets, floats, marching bands, wandering musicians, noisemakers, singers, dancers, theater, flags and signs abounded. The atmosphere was both high energy, festive, wild, strong as well as peaceful, calm and composed.

Yet the Direct Action Network's diverse alliance of people and organizations was not the only composite group organizing the coming WTO actions. Many other organizations, alliances, autonomous groups and individuals, with varying perspectives and goals, were also organizing events, marches, and actions. DAN networked and kept in communication with these varied groups in many different ways. Here we will only say something about the communication some of us had with the Black-Block and other anarchists unaffiliated with DAN (Including Reclaim the Streets). This group had plans to "up the ante" of resistance, struggle, and the WTO actions by attacking the property of WTO's corporate representatives located in downtown Seattle (Nike, Starbucks, Gap, McDonalds, etc.) This was to be done in organized clusters of Black-Block affinity groups as well as in smaller autonomous semi-clandestine groups, of necessity masked. Reclaim the Streets activists planned roving celebratory actions throughout downtown Seattle's WTO area—literally reclaiming streets with blockades, spontaneous roving dances, music, and public art—including targeted destruction of criminal corporations' properties.

With these groups some of us tried to communicate, reaching some level of agreement regarding how our disparate styles of actions could interweave

harmoniously, without stepping on one another's toes and turf. We had, we though, achieved tentative though shaky agreements with some of their members to: not engage in property destruction where/while people were still licked down in blockades and vulnerable to the repercussions of police violence. Some of us, independently of DAN, had tried to get many of the wannabe "black anarchist destroyers of corporate amerikkka" to realize the Puget Sound area corporate domain is large. Many corporate targets exist throughout the area—not just in downtown streets. We reminded them that the list of potential targets ranged from offices, warehouses, dispersed corporate properties and machinery, shipping lines, to the homes of CEO's, wealthy corporate owners, high echelon managers, and the area's political prostitute puppets of corporate rule. Imagine the press (or the corporate media blackout?), if while downtown Seattle's peaceful festive blockades had shut down the WTO (even with the inevitable police attacks), these groups had destroyed the property of corporate offices and corporate homes elsewhere throughout Puget Sound. But many in these groups scoffed at DAN's blockade plans. They felt that the blockades would fall to police force and arrest before morning was over. Many felt that only pitched struggle with the police would hold the streets, and for this they prepared. They too staked their philosophical claim—as did DAN, labor, and others—in the crowded downtown Seattle streets around the WTO's meeting places.

To be successful in our plans it would be necessary to have thousands of people in the streets. We needed to reach an 'unstoppable' critical mass of people. Added to this was the necessity of beginning both marches, from the east and west, simultaneously at 7 am Tuesday morning, Nov. 30 to have any realistic chance of being able to actually shut down the meetings which were scheduled to begin at 9 am. This reality caused, at first, a lot of consternation, skepticism, and disagreements about whether such an early start—and consequently the goal of shutting the WTO down—was even feasible. After all, November in Seattle is rainy and cold, it was early morning on a work/school/business day, and there were many other events being planned which were to occur later, at a more "reasonable" time. Given this it was possible that we wouldn't have the numbers needed; that the masses of people would just go to one of the later scheduled marches. Yet we know that if we didn't begin in mass early, there would be no way to shut it down once the meetings had begun (well, almost no way, there is always some way). If we began too late, or if our numbers were too little, our action would be little more than just another symbolic protest—yelling at the walls of closed government buildings and going home. It was not acceptable to us to leave the WTO criminals intact. Many of us lobbied hard for the "unrealistic" 7 am beginning. Eventually we achieved consensus.

As the days drew nearer to N-30 the meetings multiplied in frequency, intensity and urgency. People have a tendency to scurry around in imitation of perpetual motion, excitedly hearing only every third word spoken—moving in circular "hat dancing" exacerbation as an impending important event looms ever nearer. A tactical team of 30 of us gathered; working out logistics, doing individual/small group reconnaissance, helping various clusters of affinity groups with questions on their "pie slice",

lock-down/blockade plans, etc. Meetings spilled into meetings, overflowing the high-water marks of tolerance levels. They flooded over and washed out the needed parameters of the domain of dreams. Dreams, now homeless, waited forlornly for endlessly busy activist bodies to still their torrents of great ideas, what-ifs, worries and words—to trust, to realize that at this late hour nothing could stop the coming actions—and rest (to stay healthy and functional) (where are the off switches when you need them?).

Some of us, especially tactical and pie slice affinity groups, must have trekked and re-hiked the downtown/first hill areas surrounding the Convention and Trade Center/Paramount Theater over a couple dozen times. Elevating up high buildings for aerial views, identifying every entrance, service entrance, weak spots in the fence perimeter, banner location spots, tunnels, adjacent building vantage vistas, potential access points, hotel routes, alley ways, escape routes, "safe" hiding zones—to seeming infinity.

### **N-30 "The Day Itself" Arrives**

Knowing how crucial it can be for awareness, clear thinking, and quick effective decisions, we stumbled homeward—from yet another tactically/communications/affinity group cluster organizing meeting about agendas of meetings to meet the heat from the WTO world-wide beat on how to deal with their armored thugs on the street—and so as to not continue stumbling bumbling but remain on our feet, we went to our beds rolled around and drifted into blissful dreaming sleep.

We arrived after a shortened contentious dispute over where to best safely park the car for the day: would we be able to get through crazed out of control cops and escape if need be? Victor Steinbrueck's Park was overflowing with people, banners, signs, and giant puppet critters. Colors profused in spontaneous inter-wanderings amongst the throngs. We attempted to find various tactical and flying squad members within the demonstrations ever growing wilderness. This proved both an interesting and only partially successful endeavor. So with a handful of impromptu-designated core flying squadders (later I was tempted to call us the floundering squabblers), we had become the "dark star" flying squad, named for the type of banners someone had chosen to paint. We were hooked with (and anchored by) a radical cheerleaders contingent. The quick coming together of the core of this group lacked the time necessary for needed sharing of expectations, commitments already made with others, personal visions/desires for the day, level of risk willingness, etc for this rather hastily assembled "herd of cats" to be flying squad functional. Oh well, another of life's interesting challenges, reminding me of my own words from non-violent preps: During actions a lot of pre-made plans unravel, change, or in the view of some go wrong. Relax, the best most successful actions have many things go wrong. But good actions are like a garden—the more things that go wrong, the more compost to work with—roll with it, be creative, flexible, remain centered and inspired—there is always a way to accomplish needed

goals.. As for flying squads, we soon learned a few, initially frustrating, but humorous lessons. As we ambled onward our radio cackled "need a flying squad at \_\_\_ & \_\_\_ intersection." While we parlayed to orchestrate some consensus, unity and quick momentum in our her of contentious cats, another more organized (hopefully) flying squad dashed to answer the first call. As it turned out, over half of our core group was committed as support to a blockading pie slice ensconced within the Trojan horse of our parade. The, and we, could not ramble until after the blockaders stage and lockdowns were in place at Sixth and Pike streets. Once things get to unraveling, sometimes they get on a roll. Our two flag bearers scattered further apart, one eventually disappearing entirely, the second eventually "resigning" his commission in futile amused desperation—feeling like a target with the darkstar flag. As the lockdowns barnacled onto the deployed state in the intersection, the march broke in two directions—North and South- at Sixth and Pike. Soon lockdowns and human blockades were in place at University and Union street conjunctions with Sixth Av. People were also spilling east up Pine street towards Paramount Theater. The most important plans were working well? Working with a smaller, functionally mobile piece of our flying squad, our contingent toured the jubilant chaos of the unfurling morning—rushing to help here, get confused there, as a Great Whale beached at 6<sup>th</sup> and University's intersection. Suddenly radio communication went dead, though still early morning, and the attempted centralized cat herding of flying squad coordination was non-functional. We planted our flag in a Sheraton Hotel planter and wandered, looking for weak spots in our blockades. After helping to add marches to the blockades at University and Union intersections (6<sup>th</sup>), we toured back to the Sheraton. Here WTO delegates were just walking through the demonstration on into the Sheraton Hotel's entrances, cutting through the building to the other side—behind police lines—and straight into the WTO's meeting. Seeing these major breaches in our blockades we began forming blockades of the Sheraton's entrances. A large horseshoe driveway across the front on 6<sup>th</sup> AV. Was soon blocked as we hollered, calling many marchers over to become a human chain blocking access. Various WTO delegates sputtered in hostile futility as they were repeatedly turned back by our growing blockade. So many marchers—many having only turned out for the day, never taken a non-violence prep, some completely new to activism-but nonetheless empowered, calm, beautiful in their strength—joined in. Within a few minutes we had successfully shut off the flow of delegates through the Sheraton's main front entrance.

## NOTES:





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With all due respect to the authors and publishers of this zine, we feel it is essential that it be easily accessible to those who are currently organizing similar mobilizations, or simply desire to understand the infrastructure that made the historic WTO protests possible.

Those who wish to read more on this subject should consult our zine ***N30: The Seattle WTO Protests***, which combines personal testimony from participants, the RAND Corporation report detailing the fiasco on the other side of the barricades, and a retrospective on the subsequent legacy of the Seattle mobilization.

Finally, let it be noted for posterity that we present this zine in its original unedited form, typographical errors and all. Had we but world enough, and time, we would have corrected them—but just copyediting the RAND report for N30 was exhausting enough, and that was a government document. It's lonely at the top.



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