

U-M Disorientation Guide

Fall 2010

"EVERYONE THINKS OF CHANGING THE WORLD, BUT NO ONE THINKS OF CHANGING HIMSELF."

-LEO TOLSTOY

WE LIVE IN A WORLD OF CONSTANT DISTRACTION. JUST BY ENGAGING WITH OUR SOCIETY WE ARE CONSTANTLY EXPOSED TO THE MANIPULATIVE POWER OF ADVERTISEMENT. IT IS A NEVER-ENDING DELUGE OF BRAINWASHING IMAGES -- WHAT'S COOL, WHAT'S HOT, WHAT WILL ATTRACT THE OPPOSITE SEX, WHAT NEW TOY WE HAVE TO HAVE IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN OUR STATUS AMONG OUR FRIENDS. THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO CONTROL THE IMAGES WANT TO CONTROL YOU. THEY WANT TO CLIMB INSIDE YOUR HEAD AND DRIVE YOU AROUND LIKE A FANCY CAR.

BUT THEY CAN'T. NOT WITHOUT YOUR PERMISSION. YOU HOLD THE KEYS IN YOUR OWN HAND, AND ONLY WHEN YOU GIVE OVER YOUR PERCEPTION OF REALITY CAN THEY CONTROL YOU. ADVERTISING IS INFECTIOUS. ONCE IT TAKES HOLD OF REALITY IT SPREADS. TELEVISION, MAGAZINES, AND BILLBOARDS ARE ALL SELLING YOU A VERSION OF REALITY IN WHICH YOU WORK FOR IT. BUT ONCE YOU BEGIN TO UNPLUG FROM THEIR REALITY YOU SEE THE FRAILNESS OF IT. THE TRUTH IS THERE IS NO SET PATH FOR YOU TO FOLLOW. YOU MAKE YOUR OWN PATH. YOU CAN CHOOSE TO FOLLOW THEIR PATH -- A FRANTIC SCRAMBLE FROM HIGH SCHOOL TO COLLEGE TO WHITE-COLLAR JOB, LINED WITH STRESS IN ADDITION TO MATERIAL COMPENSATION -- OR YOU CAN FORGE YOUR OWN. ALBERT EINSTEIN, GEORGE CARLIN, AND GEORGE GERSHWIN ALL DROPPED OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL. ALBERT EINSTEIN WENT BACK TO SCHOOL LATER. FOR HIM THAT WAS IMPORTANT FOR WHAT HE WANTED TO DO.

YOUR PURPOSE WILL FIND YOU IF YOU KEEP LOOKING FOR IT, AS LONG AS YOU STRIVE TOWARDS BETTERING YOURSELF. DO NOT TAKE THAT JOB FLIPPING BURGERS.

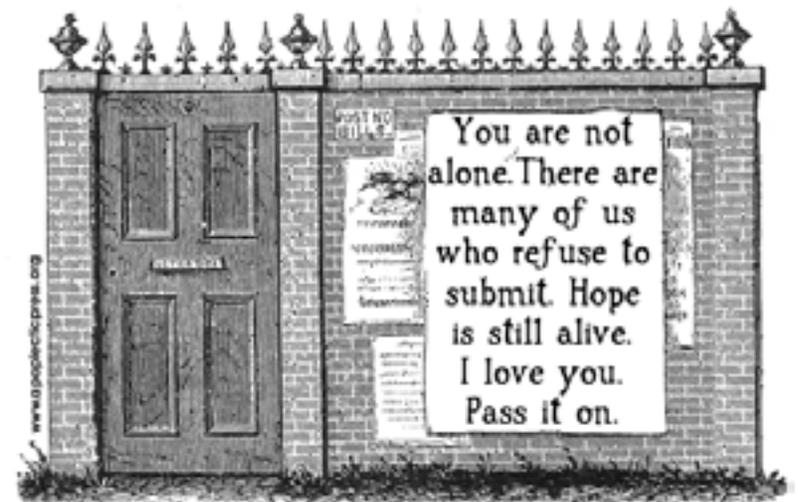
MALCOLM GLADWELL CLAIMS THAT IT TAKES 10,000 HOURS TO BECOME A MASTER AT ANYTHING. SURE, YOU CAN MAKE THAT GREASY BUCK FLIPPING BURGERS, BUT YOU'RE WELL ON YOUR WAY TO MASTERING THE ART OF DEEP FRYING BULLSHIT. START DOING WHAT YOU LOVE TO DO, AND DO IT AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE. DO WHAT YOU LOVE, THE MONEY WILL FOLLOW.

THIS ZINE WILL BRING CERTAIN THINGS TO YOUR ATTENTION. OUR INTENTION IS TO DISPEL SOME ILLUSIONS, AND INVITE YOU TO SHARE IN OUR REALITY. WE WANT TO EMPOWER YOU TO CREATE THE REALITY THAT YOU WANT. WE WANT TO INFORM YOU, INFLAME YOU, INSPIRE YOU, INTRIGUE YOU. WE WANT TO IMPART SOME OF OUR MOTIVATION TO YOU, ALLEVIATE APATHY, TOUCH OFF AN AVALANCHE OF ACTIVISM; WE WANT SIMPLY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE, NO MATTER HOW LARGE OR SMALL.

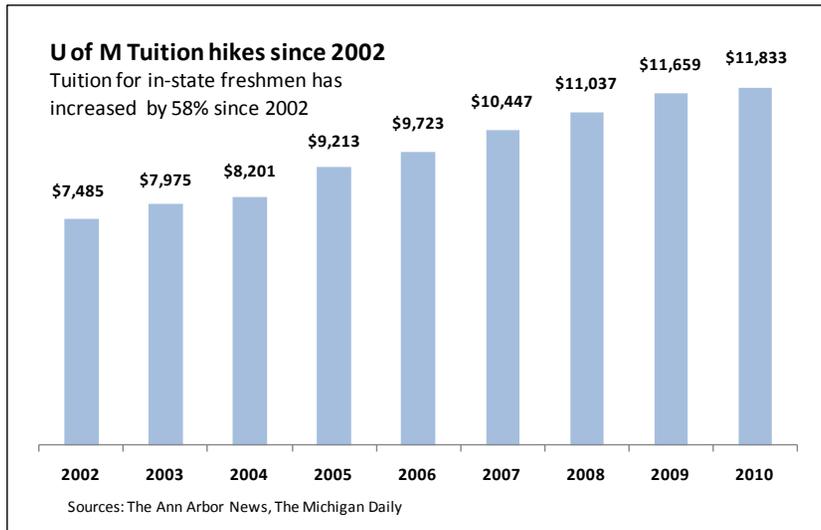
THIS ZINE IS A CALL TO WAKE UP. LIFE IS WHATEVER YOU IMAGINE IT TO BE. YOU HOLD THE KEYS IN YOUR HAND. GET CREATIVE. GET FREE. GET WORKING.

LOVE,

YOUR 2010 DISORIENTORS



WELCOME TO THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN



This past September 2, *The Economist* (a magazine certainly not left-wing by any stretch of the imagination) reported:

College fees have for decades risen faster than Americans' ability to pay them. Median household income has grown by a factor of 6.5 in the past 40 years, but the cost of attending a state college has increased by a factor of 15 for in-state students and 24 for out-of-state students.

The Goldwater Institute points to [...] rising prices and declining productivity: administrative bloat. Between 1993 and 2007 spending on university bureaucrats at America's 198 leading universities rose much faster than spending on teaching faculty. [...] In some universities, such as Arizona State University, almost half the full-time employees are administrators. Nearly all university presidents conduct themselves like corporate titans, with salaries, perks and entourages to match.

[[Declining by degree: Will America's universities go the way of its car companies?](#)] *The Economist*, Sep 2, 2010.]

For many, the Ann Arbor campus of UM may have a reputation as a liberal and even radical place. Visions of the John Sinclair and the White Panthers, the SDS and its ground-breaking civil rights work, and the tireless early advocates of antidiscrimination, anti-war, anti-prison, etc causes the town saw in the 1960s may come to mind. These figures and events all flourished circa 1960-75, but the town and the university since then have been steadily left-leaning. The UM administration prides itself on its progressive policies—it has implemented a 'green construction' policy that's impressively ahead of the national curve, and was steadfast in its defense of affirmative action, even after Proposal 2 made it illegal to consider race, religion, sex, etc in hiring or admissions practice in 2006. The university also takes pride in its commitments to social work, public health, social psychology, etc (some of its most well-known and well-respected programs) and supports a general ideology of community service. And Ann Arbor itself is by all measures a left-leaning town—in the part of town where I lived for several years, the candidates for city council were from the Democratic Party, the Green Party, and the Socialist Party. Services available for low-(or no-)income people are well above the national average, the schools, libraries, and parks are well-funded and well-used. And living in this town, you will meet all sorts of people of all ages who will strike you as open-minded, interested in community and quality-of-life, tolerant, and encouraging of eccentricity and alternative lifestyles.

Yet don't think that this makes the university any less business-minded, or the town any less beholden to corporate interest. At some point, the progressive talk ends and the bottom line takes over, and that means all sorts of cringe-inducing decisions designed to keep the university endowment and the local corporate economy growing, at the expense of everything from community groups to cultural institutions to human rights. As some of the

articles that follow will show, the university is a business, as is the city, both with all the trappings of any other (massive) business. Some extra money for the newest imacs, or for a pay increase for the Chair of Medieval Studies, or for another new fake-brick and drywall building to dazzle potential out-of-state students, will always win out over other interests. And a higher slot in the latest U.S. News and World Report college rankings, or a few extra percentage points in the graduation or job placement rate will always win out over all other concerns. The university does its best to appear open, democratic, and humanitarian, but it's fully within the global capital network, and staying ahead of the pack in this network is its mandate and mission.

There are many reasons to ignore or overlook all of this. Everyone entering or continuing in the university is going to be busy with classes and with social life. And everyone will be made to feel like they are too young, too inexperienced, too naïve, etc to begin their real lives and trust their political impulses or social consciences now. And you will hear many people will argue that the university and the city must be ruthless and aggressive in pursuing its fiscal interest—otherwise how do they stay ahead?—and you must stay ahead and prove your excellence in order to get a good ranking, to get a good job, to be successful and proud.

At some point though, the drive to sheer competition, to getting more and better rankings and placements has to face up to one simple question: **is what I'm doing right?**

Can the money spent on possibly unnecessary and extravagant luxuries (such as provisions for [gourmet meals at North Quad](#)) be better spent [to defray tuition costs for economically strapped Michigan students](#)? What is the point of so much ultra-expensive construction at the university at a time when [education at the university is slipping out of the reach of common Michiganders](#)? Many lower-income people from Michigan [can't even afford](#) to go to school at U-M even when they are admitted.

David Leonhardt of the *The New York Times* [reported on April 22, 2004](#):

ANN ARBOR, Mich. — At prestigious universities around the country, from flagship state colleges to the Ivy League, more and more students from upper-income families are edging out those from the middle class, according to university data.

The change is fast becoming one of the biggest issues in higher education.

More members of this year's freshman class at the University of Michigan have parents making at least \$200,000 a year than have parents making less than the national median of about \$53,000, according to a survey of Michigan students. At the most selective private universities across the country, more fathers of freshmen are doctors than are hourly workers, teachers, clergy members, farmers or members of the military — combined.

Experts say the change in the student population is a result of both [steep tuition increases](#) and the phenomenal efforts many wealthy parents put into preparing their children to apply to the best schools. It is easy to see here, where BMW 3-series sedans are everywhere and students pay up to \$800 a month to live off campus, enough to rent an entire house in parts of Michigan.

Over all, at the 42 most selective state universities, including the flagship campuses in California, Colorado, Illinois, Michigan and New York, 40 percent of this year's freshmen come from families making more than \$100,000, up from about 32 percent in 1999, according to the Higher Education Research Institute. Nationwide, fewer than 20 percent of families make that much money.

The recent increase has continued a two-decade trend that extends well beyond the best-known colleges.

In 2000, about 55 percent of freshmen at the nation's 250 most selective colleges, public and private, were from the highest-earning fourth of households, compared with 46 percent in 1985, according to the institute, which is based at the University of California, Los Angeles.

The number from the bottom fourth dipped slightly over that period, while those from the middle 50 percent fell sharply. In many cases, the less wealthy students went to less selective schools, including lower-ranked campuses of state universities.

According to «[Measuring Up 2008: The National Report Card on Higher Education](#),» by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, simply to ensure that a student attends a four-year public university, a family in the country's lowest-income bracket now has to pay, on average, 55 percent of its total income (up from 39 percent in 2000); for a middle-income family, the average is 25 percent (up from 18 percent in 2000); and for an upper-income family, 9 percent (up from 7 percent).

«Engines of Inequality,» a 2006 report by the Education Trust, a national education advocacy and policy organization, found that state flagship universities and a group of major research universities spent \$257 million in 2003 on financial aid for students from families earning more than \$100,000 a year. Those same universities spent only \$171 million on aid to students from families who made less than \$20,000 a year. Similarly, between 1995 and 2003, according to the report, grant aid from the same public universities to students from families making \$80,000 or more increased 533 percent, while grant aid to families making less than \$40,000 increased only 120 percent.

LSA junior Erin Green [wrote in a letter to the Michigan Daily](#) (published on April 15, 2009):

We need to focus on improving access to education here, or making it easier to register for the classes you want or reducing text book prices, not improving our recreation facilities when they are already bigger and better than those of other schools.



Corporate Criminal Profiles: Rogue's Gallery

U of M has a massive endowment, one of the ten largest of any university in the country. The collection of over 6,000 separate investments provides the school with funding for a large portion of its operating costs. As of June 2009 the value of the endowment had fallen to \$6 billion dollars, down from \$7.6 billion the previous year. But just who makes up the 6,000 different investments? Here is a short list of some of the more notorious companies the U is invested in. All figures here are from [the 2008 Endowment Stock List](#).

Barrick Gold Corporation

Barrick Gold is the world's largest gold mining company. Like many mining companies, Barrick has a dismal environmental record. They use cyanide to separate the gold from the surrounding minerals, and at Lake Cowal in Australia, the cyanide leached out of their dam and into the environment. Elsewhere in Australia, near the city of Kalgoorlie-Boulder, they released seven tons of mercury into the surrounding area. They also caused considerable heavy metal contamination at their Porgera mine in Papua New Guinea. But don't take our word for it, the Norwegian government's pension fund dumped \$245 million of Barrick stock, after the fund's ethics council found «an unacceptable risk of contribution to ongoing and future environmental damage.» Maybe we should follow their lead, and drop our \$11 million in cyanide and mercury tainted stock.

Berkshire Hathaway

Berkshire Hathaway is the holding company of Warren Buffet, the richest man to never produce anything. We own \$6.4 million dollars of stock in this company, which owns sweatshop operators Fruit of the Loom, Russell Athletic, and Fechheimer Brothers, as well as 8.6% of Coca-Cola. (See the article on Russell Athletics, which appears later in the zine.)

Coca-Cola

Why did the University pull a bait-and-switch to reintroduce Coke? I can think of 1,483,608 reasons, and they each have George Washington's face on them. (See the article on Coca-Cola later in this zine.)

BAE Systems, Northrop Grumman, Raytheon

What if a company produced a weapon that was illegal in ninty-four

countries? What if 98% of this weapon's victims were civilians? What if 27% of its victims were children? What would you do if your university had investment \$3.2 million in this company? I speak of the ammunition known as cluster bombs, and one of their manufacturers, BAE Systems. We also invest an addition \$450,304 in cluster bomb maker Northrop Grumman, \$815,713 in Thales, and \$1.2 million in Raytheon, who developed the delivery system. We'd be breaking the law in Belgium, by the way. In 2007, they outlawed investing in companies that make cluster bombs. The Norwegian government's pension fund also excludes Raytheon and Thales on humanitarian grounds.

AstraZeneca

AstraZeneca is a pharmaceuticals company. They only make money while their drug is protected by patent. When the patent was about to run out on Omeprazole, their most successful drug, they re-patented it as Nexium, the only change being the molecule was a mirror image. But in the body, they are both converted to the same active molecule. Then, they spent millions of dollars marketing Nexium as if it were a brand new drug. They are also the subject of four class action lawsuits in Canada and two in the US, when it turned out their anti-psychotic drug, Seroquel, had the teensy side-effect of causing diabetes. They have since indicated they are seeking approval to market Seroquel as an anti-depressant. I wonder how it affects our medical programs that \$768,612 of your tuition is invested in them. (Along with \$x in other pharmaceuticals.) Also, criticism of AstraZeneca was erased from Wikipedia by a user editing from a computer registered to the company.

Big Finance

The University put a ton of our money in finance, over \$55 million total. They do some curious things with the money, though. Citigroup, for instance, has over a million dollars in investment from the U. In the 2008 election, they donated \$320,000 to McCain and \$657,000 to Obama. We own \$2.6 million of Goldman Sachs, and they gave \$230,000 to McCain and \$980,000 to Obama. We own over two million in JPMorgan Chase stock, and they gave \$225,000 to McCain and \$650,000 to Obama. UBS has \$2.5 million of our money, and they gave \$182,000 to McCain and \$522,000 to Obama. It seems the people we invest in know a thing or two about investment themselves. For instance, they know how to diversify.

Further, big finance companies do creepy things with your money. For instance, a prominent manufacturer of cluster bombs and anti-personnel mines is Textron. We don't own any Textron stock, but JPMorgan Chase has \$120 million invested in Textron. Similarly, we don't own any Lockheed Martin stock, but four banks we are invested in (JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America, Citigroup, and Mizuho Bank) form Lockheed's \$1.5 billion revolving credit facility. Thales, another cluster bomb maker whose stock we do own, recently got a \$2 billion dollar loan from a syndicate including U-M financed banks BNP Paribas, Deutsche Bank, and JPMorgan Chase. Other Thales-financing banks we're invested in: Barclays, BBVA, BNP Paribas, Citigroup, HSBC, ING Bank, Lloyds TBS, Sumitomo Mitsui, Societe Generale, and UBS.

Exact figures on campaign donations (for reference):

	McCain	Obama	U-M
Citigroup Inc	\$320,251.00	\$657,268.00	\$1,069,288.00
Goldman Sachs	\$230,095.00	\$980,945.00	\$2,675,970.00
JPMorgan Chase & Co	\$225,557.00	\$650,758.00	\$2,028,201.00
UBS AG	\$182,079.00	\$522,019.00	\$2,500,898.00

On the Norwegian Government Pension Fund: The NGPF invests Norway's oil money. They have an ethics committee which determines if a company poses an unacceptable risk of contributing to human rights violations, environmental damage, etc. On their list of excluded companies are nine companies we invest in, totaling over \$13 million. Also, we invest in two companies they have flagged for keeping a close eye on.

Rio Tinto - 3902041
 BAE Systems - 3202259
 Finmeccanica - 186405
 Thales - 815713
 Boeing - 1196104
 Northop Grumman - 450304
 United Technologies - 900820
 Raytheon - 1226904
 Freeport McMoRan Copper & Gold - 1996759
 Total: \$13,877,309

University Donors: Where the big money comes from

If you're in the business school, you might have had classes in Sam Wyly Hall. If you study architecture, chances are you're familiar with the name A. Alfred Taubman- the school of architecture and the Health Care Center are named after him. What you might not have realized is that both of these names have been dirtied with accusations of fraud.

Most recently, Sam Wyly and his brother Charles have been accused of insider trading and securities fraud. Whether or not they are guilty will be up to a court of law, but the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations released a report in 2006 highlighting Mr. Wyly's investment practices as an elaborate abuse of tax laws, including purchases of a \$622,000 ruby and a \$937,500 painting of Benjamin Franklin with untaxed dollars. In an interview with the Michigan Daily, University spokeswoman Kelly Cunningham said the U is "sorry to hear he is facing these difficult circumstances." Allegedly the pair utilizes a maze of 58 different shell and trust corporations in the Isle of Man and Cayman Islands to mask their activities. The SEC has been investigating them for six years owing to the complexity of the case. Mr. Wyly claims it's a political issue, that it is "good politics to beat up on big companies and rich people." Wyly himself has had a great deal of political involvement, contributing \$30,000 to the Swift Boat campaign against Sen. John Kerry in 2004 and around \$4,000,000 to various arms of the Republican machine in the last 20 years. * The Wyly brothers are accused of profiting more than \$550 million dollars from their offshore activities. According to the SEC, \$8 million of Wyly's \$10 million dollar contribution to the U of M came from offshore funds.

Adolph Alfred Taubman, real estate mogul and billionaire, has done time in the slammer. In 2000 he was convicted of price-fixing, a charge he still denies, and sentenced to 1 year in prison with a \$7.5 million dollar fine. The prosecutors at his trial claimed he schemed with his competitor at Christie's to steal over \$400 million dollars in commissions from sellers during a six year period. His defense claimed he was set up by a greedy employee. At his trial, other real estate executives claimed he was a simple businessman who fell asleep at meetings and would not know how to construct such an elaborate scheme. Still, the court found him guilty and he served 9 and half months in a federal white-collar prison.

Political science professor Edie Goldenberg argued at the time of Taubman's conviction that his name should be removed from the buildings that it graces. "I don't think that sets a wonderful example for the students," Goldenberg said. "The University really ought to give the money back and find other sources."

*Source: Center for Responsive Politics, Washington Post research.

<http://www.michigandaily.com/content/u-donor-accused-hundreds-millions-dollars-fraud>

CASE STUDIES/ UNIVERSITY ACTIVISM AT WORK

A Struggle in Solidarity with Others: Lessons from the Student Campaign Battling Coca Cola

I became involved in a campaign to kick the Coca Cola company off the UM campus because of their treatment of workers and the surrounding community at their plants in India and Colombia.

While walking one day through the university's central quadrangle, I saw undergraduates distributing fliers and accepted one. The flier asked people to assemble in the University Union to work on creating and assembling banners and posters for an upcoming demonstration, where one of the Coca Cola company's higher-ups was going to be speaking at a panel discussion at the university's business school. I went and found several others making posters, and joined. Several others seemed to have shown up in the same way I had.

Some of the students were from different organizations, while some, like me, were in no organization at all. Represented were Amnesty International's campus chapter, several environmental groups, Latino/Hispanic student organizations and a group called Students Organizing for Labor Equality. The range of groups that were able to form a coalition reflected the range of problems the corporation posed. Coke has bottling plants in Colombia, where several trade unionists have been killed by paramilitary forces suspected of working in collusion with plant managers. Several of the company's plants in India are suspected of contributing to groundwater depletion in surrounding areas. Coke had also gained notoriety when a test by a non-profit environmental organization allegedly proved that the bottled drinks the company sold throughout India had high levels of pesticide.

The demonstration was to be held at a «corporate social responsibility» panel during a conference at the Business School and a representative from Coke was going to be on the panel. The students organizing the protest had decided to expose the Coke representative on the panel to an innovative form of public ridicule. They had strung together many Coke bottles and cans into a giant chain about fifty feet long.

After some debate, the group decided that a couple of students would walk down to the stage without warning, and take a minute or two

explaining why they were protesting against Coke. It was hoped that the element of surprise would provide just enough time for the students to speak before the security guards could cart them off the stage. Meanwhile, a group of students would silently parade up and down, presenting the surreal spectacle of strung-up cans and bottles. This “guerrilla theater” would, it was hoped, throw the event into disarray.

On the day of the protest, we passed out informational fliers to those attending. Our presence created, I think, a sense of anticipation on campus that something interesting was about to happen. There certainly was a palpable sense of tension in the air. When the students “rushed” the stage there was a collective gasp from the audience. While the “rushers” delivered their short speech, the rest paraded the chain with mock-solemn silence. There was a murmuring ripple of laughter.

These minimally disruptive actions completely changed, however, the dynamic in the room: during the question-and-answer session, most questions that the audience asked ended up being directly or indirectly related to the concerns we had raised. We had strategically sprinkled ourselves among the audience, with banners and posters on full display, and asked pertinent questions. This demonstrated that the protesters were not mindlessly disruptive, but were, instead, intelligent, thoughtful members -- citizens -- of the university community. It showed that the protesters were fluent both in the language of street protest and in the language of the academy -- we communicated that we were participating in the university's own mission of critical thought and inquiry. We succeeded in capturing the audience's interest and attention by organizing a protest that was inventive, innovative and combined performance art and humor.

The coalition was made up of many pre-existing student groups. It was also a coalition or cooperation between similar campaigns at different universities, as we coordinated activities and kept in touch. Campaigns from different campuses were able to share ideas, discuss strategies, and most importantly, draw inspiration and encouragement from success on other campuses. The campaign itself represented a kind of coalition activism as students on U.S. or Canadian campuses agitated about a multinational company's activities in Colombia and in India, while at the same time large numbers of people in those countries were, also, of course, actively agitating around these demands. Implicitly, then,

this was a coalition between “first worlders” and “third worlders,” the relatively elite and the relatively underprivileged.

Such a coalition, by its nature, raises an array of questions and issues.

The students demanded that Coke not be allowed to sell its products on campus, because, given its unethical conduct, this would violate the university’s Vendor Code of Conduct. So, this was a consumer-led protest -- not a consumer boycott, but a more focused, and potentially more effective, resistance that demanded that the university be accountable to its *own* stated goals. But could the students ethically claim to speak *on behalf of* the affected people in India or Colombia? In recognition of this challenge, the student campaign took a conscious decision to play a supporting role, deferring to all decisions taken by activists on the ground, remaining in constant communication with them.

This proved easier in the Colombian case than in the Indian. In fact, leading Colombian trade unionists were able to tour the county, addressing audiences at well-publicized public meetings, which was not possible for Indian activists because of the greater distance involved. But we also found an ally in the India Resource Center, a nonprofit organization in California, which is run by an Indian expatriate activist who travels to the India regularly, thus serving as a communication channel between activists in India, and the USA.

Thus, the politics of the campaign were a politics of solidarity rather than a politics of representation. Students were careful to avoid what is always a potential pitfall when there is a coalition between the relatively powerful and the relatively powerless -- the danger of “appropriating” the agency of others. For example, when a campus newspaper invited student activists to write op-ed articles, the students insisted on giving the Indian and Colombian activists space to write first-person narratives. Likewise, on the campaign website, students provided posted statements not only from the student campaign but also from the Colombian union and peasants’ organizations in India.

What did the students accomplish in the end? On the “legal” front, students filed a complaint with the university’s Dispute Review Board stating that Coke was in violation of the Vendor Code of Conduct. The Dispute Review Board held public hearings at which both sides spoke

and concluded that there was reasonable ground to suspect that the company was indeed in violation of the VCC. The Board recommended that the company subject itself to further investigation, which Coke refused to do.

The university, under intense student pressure, cut their contract, at which point Coke agreed, a few weeks later, to an «assessment» (its chosen euphemism for an investigation). The university backtracked, then restored the contracts while also arranging for an Indian nonprofit research institute and the International Labor Organization (ILO) assess the situation. The Indian assessment team submitted its report in January 2008, while the ILO’s assessment in Colombia is still continuing. On the basis of the Indian team’s report, the university said that the company was off the hook despite the report finding problems, especially groundwater depletion at the site of Coke’s bottling plants. This finding also provided activists in India with documentation. Thus, the students’ work has already led to some concrete results.

Perhaps the most important result through this three-year-long agitation at the university was the effect on the participating students themselves. One student, for example, went to Colombia after graduation to work with the Colombian labor union at Coke and then has returned to work as a union organizer in the USA, while others are working for progressive organizations or pursuing activist scholarship in graduate school. The campaign has left an influence on the activists. These effects are being felt in ways large and small as the participants move on to new projects in the course of their post-university lives.

In her ‘Confronting Empire’ speech in January 2003 in Porto Alegre, Brazil, the Indian writer Arundhati Roy made a series of powerful remarks towards the end of her speech. [1] She said, «We can continue to build public opinion until it becomes a deafening roar... Our strategy should be not only to confront empire, but ...to deprive it of oxygen. To shame it. To mock it. With our art, our music, our literature, our stubbornness, our joy, our brilliance, our sheer relentlessness... The corporate revolution will collapse if we refuse to buy what they are selling -- ... their notion of inevitability. Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing.»

The fight for another world, a better world, has to be fought and

won incrementally, inch by inch, person by person, even if it seems tantalizingly close and almost within our reach. It will be won through building coalitions and building solidarity. There was evidence of all these aspects of successful struggle in this small and humble episode, this one struggle among many unfolding today in the world, that I was fortunate to witness and, to some extent, participate in.

In June 2008, Frei Betto, the Brazilian liberation theologian, wrote: «I think the best present would be to see new generations believing and struggling for a better world, where solidarity is a habit, not a virtue; where the practice of justice is an ethical demand, and socialism the political name for love.» [2] The students at this U.S. university had successful careers waiting for them after graduation. They did not have to do what they did, and yet they did so, without thinking that they were doing something exceptional. Solidarity, for these students, had – in Frei Betto’s language -- become «a habit».

If they could act in this way, others can, too -- and the ethical demand whose name is “the practice of justice” can perhaps become universal and omnipresent in a future world!

Notes:

1 Roy, Arundhati. “Confronting Empire” (Speech Given at World Social Forum, January 27, 2003, in Porto Alegre, Brazil). Reprinted in: *North Bay Progressive Newspaper*, Feb 25 - Mar 25, 2003.

2 Betto, Frei. “14 de junio, 80 cumpleaños del Che Guevara: Mensaje de aniversario” (“Message for Che Guevara’s 80th birthday on June 14”), *Granma*, Cuba, 2008.



Co-ops: For Housing, Community, Economy, and the World

Where are you living next year? You’ll probably start hearing this question long before it seems to make any sense to start thinking about it. You’ll most likely hear about two options. There’s the dorms: social, includes a meal plan, yet exorbitantly expensive and under the thumb of the university. Or you can live in a private house or apartment, where you’ll save money and have more freedom, but you have to shop and cook for yourself, and you don’t get the built-in social life guaranteed by the more densely populated residence halls.

That’s where the co-ops come in. Less than half the cost of the dorms, about 30% cheaper than the average Ann Arbor apartment, yet includes food—all the food you could possibly want, any time of day or night—plus home cooked meals almost every night, all your utilities, internet, laundry, cable, parking, and more. The 18 ICC co-ops around Ann Arbor are all located in easy walking distance from campus, including one huge structure on North Campus housing 150 people. The co-ops are pretty much the only game in town offering 4 and 8 month contracts, so you don’t have to try to find a subletter when you leave for the summer or study abroad. Plus, the co-ops include that student/community/social-life-in-a-can aspect that convinced you to sign your life away to University Housing for your freshman year. Varying in size from 12 to 85 members, each house has a unique culture and history. You’ll become part of a genuine community, and you’ll meet friends that you’ll keep for the rest of your life. Best of all, if you don’t like something, you can change it—because the co-ops are 100% owned and democratically controlled by the people living in them.

How is all this possible? Through the power of cooperatives. A co-op is a business or organization that is collectively owned and democratically controlled by the people it serves. In the case of a housing co-op like the ones described above, collective ownership means there’s no landlord making profits off of your rent payments, and democratic control means you decide as a community how much you’re going to pay and what it’s going to be spent on. You decide what kind of food to buy, what newspapers to subscribe to, when you’ll have meals, and when you’ll have parties. Each member also contributes about 4 hours of work a week to keep the house running. This includes things like cooking, washing dishes, ordering food, paying bills, and cleaning the house—things you’d have to do anyway if you lived on your own. Everyone just pitches in a few

hours a week, and like magic, everything gets done—you get meals cooked, food bought, dishes washed, bathrooms cleaned, bills paid, trash taken, parties planned, and much much more.

The oldest co-op in Ann Arbor, Michigan House, was actually the first student co-op in North America, founded in 1932 at the height of the Great Depression. It served two purposes: a way for low-income students to save money to be able to afford being in school, and an experiment in putting values of cooperation and democracy into practice. Today there are 18 student-run co-ops around Ann Arbor and hundreds more that have sprung up all over the U.S. and Canada. The 18 Ann Arbor co-ops are part of an organization called the Inter-Cooperative Council, or ICC (www.icc.coop), that is 100% owned and controlled by its members, all of whom are residents and most of whom are students. Students serve on the Board of Directors, work in the office, and oversee maintenance, property management and the finances of the organization, with the help of a small staff hired by and accountable to the membership. An organization called NASCO (North American Students of Cooperation, www.nasco.coop) represents the tens of thousands of members of student and campus co-ops all over the U.S. and Canada. The student co-ops are an amazing way to save money, make friends, and learn things you could never learn in a classroom, like how to get along with a diverse group of people and how to run a multi-million dollar business.

But the cooperative movement is much larger than student housing. There are many different kinds of co-ops throughout the world, and each one is collectively owned and democratically controlled by the people it serves. Food co-ops, like the wonderful People's Food Co-op at the corner of Fourth and Catherine in Ann Arbor, are grocery stores owned and controlled by the people who shop there. They tend to provide many more options for organic and local products than traditional grocery stores, and PFC, which gives special discounts to students, is no exception. Credit unions, like the University of Michigan Credit Union in the basement of the Michigan Union, are co-op banks owned and controlled by the people who use their services. UMCU tends to provide better rates and more people-friendly service than other local banks, and it too has great deals for students.

Agricultural co-ops, which empower small farmers in the developing world to compete with major agribusinesses and maintain control of their own production and distribution, form the foundation of the Fair Trade movement. By shopping at exclusively Fair Trade coffee shops like Rendezvous Cafe on South University, Cafe Verde at Fourth and Catherine, or any

of the coffee shops in campus buildings, or by asking for Fair Trade at most other coffee shops in town, you can contribute to the development of alternative systems of international trade that use co-ops to achieve economic equality and justice. And Fair Trade is not just for coffee: other products available include tea, cocoa, bananas, flowers, wine, and even vodka.

But the co-op model most radically different from conventional business, and most hopeful as a tool for economic justice, is the worker-owned co-op. Worker-owned co-ops, like Fair Trade distributor Equal Exchange, are businesses owned and controlled by their workers. Instead of having owners or outside shareholders who hire workers and then collect all the profits, the workers in a worker co-op own the business they work in, make business decisions in a democratic way, and collect all the profits from their labor. Unlike in a conventional business, where perverse incentives encourage employees to work as little as possible without getting fired and thus require owners to employ many layers of supervision, workers in a worker co-op directly benefit when the business does well, and so each one has an incentive to be productive. In a worker co-op, profits are still desired, as all the workers benefit when the business profits—but profits are not the true bottom line. The bottom line is people. Profits are desirable only to the extent that they benefit the people most affected. And decisions are made by the people most knowledgeable about the business operations, the workers themselves.

Since the worker co-op is a business model rather than a system of government, it is one of the most hopeful tools the world has for a better economy. Worker co-ops don't require a revolution—they function within the market economy. They are a grassroots, bottom-up solution—one business at a time. And since they are co-ops, they can plug in to the already huge co-op movement: There are almost a billion members of co-ops in the world, including 40% of the US population. And co-ops provide over 100 million jobs worldwide—more than multinational corporations! There's a lot more information about worker co-ops on the website of the US Federation of Worker Cooperatives at www.usworker.coop. Viva La Evolución!



Anti-Sweatshop Work

The Michigan logo is one of the most widely reproduced university logos in the world. You may be wearing one now. You may even have got that shirt for free. How did that logo get there, and what does the University get out of it?

The University owns the logo, and only companies that the U designates are allowed to use it. They pay royalties to the U for the privilege of this license. During the licensing process, the U negotiates with companies and dictates certain things; for instance, each licensing agreement contains certain parameters for a given shirt's quality, how good its fabrics are, how high-quality the ink used, etc. That way, the up-scale products come from a different company than the bargain products. The point is, the licensing process is relatively complicated and the U gets more than a passing chance to see who they're dealing with and how their licensed products will be made.

For a long time, labor and human rights were not considered in the distribution and granting of licenses. But in 1999, students from SOLE (Students Organizing for Labor and Economic Equality) occupied the president's office for two days in order to get labor and human rights requirements in the license. The protest was successful, and since then all licensees must agree that they would meet certain production and labor right standards.

However, it turned out a lot of companies that produce licensed products for all sorts of universities and sports teams didn't follow the license. Word got around that certain production companies had not been meeting licensing standards (a fact which was bad for business) and, in response, several groups were started to monitor licensed groups. The apparel companies started a group called the Fair Labor Association (FLA) to help monitor, while the unions formed their own monitoring group, the Workers Rights Consortium (WRC). The U initially sided with the (obviously more corporate friendly) FLA but, after some efforts spearheaded by students, the U eventually became a member of both groups.

During the early years of the two organizations, both together inspected a hat factory in the Dominican Republic called BJ&B that made Nike hats for a lot of universities, including us. The workers formed a union, and Nike pulled their orders from the plant, moving them to a different plant owned by the same company. BJ&B had to close. Leaving factories because they unionize is the kind of thing licensees specifically aren't allowed to do. Nike noted that the FLA could not conclude definitively that this had happened, despite the fact that the WRC was unequivocal in its decision that it had. The U went with Nike on the matter, not only keeping them on as the chief producer of Michigan gear but also denying the reports of the WRC.

These sorts of problems happen all the time. The WRC came up with a better program called the Designated Suppliers Program, in which factories are pre-approved as having good working conditions, and we tell licensees they have to pick one of the approved factories to make our stuff. President Coleman refused this program, and, after years of fruitless lobbying (including being shut out of the Board of Regent's meeting in 2005), students again occupied the president's office in 2006. This time, they were arrested. «I don't take demands from students,» was the only comment from President Coleman.

Other problems arose around a loophole in the licensing agreement, which states that only companies that print logos are subject to labor standards while suppliers of the un-printed shirts, hats, etc are not. For instance, Fruit of the Loom workers in the Dominican Republic were notoriously poorly treated from the mid-2000s forward, when increased competition brought the company to implement new, violent measures to decrease organizing. Fruit of the Loom doesn't have a UM license, but a number of companies with a license buy their shirts and print on them.

The U does respond positively to some violations of labor standards, thank mostly to student efforts (especially the on-campus group SOLE) over the past ten years. The most recent violation that students protested was by Russell Athletic, which shut down a factory in Honduras after workers, facing increasingly egregious working conditions, began to organize. The U gave Russell a remediation plan but soon learned the company had no plans to comply, eventually dropping them and their license after they shut down another Latin American plant that was trying to unionize. It was the second contract to ever be cut for labor rights violations, after New Era was dropped for their labor practices in 2003.

How can you buy a U-M shirt that wasn't made in a sweatshop? The Barnes and Noble bookstore in the Union sells a Knights Apparel line called «Alta Gracia» that is made in a factory with higher labor standards than the rest. The factory's conditions are in accordance with DSP standards, and it is located where the old BJ&B factory in the Dominican Republic was, providing jobs to the community that lost them when Nike closed its factory. Go ahead, buy Michigan apparel with a healthy conscience!

Also, if you're looking for sweat-free clothing for your student group, consider ordering through FairTees. FairTees is a student organization dedicated to connecting student groups with ethical and environmentally-friendly clothing. Check it out at fairtees.org

THIS MODERN WORLD

THE COLUMBIA ADMINISTRATION GUIDE TO UNION BUSTING 101

HOW TO KEEP YOUR TEACHING ASSISTANTS SAFE FROM INCREASED WAGES, CHILD CARE BENEFITS, AND OTHER PERILS OF UNIONIZATION!

by TOM TOMORROW



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WELCOME TO ANN ARBOR

Ann Arbor, City without Communities

In general, Ann Arbor is an upper-middle class city with a median household income of about \$85,000 (versus a national median of \$52,000). If you do an extensive tour of town, you might be surprised by the number of upper-middle class households and the relative lack of working class or lower-middle class ones (this will be especially apparent to people coming from the Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, or Lansing areas, since all three of these cities have population sizes vaguely comparable to Ann Arbor's). This is due not only to the presence of the university, which supplies quite a few people with upper-middle class incomes (in households that tend to be small), but also to the extensive research and development economy the city hosts. In addition to the hospital—which is fully a part of the University—various chemical, biotech, and medical research companies that employ highly specialized, highly paid workers are based in Ann Arbor. The prices of housing and real estate are extremely high, relative not only to the national average but also to other cities in Michigan, substantially beating out such suburban enclaves as Auburn Hills or Canton. (Out of cities in Michigan of more than 50,000 Ann Arbor is the most expensive, and by no small measure.) This means that most of the non-professional population of Ann Arbor rents, a fact especially true downtown, in the areas surrounding campus, and on the expansive west side of town. This in turn means that there are few people with a stake in long-term community life in Ann Arbor, a condition furthered by the overwhelming transience of young people in town. Ann Arbor's minority enclaves and lower-income spaces have dwindled over the past thirty years. For example, the area around Wheeler Park and the Amtrak station was not long ago a neighborhood of working class families, many of them black and (later) Hispanic, until it was reclaimed by developers over the past three decades who have rehabbed single-family houses and split them into apartments to rent to grad students and young professionals, built half-million dollar condominiums for health and research professionals, and even tried to put up high rises in the middle of these neighborhoods.^[1] This has forced lower-income families to the distant corners of the city, to apartment complexes at the end of bus lines without any neighborhood support systems.^[2]

The story of gentrification is familiar, but it's not often mentioned how damaging for the health of a community the removal of all lower-income housing to a city's peripheries can be. Gentrification and the removal of all lower-income people from a city mean a change in the meaning of the word, 'community.' Professionals have smaller families and fewer children; they have enough money to make sure their kids go to good

schools and have enough supplies; they have enough money for health care, and so forth. No one is in need and everyone is too busy with careers, running kids to school and baseball practice, etc, to socialize much with neighbors, and relationships are primarily economic as a result: one knows the local barista because he serves you coffee, the local butcher because she gets your bacon, the yoga teacher because he teaches your Thursday morning class, etc. Even the 'public' places and events (e.g. Top of the Park or the libraries) are funded from on high, not from autonomous grass roots community initiatives. The general mindset is that donating money and trusting the local government to take care of all social issues will take care of all the city's problems and make Ann Arbor a wonderful liberal place.

Once an administration no longer has to meet its citizens' demands and its communities' needs, the only thing they look to do is grow, and that's where Ann Arbor is at now. All these well-off people have secure presents and their futures look secured, all these renters are worried about paying their next month's rent (or preparing to move to bigger cities), and all the lower-income people with childcare, health care, and education needs are pushed far away from the eyesight of most residents. In general, Ann Arbor residents are willing to throw money at some causes, but few seem interested in anything that goes beyond professional or personal comfort zones—don't want to work directly with people, don't want to mix with those outside of my class or race, don't want to risk noncompliance with any state or federal regulations, and definitely not willing to stop and rethink what we're doing and why.

This is the current state of Ann Arbor's communities. We need your help to imagine something better.



Some case studies: Ann Arbor's priorities

A few years ago, a group of homeless people who had been turned away from the Ann Arbor homeless shelter, the Delonis Center, decided to start a tent city in un-used city land behind a shopping center. The tent city, called Camp Take Notice, was not meant to be just another flopping ground for vagrants, but was rather designed as an autonomous, drug- and alcohol-free community with a long list of rules and bylaws. They held regular meetings and made decisions democratically, and during their existence were able to handle all problems among residents from within the community. As their name indicates, their stated goal was to provide a model of a working homeless community and bring attention to the issue of homelessness to the larger Ann Arbor community. They wanted to publicize the fact that the existing facilities in Ann Arbor, while useful and effective to an extent, were insufficient to meet the needs of the homeless population. And above all, they looked to protest the criminalization of homelessness in the United States.

On September 2, 2009, Michigan state troopers raided the organization's site, arresting the founder of the camp for trespassing and ordering the rest of the residents to leave immediately—even wheeling up two Department of Transportation dump trucks and threatening to dispose of their tents and belongings if they didn't leave in good time. Their leader, Caleb Poirier, was arrested for trespassing and taken off to a Washtenaw County jail. There had been no complaints from neighbors to spark the raid, and the land was not set to be reclaimed or repurposed by the state, but the residents didn't own the land and hence were considered 'trespassers' on it. Since they were homeless and owned no land, there was, in fact, no place in the entire state of Michigan where they could sleep for free without being considered trespassers. The state had no further plans for them, didn't have a shelter lined up, or an alternative location—but removed them and their quiet community from the un-used, low visibility land and put them back on the street. In the days that followed, the city cleared trees and other shade from the land to ensure that the camp wouldn't return, and warned the group not to set up shop at another location within Ann Arbor city limits. Charges were pursued against Poirier until a series of high-profile protests by ACLU lawyers brought Washtenaw County to drop the case in January 2010, more than five months after the initial arrest.

Just a few weeks ago, a large diverse group of dozens of travelers, musicians, adventurers, etc came to Ann Arbor for the annual mid-August 'Punk Week,' in which locals put on concerts, workshops, spectacles, and other events for any and all travelers willing to make the trip to AA. A group of twenty or thirty of these travelers were barbecuing in

Bandemeer Park (off of N Main St along the Huron River), when an Ann Arbor squad car came by and told them to disperse. Complaints about the travelers had come in, and the cops wanted them to leave the park immediately. Some of the travelers protested, and a few were quickly arrested on dubious charges of refusing to leave the park (a public park). A fracas followed, in which police tackled and violently restrained a fleeing female, and seven people were ultimately arrested. Local lawyers stepped up to defend the arrested travelers, working *pro bono* and citing clear police prejudice against their age and appearance as their reason for involvement. The story was picked up by the local media outlet, annarbor.com, and sparked some debate about whether or not Ann Arbor should tolerate punk week and the travelers that came with it. The debate was about whether or not, and how much, the scruffy-looking travelers might threaten business and make the streets less pedestrian friendly. At a city council meeting held while punk week was still going on, punk week was on the agenda and City Administrator Roger Fraser declared that the event had become 'quite a nuisance' and brought 'rampages' and 'other unmentionable activities' to town. More discussion followed on websites and other outlets, and the general consensus was that the city should put their foot down and no longer allow itself to be abused and taken for granted by these travelling kids. Other disagreed and thought they should be tolerated, or perhaps treated as charity cases.

What seems to have been lost in all this was the question of the law. It's unclear what 'rampages' and 'unmentionable activities' Fraser was referring to—especially since nobody was ever accused of, let alone charged with such actions—and the debate was centered on whether or not body odor and scruffy appearance was bad for businesses relying on foot traffic, not whether or not travelers broke laws or were becoming dangerous. In other words, what the city council, the police, and concerned citizens were aiming at was the systematic harassment and driving off of a particular 'population'—though one that it couldn't charge with any actual crimes or legal transgressions—that it saw as bad for business.

In the end, the travelers pled guilty and their sentences were all limited to the week in jail they had already served while awaiting their court date. Perhaps this had to do with the pressure on the city and the police department that the lawyers threatened, or perhaps it was merely due to the fact that punk week was over, and most of the travelers already gone, so that the city could relax with the threat of the punks having passed. In any case, it seems like a good introduction to the famously 'liberal' town you're now living in: if a few businesses claim that they're selling a bit less than normal, or if a few citizens complain about someone's body odor, the city will step up, invent reasons to arrest people and have its administrators and politicians advocating selective, prejudiced

enforcement of the law.

To be fair, in both these instances, many citizens responded to the arrests quickly, raising lawyers and putting pressure on the city to deal with the matters fairly. Ann Arbor is indeed still a liberal place, but the liberal community has become reactionary, relying on gross abuses of the law to take a stand against corporatism and encourage community life.

LOCAL STUFF

There are a number of organizations, collectives, co-ops, etc in Ann Arbor now that are looking to counter the effects of consumerism; some of these are explicitly dedicated to community-building and offer free classes and opportunities for cooperative work. Others offer alternatives to ethically compromised agribusiness, sweatshop-reliant retail chains, and other non-sustainable businesses.

COMMUNITY GROUPS

Ann Arbor's most promising recent development has been the growth of a handful of different groups looking to spread knowledge and share skills free of charge to all members of the community. Most are consciously opposed to commercial models and look to foster community by teaching skills

The Ann Arbor Free Skool: relatively new, growing organization dedicated to offering free classes and workshops on a variety of DIY skills from beer-brewing to bee-keeping to furniture-building to Tai Chi to wilderness survival. They also throw really fun 'DIY Fests' every month or two with food, bands, art projects, and workshops. Everything is free, and they're always looking for more people to get involved. Check 'em out on Facebook for a calendar, upcoming events, or to get involved.

Common Cycle: free bike collective along the lines of Detroit's The Hub or Chicago's Recyclery. Show up with a broken or damaged bike, and they supply tools, know-how, and even (some) parts to fix it up and get it back on the road. They hope to have a permanent location soon and host classes and bike-builds in addition to their usual repair services. Currently held on Sundays from 10-3 at the Kerrytown Artisan Market, 407 North 5th Ave. Look for their banner and cart. Commoncycle.org

All Hands Active! (AHA): a group of hackers, electronics wizards, and 'makers' who build everything from robots to Halloween costumes. They do collaborative projects but also host 'build nights' in which anyone

can come and work on individual projects. They also offer classes and workshops on different subjects. Currently meeting Thursdays from 7:30p 'til you're tired of making at Ann Arbor's underground gamers' den, Digital Ops (525 E Liberty). Allhandsactive.com

Ann Arbor Food Not Bombs!: Food Not Bombs! is a revolutionary activist organization dedicated to ending poverty, war, and imperialism worldwide. First started in Massachusetts in 1980, Food Not Bombs! has spread to hundreds of cities across the Americas, Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia and the Middle East. They protest governments that allow the continuation of hunger and poverty while spending billions every year on weapons and war. Food Not Bombs! shares free vegetarian and vegan meals to advocate democratic and decentralized access to food in the community. Food comes from donations from local gardeners, supermarkets, bakeries, restaurants, farmers and wasted food that is reclaimed. Ann Arbor Food Not Bombs! serves weekly meals at Liberty Plaza, Sundays from 6 to 8. To get involved, contact

aafoodnotbombs@gmail.com or visit the Ann Arbor Food Not Bombs! facebook page.



STUDENT GROUPS

There are a ton of on-campus groups for all sorts of niches, and this list is not only woefully incomplete but also fairly random. University groups tend to be less grass-roots than non-university-affiliated ones, but the point is to be aware of the variety of groups--and to be careful in researching which groups you want to be a part of. Also don't hesitate to shop around; be confident that you'll eventually figure out how to apply your energies and talents to causes that fit them.

SOLE: Dedicated activist group working for labor rights; connected with other groups and chapters at other universities, and working in solidarity with the labor groups whose causes they publicize; see the article on sweatshops above for information on some of their work

Student Sustainability Initiative: Blanket organization encompassing a number of environmental causes and sub-groups, from ride-sharing on campus to education about local agriculture; with a group that size, be careful to separate the sustainability from the green-washing, but they're active and contain many options

The F-Word: Feminist organization dedicated to dispersing the ideals of women's equality throughout campus

Global Zero: Group looking to eliminate nuclear weapons world-wide

Union of Progressive Zionists: Advocates and works towards a peaceful two state solution in the Middle East

Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice: Collaboration between various non-profit community organizations promoting environmental and anti-war causes, as well as smaller scale, community-based initiatives; urges both people of faith and secular people of conscience to act on their moral and social values

Good' businesses

One of the best things about Ann Arbor is that it is relatively easy to support 'good' businesses (and even 'good' chain stores—which do exist!). There are local, sustainable options for everything from where you get your pizza to where you get your nails done to where you buy the seeds for your garden. This guide will not list many of them—you can find them yourself, just ask around!—but we would like to take a moment to remind you of the importance of supporting them. Corporate practices employ unethical, unsustainable practices ubiquitously to produce cheap and convenient products, but corporations *will* listen if we stop buying their products and demand more ethical and sustainable production practices. Putting pressure on companies due to lost revenue or bad p.r. can immediately prevent everything from the destruction of endangered habitats in India to the murder of organizers in Honduras (see the above article on sweatshops). The battles against some of the worst injustices in the nation and world today can be fought just by buying one reasonable, sustainable product instead of a compromised one. And also remember that small, local businesses alone can offer innovative, alternative models of production and show new ways of producing food, clothes, etc that have less damaging effects on the

community and beyond.

All in all, supporting 'good' business may not be as sexy as a revolution but it could also, conceivably, have as big of an impact.

With that in mind, here are a few businesses—some innovative, some old as the hills—that offer alternative models to the dominant corporate ones.

THRIFT STORES

We've all been in them but may forget that they're essentially turning garbage into meals for homeless people, school supplies for kids, etc. In offering their goods at greatly discounted rates, they also supply clothes and household products to low-income families who would otherwise struggle to afford them. Here are the local ones:

Salvation Army, 1621 S State St:

A behemoth of a store, frequently patronized by frat kids 'slumming' it but also essential for lower-income families on the south side of town. Not an easy store to navigate—clothes aren't arranged by size and there's virtually no in-store help—but it's by far the biggest thrift store in the area as well as the closest one to campus. Also on the cheaper end of thrift stores. (Note: the Salvation Army itself is a religious organization that uses a strange combination of Bible-based Protestantism and military jargon to 'reform' homeless people and drug addicts who come to their shelters. It's not coercive, though, and does indeed help lots of homeless people; many communities would be much worse off without their help.)

PTO, 2280 South Industrial Highway:

Smaller store that only puts out higher-end goods (i.e. no double-XL hoodies with mustard stains on the wrists). Small enough that you can actually see their whole selection in a fifteen-minute browse. Much less of a campus crowd here, though it's only a few blocks from the Salvation Army. Proceeds go to the Parent-Teacher Organization of Ann Arbor, all of which goes to AA public schools.

Value World, 345 North Maple Road:

Big, well-stocked store, mostly clothes. Privately run, though I think they get most of their clothes from charity organizations.

Kiwanis, 200 S 1st St:

Only open on Saturday mornings. Fun, chaotic place to go to, with a great selection and good bargains. But again: **ONLY OPEN ON SATURDAY MORNINGS**. Run by the local chapter of Kiwanis, a volunteer organization that supports and funds various charities

ReUse Center, 2420 South Industrial Highway: For larger items and household things like doors, pipes, roofing, etc. Also has a large selection of books, electronics, and kitchen stuff. Run by the city, it's become relatively expensive but still quite a discount from the hardware store. For home repair supplies, check out the Habitat for Humanity ReStore, 170 Aprill Drive (a few miles west of town).

FOOD/GROCERIES:

Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA):

Ann Arbor's proximity to good ol' Midwestern farmland means that it provides a number of CSA opportunities. CSAs are farms supported by members of the community (thus the name!), who buy a share in the farm and receive a portion of its produce in exchange. Essentially a farm co-op. Some of them require that members or share-holders (or simply sharers) work on the farms, though others don't ask for anything more than a check. There are a few year-round and winter-time CSAs in the area but most go from approximately May to November. Here are a few, but there are more out there that offer different goods and different prices:

-Community Farm of Ann Arbor, <http://www.communityfarmofaa.org>

-Tantre Farm <http://www.tantrefarm.com>

-Garden Works <http://www.realtimefarms.com/farm/garden-works>

In addition, there are a number of community gardens that produce food for blocks or neighborhoods. (Note: for those interested in community agriculture, a trip to Detroit is essential. Because of large amount of vacant land in Detroit, the city has become a beacon of urban agriculture, with a number of small farms within the city limits offering fresh healthy produce to various neighborhoods which otherwise would have mostly corner stores and fast food chains as options for food. There are also a number of places working to educate Detroit residents to grow their own food in vacant areas around the city. Earthworks Urban Farm is a good place to start)

Farmer's Market, 315 Detroit St (at 5th Ave and Kingsley):

Only open Saturdays and Wednesdays from 7a-3p. Produce and other goods from local farms. Some of it is expensive, but you can always find

a deal, and you can ask the farmers all about where it's from and how they produced it. Also features some small businesses doing innovative things with local food. (Note that the same space is used for other markets other days of the week)

The People's Food Co-op (PFC), 216 N Fourth Ave:

Initially started as a barebones co-op designed to bring produce to students and lower-class families, the PFC is now a large and attractive store. Unfortunately, it's also an expensive place that makes most of its money selling corporate organic products (Morning Star, Stonyfield, etc—all owned (though not necessarily run) by massive food companies like Danon and Coke). Though technically a co-op, paying for their large facility in prime Ann Arbor real estate compromises their ability to offer affordable fresh products to the community. It's by all means better than having a Kroger at the same location, and most of the store's products are miles better than the average big grocery store. Students can get tasty organic lunch for three or four bucks at the food bar (or more likely at the pre-packed fridge case), and it's vegetarian and vegan friendly. Maybe a disappointment to those wanting a real grass roots co-op, but it's open pretty late and you can trust most of their products.

MEDIA

Local radio stations WCBN (88.3) and WEMU (89.1) are both community-run, non-commercial stations whose DJs and programmers play what they want to play. 'EMU is more conservative, supplying the area with jazz, blues, and roots programs most nights of the week, and also running the more popular NPR shows (This American Life, Wait Wait!, etc) during the weekends and some days. 'CBN is run mostly by students, with some shows here and there run by various non-university locals, and the programming is generally more experimental, cutting edge, etc (though not always—you'll still run into a sports talk show or an hour block of classic rock here and there). I'm guessing 90% of music lovers in town list CBN as their favorite station—and you're guaranteed never to hear an ad for Red Bull, Monster, or Amp'd on it.

There are also a handful of small, locally run record stores and bookstores. Most are staffed by people who know what's up and can turn you on to stuff that'll get you going. Some of the good ones are:
Wazoo records: 336 1/2 S. State, above Bivouac. Great staff, used and new CDs and some records
Underground Sounds: 255 East Liberty St. Knowledgeable and friendly staff.
Encore Recordings: 417 East Liberty St. Mostly used records and CDs;

best in town for vintage LPs

Dawn Treader: 514 East Liberty St. Prototypical used bookstore with a good selection, though not always the cheapest source of books
David's Books: 516 East William: Smaller and generally a little cheaper than Dawn Treader
Cross St Books: 523 W Cross St Ypsilanti: chaotic bookstore staffed exclusively by its eccentric owner; best-quality selection in the area
Nicola's Books: 2513 Jackson Ave. Not close to downtown, but the only place for new books in town where the staff actually seems to enjoy reading and knows anything about books (and not just Tom Clancy); your other options are Border's and Barnes and Noble

Note on shows: more well-known indie touring acts come to the Blind Pig, the Elbo Room in Ypsi, and the Majestic/Magic Stick in Detroit. More cutting-edge, DIY-minded local and touring acts tend to play at one of a handful of lesser-known venues. Keep your eyes peeled for shows at Far House, Arbor Vitae, and the Yellow Barn.

[1] A decade-long neighborhood rights campaign against the plans of development company, Three Oaks, to build a series of high rise condos along N Main St by Felch St has, along with the help of the foreclosure crisis, temporarily succeeded.

[2] These complexes are on all sides of the city. There are large complexes along Packard and Stone School on the south and southeast edges of town, to the north along Pontiac Trail and Nixon Rd, etc.





“We can continue to build public opinion until it becomes a deafening roar... Our strategy should be not only to confront empire, but ...to deprive it of oxygen. To shame it. To mock it. With our art, our music, our music, our literature, our stubbornness, our joy, our brilliance, our sheer relentlessness... The corporate revolution will collapse if we refuse to buy what they are selling -- ... their notion of inevitability. Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing.”

--Arundhati Roy