

CULTURE OF RESISTANCE

You may have had this experience like many have when talking about the state of the world. Whenever the topic of making real social change or revolution comes up a cynic claims in who wants a positive social change , saying talk is cheap, action is all that matters, all radicals do is play songs about revolution without doing it and making murals about ending war instead of really stopping it. In a way they're right. The obstacles to anarchy, a society based on freedom solidarity human decency, have not been destroyed and the path to unfettered human potential hasn't been opened. At the same time they overlook highly relevant actions that make revolutionary change possible. Actions such as building a culture of rebellion by creating music and art that are promoting free thought, mutual respect, sincerity, solidarity and disrespect for all authority and the powers that be.

Take for example the story of Joe Hill the IWW labor organizer singer songwriter

The IWW, which advocated a new economic order featuring "one big union" of workers controlling the means of production, Hill began organizing for the IWW and he used his music to strike a chord with a forgotten segment of American society. He would slip in a couple of hard facts in with a good tune and people would get it more easily seeing as many weren't into or able to read. Joe Hill observed, "A pamphlet, no matter how good, is never read more than once," Hill is reported to have once written to a friend, "But a song is learned by the heart and repeated over and over."

That quote still rings true today, where revolutionaries and activists are inspired to by rebel music art and poetry of the past and present more than the best pamphlets or non fiction.

My first encounter with counter culture specifically punk rock was listening to music from the 70s and 80s like the Dead Kennedys, the Clash, bad brains, Bad Religion, the Addicts, the Casualties etc. music that was made before I was born. The music introduced me to radical ideas, but experience of being involved in a living breathing counter culture is what brought those ideas to life. So many communities working together in an authentic and real way. The culture that puts on shows puts on food not bombs stands against police brutality creates a sense of joyous community in revolt.

A lot of how music helps is by allowing free expression and letting loose all those repressed feelings in a mostly support the community. The first show I went to was a metal show Forward Trauma, it was unadulterated rage hate and joy in consensual violence with a general disrespect for usual repressive social rules. It wasn't the same as the punk shows I went to later, the mosh pit was not an option it was the first time I broke my nose and I was fully prepared for it. There were people hanging from hooks on the ceiling it was really different experience than I was used to.

Also it's not just punk rock it's hip hop some gangster rap, Ska, metal, blue grass, funk, reggae, and country and everything in between those are mediums where ideas of change and practicing what you preach really comes through.

How your probably wondering "what about visual art?" well posters put out by the "Bee line Collective, those amazing flyers and posters you see around town like wood block poster for the second anarchist book fair help build a revolutionary culture. Writing is definitely a creative mode of expression, the words you choose, the style created by the way words are put together and presented are all important elements for expressing ideas. consider self published Zines or hand made books or this news paper, how the words are presented all impact how the ideas are taken in. Grimethinc is an a successful publishing group that wrote the famous book, Days of Wretchedness of Love, Grimethinc for beginners. It's far reaching success in inspiring so many to become anarchists is firmly rooted in the premise that you can't have a real revolution if people can't dance to it.

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Is that the media (ie Theates Greenson of the Times Standard who was in Blue Lake) will parrot, stating as fact, the police story. That's what the media ALWAYS does. Now, we know the police story will be told in defense of the cops who murdered Robert. (Redwood Curtain CopWatch, Indymedia) That is exactly what happened. The cops killed another person and again the status quo media hurried to cover their tracks: "According to the release, the handle of the rake broke off during the assault, and officers arrived to find the assault victim and the suspect struggling over the rake handle. When deputies pulled up in their patrol car, Knight said, the victim let go of the rake and ran away from the suspect. According to the press release, the suspect then turned his attention to the officer's, and allegedly began advancing on them with the rake handle, which looked like a three-foot metal pipe. The suspect, who was in close proximity to the officers, then allegedly raised the pole into striking position and came at the officers, causing them to draw their weapons, according to the release." (Times Standard, August 8, 2010)

This is the same line the police have always given for shooting, beating, burning, and killing people in our community. Either way you slice it, it is another killing of a member of our community who was cared for and that didn't need to die. We all know this didn't have to happen, the police need to stop killing! This makes many wonder, why didn't the use their tasers? if they are so murderous and unjust, do we need the police? Could we have a world without police, where public safety is dictated by the community, not men in uniform??

The police don't typically use tasers instead of guns. Instead, they use them when no force would otherwise have been used. The single most common application of the taser's 50,000 volts is not in defense against a violent attack but simply to gain a person's compliance. The police use the taser quite liberally to shock people who pose no threat to them but who are not doing what they're told.

According to Charles Garth (Robert's father), when he spoke with district attorney Paul Gallegos, Gallegos said "The police have the right to use deadly force. They don't have to use minimal force." He further stated that Robert was a homicide Paul Gallegos is a coward because he won't prosecute the Sheriff's who murdered Robert Garth.

A witness at the scene of the crime saw the police put a sheet over Robert while knowing full well he was still alive. The police also joked and laughed in the presence of Robert's family, refusing Robert medical attention.

Then of course it is time to consider a world without police a real possibility, and an absolute necessity, says Portland's Kristian Williams, author of Our Enemies in Blue: Police and Power in America. "It's not personal, it's institutional," according to Williams who has done his homework working as a member of Rose City Copwatch and writing extensively on the subject of police power in his two books: Our Enemies in Blue: Police and Power in America and American Methods: Culture and the Logic of Domination.

"We haven't always had this [police] institution," Williams said. "The institution of the police is really only a couple hundred years old, and if we're willing to accept the idea that social changes produced this new institution, we should at least have an open mind that further social change could eliminate it."

Our Enemies in Blue traces the history of policing from the slave patrols of the colonial era to the contemporary age of militarization and the war on terrorism. Williams looks at the institution's role in preserving racial and economic inequality, and suppressing social change. "We're very much encouraged to think of the police in terms of what they do - they fight crime, defend public safety, direct traffic at accidents," Williams said. "Those are actually secondary functions. The guiding force of the institution is the need to maintain the distribution of power in roughly the configuration that it is: keeping the rich well off and the poor marginalized and preserving the monopoly that white people exercise on all of the benefits of society. And when those things conflict either with public safety or the law, public safety or the law falls to the side. The preservation of class and race hierarchies are a far better predictor of what police are going to do." (Joanne Zuh, Street Roots)

Williams analysis appears painfully true when you look at the case of the Garth family and their property. See How! After killing Robert Garth, now Gallegos is charging Charles Garth, a 25 year old, with felony charges of "Sale and/or Transportation of (13.3 ounces of) Marijuana." This is three days after sheriff's gunned down his son. It is like he is kicking Charles while he is down.