

On May Day, Bloomington police descended on a group of occupiers who'd set up a tent for the day's activities. Officers blockaded the street so there would be no additional witnesses as they dragged a woman out of the tent, slashed its ropes, and surrounded the organizers with a pepper-ball gun drawn.

# Would you

Three weeks prior, when dozens of students and Bloomington residents disrupted a pro-slavery, anti-gay speaker, police responded by arbitrarily targeting and arresting a single demonstrator at the behest of the event's emcee.

# rather die

On April 9, IUPD arrested a student at gunpoint on the accusation that he'd hung an anti-coal banner.

# from a single

In January two protesters were charged with serious misdemeanors for allegedly throwing water balloons at anti-choice picketers outside Planned Parenthood.

# blow to the

After a joyous anti-prison demonstration on New Year's Eve, police targeted and arrested three people, one of whom is still facing serious felony charges.

# head or 1,000

The police and the Herald Times portray all these events as isolated, but we know better.

# paper-cuts?

Depicted as irrational crimes by the cops and the media, these reflect the stirrings of a budding network of social struggles in Bloomington.

Rather than confront this new movement head-on, city managers hope to exhaust it through a strategy of attrition. They hope to quietly suffocate dissent in our community by limiting our use of public space, burying us in tedious legal cases, and through violence or the threat of violence.

There is an illusion that the Bloomington Police are 'more friendly' or reasonable than their counterparts in other cities. However, just as the police in Oakland and St. Louis have viciously beaten and teargassed demonstrators, the BPD also has blood on its hands. The appearance of the pepper-ball gun on May Day represents a first slip of the democratic mask worn by the BPD, but many around Bloomington have already experienced the violence underlying "soft" policing strategies. Over the past few months, police have repeatedly and violently targeted mentally ill people on the street, while we also remember how recently the BPD shot a 16-year old and guards in the county jail tasered an inmate to death. This in the name of keeping Bloomington "safe and civil."

Everywhere the job of cops is the same, and the choice to use "soft" or "hard" policing methods is simply a question of strategy. Soft policing functions as a racial divide and conquer game in which one sector of the population is spared intense police violence so as to conceal the violence inflicted on other sectors. To diffuse the resistance movement in our community, the BPD would rather intimidate and isolate us than engage in open conflict. Thus, they pluck one or two demonstrators from a crowd instead of arresting the whole bunch, or brandish "less-lethal" weapons to promise bodily pain if we should get too out of hand.

Not only are each of the above cases an emotional and financial burden for those facing charges, but with each successive arrest, repression is normalized and more friction is placed on the forward motion of liberatory projects. Immediate, vocal, and abundant support — both emotional and legal— is necessary for all those who are and will continue to face charges, no matter how small. Daily, repression reminds us of the importance of active solidarity, but it also teaches us that for our movements to grow, they must also learn to defend themselves.

We can no longer tolerate these threats to our bodies and the bodies of our comrades. Each attack by police that passes unchallenged is a step toward more total repression- toward a culture where police violence is normalized and dissent appears impossible. **Against repression, solidarity is our weapon.**

# Neither. We choose to live.