The Anarchy Police

Militant Anti-Fascism as Alternative Policing Practice

Stanislav Vysotsky

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Abstract

Anarchist criminology has produced a strong critique of the system of criminal law, but has only recently started to theorize practical alternatives. The alternatives that it offers have been largely rooted in pacifism through the practice of restorative justice and deescalation of conflict. These models are generally effective so long as the individuals involved are committed to the process being applied. Ethnographic study of the anti-fascist movement in the United States demonstrates a potential model of anarchist response to threats of community and public safety in prefigurative subcultural spaces. The confrontational and violent tactics employed by militant anti-fascists serve as a form of policing based on anarchist principles of spontaneity, direct democracy, and direct action; and can serve as a starting point for theorizing proactive anarchist actions against individuals who threaten public safety and order.

Introduction

Anarchist criminology has traditionally advocated alternatives rooted in pacifist visions of restorative justice to existing systems of criminal justice. These restorative practices often ''[aim] at the good of all, freedom and justice for all, solidarity and love among the people'' (Malatesta N.d.). Restorative justice methods, however, are often only applied after crimes—and other violations of social and community norms—have occurred in order to bring a sense of peace and justice to the aggrieved, the community, and the perpetrator. In this respect, restorative justice presents only part of the anarchist answer to the question of how to address crime without reliance on the system of criminal law. Anarchism has produced very few models for how to prevent or address crime when it is occurring because such responses often involve the exertion of force or power that is antithetical to anarchist principles. Yet anarchism is also driven by a belief in direct action and developing prefigurative models of future institutions in a pre-revolutionary society. Militant opposition to fascist organizing may serve as a model for proactive and preventative anarchist responses to threats of social order and safety.

Direct, often violent, opposition to the fascist movement presents a unique challenge to criminologists. Often such opposition is understood in popular discourse as ''gang violence'' which places it under the purview of the state. For mainstream criminology, the understanding of such actions becomes similar to that of any other form of gang activity, often because the violence takes place within and between subcultures in social spaces. Criminologists and criminal justice professionals see a violent clash involving members of Punk and/or Skinhead subcultures as a product of internal conflicts over subcultural dominance and control of social space (Blazak 2001). Such actions may also be interpreted as acts of vigilantism because they involve the extra-legal use of violence in order to admittedly maintain the social order of the subculture within which these conflicts take place.[1] The research presented in this article will demonstrate that such ac-

[1] On the surface, the practices described above would seem to meet Johnston's (1996) criminological criteria for vigilantism—planning, premeditation, and organization; private voluntary agency; autonomous citizenship; the use or threatened use of force; reaction to crime and social deviance; and personal and collective security. Yet, it is the ideological character of anti-fascism that transforms it into a prefigurative practice rather than an act of vigilantism. The central theme of this article is that anti-fascist militancy is in itself a political act. By rejecting the legitimacy of police and existing law, anti-fascists in effect become public agents acting in the interest of a population that intentionally posits itself outside of the control of official avenues of legal redress. Furthermore, militant anti-fascism

tions are in fact an attempt to maintain order within the subculture and its social spaces, as well as the safety of participants. The militant approach to anti-fascism presents a unique form of anarchist praxis and makes a distinct contribution to anarchist criminology by incorporating a form of direct action against a collective threat represented by individual fascists. By directly acting against fascists, militant anti-fascists express the anarchist values of direct action and non-state action. In this sense, militant anti-fascist violence among subcultural participants acts as a form of anarchist policing of the prefigurative spaces that these subcultures represent because it (1) reflects a disdain for civil society and the state; (2) involves direct action; and (3) presents an alternative to state action. This anarchist, direct action approach also represents a crucial contribution to the field of critical criminology because it embodies a radical, pro-active approach to resolving issues of social order within subcultural communities that often wish to remain outside of both the purview and restrictions of the law and the state. Such practices may serve as a starting point for a broader discussion regarding alternative practices to current modes of policing.

This article develops this anarchist approach to ''policing'' by first outlining the basic principles of anarchism and its understanding of the practices of social control. Then, the case examples are contextualized through a discussion of the practices of contemporary fascism and anti-fascism as they are manifest in subcultural participation in the Punk scene. Such activity is linked to anarchist practice by understanding it as a form of ''prefigurative'' political practice typical of new social movements (see Polletta 1999). After establishing the concepts used to understand militant anti-fascism as a form of anarchist praxis, I briefly outline the process of data collection followed by case examples of anti-fascist actions as forms of policing action. The article concludes by discussing the processes that ground militant anti-fascist practices as forms of anarchist social control as described above.

Anarchism and Anarchist Criminology

Anarchism developed as a distinct strand of socialism in the nineteenth century (Guerin 1970). Contemporary anarchism has splintered into a diversity of branches that are based on a variety of historical circumstances and philosophical influences. Nonetheless, the core of the theory has not changed since its early theoretical articulations:

> ANARCHISM…, the name given to a principle or theory of life and conduct under which society is conceived without government — harmony in such a society being obtained, not by submission to law, or by obedience to any authority, but by free agreements concluded between the various groups, territorial and professional, freely constituted for the sake of production and consumption, as also for the satisfaction of the infinite variety of needs and aspirations of a civilized being. In a society developed on these lines, the voluntary associations which already now begin to cover

is responding directly to political rather than normative threat posed by fascists (Vysotsky 2013). Fascist participation in subcultures, and by extension public life, is viewed as threatening not because it is a stigmatized social identity that reflects non-normative values (Simi and Futrell 2009), but due to the ideological position it represents. Fascists actively participate in subcultures as a means of recruitment to their ideological position (Blazak 2001). It is therefore incumbent upon other subculturalists to develop solutions to the threat posed by fascists in a manner that is consistent with their anarchist or anti-authoritarian ideological position. As such the conflict between fascists and anti-fascists is a political, rather than normative or vigilante, struggle.

> all the fields of human activity would take a still greater extension so as to substitute themselves for the state in all its functions. They would represent an interwoven network, composed of an infinite variety of groups and federations of all sizes and degrees, local, regional, national and international temporary or more or less permanent — for all possible purposes: production, consumption and exchange, communications, sanitary arrangements, education, mutual protection, defence of the territory, and so on; and, on the other side, for the satisfaction of an ever-increasing number of scientific, artistic, literary and sociable needs. Moreover, such a society would represent nothing immutable. On the contrary — as is seen in organic life at large — harmony would (it is contended) result from an ever-changing adjustment and readjustment of equilibrium between the multitudes of forces and influences, and this adjustment would be the easier to obtain as none of the forces would enjoy a special protection from the state (Kropotkin [1910] 2001).

Kropotkin's description summarizes the key principles of anarchism—direct opposition to the state and other formal structures of authority, an opposition to capitalism and the free-market system, and a belief that the masses of people can manage their own affairs if given the freedom and opportunity (Guerin 1970; Kropotkin [1910] 2001). Anarchists believe that the social changes necessary for their vision of society to come to fruition will be achieved through revolution because those who hold power will not relinquish it voluntarily. Anarchist praxis focuses on working to build models of social organization within the framework of the existing society and taking direct action against the state and other forms of authoritarianism (Avrich 1988; Ferrell 2001; Graeber 2002; Guerin 1970).

The anarchist opposition to the state comes from a belief that the state is tyrannical and authoritarian. As evidence, anarchists present a litany of the state's abuses:

> To be governed is to be watched over, inspected, spied on, directed, legislated, regimented, closed in, indoctrinated, preached at, con-trolled, assessed, evaluated, censored, commanded; all by creatures that have neither the right, nor wisdom, nor virtue.... To be governed means that at every move, operation, or transaction one is noted, registered, entered in a census, taxed, stamped, priced, assessed, patented, licensed, authorized, recommended, admonished, prevented, reformed, set right, corrected. Government means to be subjected to tribute, trained, ransomed, exploited, monopolized, extorted, pressured, mystified, robbed; all in the name of public utility and the general good. Then, at the first sign of resistance or word of complaint, one is repressed, fined, despised, vexed, pursued, hustled, beaten up, garroted, imprisoned, shot, machine-gunned, judged, sentenced, deported, sacrificed, sold, betrayed, and to cap it all, ridiculed, mocked, outraged, and dishonored. That is government, that is its justice and its morality! (Proudhon quoted in Guerin 1970: 15–16)

For anarchists, the state, no matter how liberal or democratic, can never act in the interests of the population. Daniel Guerin (1970) describes the anarchist position on democracy as follows:

> The people were declared sovereign by a ''trick'' of our forefathers... The people rule but do not govern, and delegate their sovereignty through the periodic exercise of universal suffrage, abdicating their power anew every three or five years. The

> dynasts have been driven from the throne but the royal prerogative has been preserved intact. In the hands of a people whose education has been willfully neglected the ballot is a cunning swindle benefitting only the united barons of industry, trade, and property (17).

The state is seen as truly representing the interests of the powerful classes, or in a worst-case scenario, the interests simply of the people who comprise the organs of the state. Any affirmation of the state effectively takes control away from the individual and places it in the hands of an institution more powerful than the self. In the anarchist analysis, the state not only has a monopoly on the legitimate use of force, but ultimately a monopoly on all behavior within its boundaries and will gladly repress and destroy any activity that it finds threatening.

Because anarchists believe that the state serves only the interests of those who hold power economically, politically, and socially, they seek to create models of an anarchist society within the framework of the existing system. In this sense, anarchist ideology is predicated on constructing a prefigurative society to model the future (Avrich 1988; Guerin 1970). By taking ''direct action'' in relation to their lives, anarchists simultaneously reject the power of the state and other structures of power. Direct action becomes a form of praxis by applying anarchist principles in the here-and-now rather than engaging in slow processes of reform which may or may not bring about the change that they desire. Anarchists have, therefore, been involved in social movements that are countercultural in their orientation or place a strong emphasis on prefigurative politics (Ferrell 2001). Unfortunately, they are also seen as incapable of making compromises because their ideology has strict prohibitions against working within existing institutions, especially with the state. The focus on prefigurative action in anarchist ideology has developed into a preference for tactics that involve directly attacking the targets of their opposition. Taking direct action often places anarchists at odds with more moderate activists and with agents of the state (Ferrell 2001; Graeber 2002).

The direct action of anarchist praxis often focuses on process rather than a predeter-mined outcome or result. Anarchist philosophy views formal restrictions of bureaucracy, law, or religion as inherently oppressive to the expression of the individual (Ferrell 2001; Guerin 1970). This is not to say that anarchists envision a world of Hobbesian chaos in place of the ''rule of law'' established by the state and carried out by its agents (read: police). The anarchist vision of a society free of government and law ensures peace and social order by prioritizing core concepts of justice, fairness, and equality (Berkman [1929] 2003; Ferrell 1998; Pepinsky 1978; Tifft 1979). Such concepts reinforce the anarchist belief that the response to violence and other threats to social order cannot be developed in a universal manner before such threats occur. Instead, they posit that responses must occur after the violation and in keeping with the needs of all parties involved—victims, perpetrators, and the community at large (Brisman 2011; Ferrell 1998; Sullivan and Tifft 2001; Tifft 1979). In this sense, anarchists are more averse to the formal structures of law and the state than informal codes of conduct or procedures necessary to maintain the safety

of a community and its members.[2] Such principles and practices, therefore, serve as the basis for the development of an anarchist criminology.

Anarchist ideology produces a unique perspective within the field of criminology. Because anarchism is predicated on the illegitimacy of the state and its actions, it informs a criminology that is fundamentally critical of the actions of the state as it attempts to maintain social order. Yet anarchist criminologists are not content merely with challenging state practices of control and posit alternative forms of social organization as the solution to the problems presented in their critique (Ferrell 1998). Anarchist criminologists present three key criticisms of state action in the interest of crime prevention and control: (1) the notion that the state has legitimate power over the lives of individuals; (2) the practices of construction and reinforcement of criminality through the creation and repression of criminal acts and identities; and (3) the criminal justice actions of the state perpetuate its legitimacy while being ineffective at actually preventing anti-social crime.

As noted above, the state has inordinate power over the life of every individual that is governed by it. This power is fully witnessed when an individual violates codified law. Tifft (1979) notes that the state has exclusive power to ''appropriate'' the life and property of any individual who falls under its jurisdiction. When an individual violates the law, this appropriation often takes the form of imprisonment or, in extreme cases, death. In all cases, the state takes control of the life of the individual for its own ends. Even practices of victim restitution serve as a form of appropriation because ''when we compensate a 'victim' of an appropriation by appropriating an 'offender's' resource, we merely increase the incidence of appropriation'' (Tifft 1979: 394). Such acts serve only to legitimize the appropriations enacted by the state, and therefore, its control over the individual.

At least since the days of Durkheim ([1895] 1999), criminologists have understood crime as a construction of a particular society. Anarchists challenge the very notion that this practice is legitimate and necessary. By defining criminal and non-criminal alike, the state creates a ''downward spiral of crime, criminalization, and inhumanity'' (Ferrell 1998: 10). Those who have the misfortune of being criminalized are alienated from the ''non-criminal'' population and become limited in terms of personal and professional development, which results in further crime and criminalization. Those who are not criminalized respond with fear and a greater demand for state intervention, thereby strengthening the power and control of the state and its estrangement from others (Ferrell 1998). The clear beneficiary of such a dynamic is the state, which grows stronger in light of public demands for protection and ever increasing rates of crime.

As the state grows more powerful in response to demand for ''crime control,'' a vast bureaucratic structure is developed that further controls the daily lives of individuals through increasing surveillance and regulation. This structure is largely ineffective at reducing crime and acts of criminality, however. The growth of state bureaucracy in the control of crime is evident in the ever-increasing rates of criminal justice careers, institutions (such as prisons), and individuals under the control of the criminal justice system (Pepinsky 1978). The growing bureaucracy is both the product and the origin of ''a proliferation of legal controls'' that regulate and criminalize almost every aspect of everyday life (Ferrell 1998: 10; Tifft and Sullivan 1980). In the end, the

[2] This vision of informal and spontaneous processes of dispute resolution is consistent with anthropological observations of similar practices in cross-cultural contexts. Informal and extra-legal process of dispute resolution are often invoked in place of formal legal structures because the former are viewed as authen-tically indigenous and designed to maintain harmony in the community as opposed to the latter, which are externally imposed and threaten community autonomy and values (see Barclay 1990; Engel 1984; Moore 1989; Nader 1989; Ruffini 1978).

state can never achieve its stated goals of crime prevention and control because its actions are ultimately contradictory and self-defeating. ''The rule of criminal law,'' as enacted by the state, requires ''swiftness, sureness, and severity.'' As the state acts to maximize one or two of these principles, however, it violates another (Pepinsky 1978: 317). If the state acts quickly (swiftness), then it is likely to violate due process or condemn an innocent person, violating the principle of sureness, and so on with the remaining principles. In the end, the state simply grows larger and more powerful without effectively controlling ''crime.''

While anarchists have been long on critique of the state and its role in the construction and control of crime, there has been little theoretical or practical development of alternatives to existing models criminal justice. The notable exception to this claim has been a theoretical focus on restorative justice as an anarchist practice of resolution to criminal violations (Brisman 2011; Pepinsky and Quinney 1991; Sullivan and Tifft 2001; Tifft and Sullivan 1980). The anarchist criminological vision of restorative justice involves a needs-based approach to resolving the conflict that stems from harms caused by criminal activity. This approach involves the meeting of needs of all parties involved—those being harmed, those who have harmed, and the community as a whole. The restorative justice process is designed to humanize the victims and perpetrators of crime and come to a resolution that meets the needs of all parties involved. It rejects a system of justice that is predicated on punishment and seeks to build strong interpersonal relationships fundamental to a non-hierarchical society. Restorative justice also requires the community to be involved in the process and to rebuild in the wake of the harm that initiated it. This is a fundamentally anarchist approach because it critiques the existing form of justice and state action as well as offers a non-state, non-violent solution to the problem of social harm caused by criminal activity. In spite of this, there has been little scholarship on how anarchists can be proactive in dealing with questions of public order and safety as they occur.

The existing work on anarchist attempts at ''policing'' have focused on projects that seek to prevent or de-escalate conflict and confrontation through pacifist practice. Michael Niman (2011) uses the case study of the Rainbow Family gatherings to point out practical models of anarchist pacifist intervention. He explains that the Rainbow gatherings used two distinct methods to ensure the safety of their participants: the physical separation of violent and aggressive attendees into an ''A-Camp'' that is simultaneously a part of and apart from the rainbow gathering, and the Shanti Sena practice of de-escalating aggression in the main camp. As an open event, the Rainbow Family gathering does not turn away any participants. This structure draws individuals who may not be completely committed to the ideology and principles of the Rainbow Family. In order to accommodate these individuals and provide for the safety of the larger group, the Rainbow gatherings create a space where participants can consume alcohol and engage in ''disruptive antics'' in a liminal space between the utopian, pacifist main camp and ''Babylon'' (Niman 2011: 67). This is seen as a uniquely anarchist practice because it allows the participants in A-Camp a freedom to engage in whatever activities they choose, including activities that are not consistent with the Rainbow values and practices, without threatening the integrity of the camp as a whole, while at the same time, affording them the opportunity to participate in the Rainbow experience in the anarchist spirit of openness and direct democracy. In addition to this practice of separation, Rainbow participants engage in a practice of de-escalation that they refer to as Shanti Sena, or ''peace center'' (Niman 2011: 68). This practice involves Rainbow participants surrounding a fellow participant who is becoming agitated and aggressive and encouraging her/him to de-escalate through ''smiles and eye contact, as well as friendly touch, when appropriate'' (Niman 2011: 68).

When such efforts are not enough, participants engage in the practice of creating an ''Om circle'' or ''Omming'' where the aggressive individual is encircled by a group of people who chant ''the harmonic syllable 'Ommmmmm''' (Niman 2011: 68). This practice is generally effective in deescalating aggression and potential violence because the individual being encircled is committed to the pacifist principles of the group.

Ferrell (2011) has presented a similar practice among bicycle activists engaged in Critical Mass protests—a practice known as ''corking,'' whereby participating bicyclists will break off from the main group in order to act as traffic police and to de-escalate potential conflicts with motorists and bystanders. Both of these practices demonstrate anarchist principles of mass, voluntary participation because the individuals intervening are doing so on a voluntary basis and have not been singled out to engage in the activity. The people engaging in such practices are neither elected nor selected and come from the group based on a personal desire to intervene and take action. These people are also given no special power or authority by virtue of their position in the practice of ''Omming'' or ''corking,'' and any participant is free to engage in this action. While these models have been effective at preventing or de-escalating conflict, they do not provide anarchists with a model for voluntary, direct democratic practices to confront violence or threats of violence.

The peaceful tactics described above are effective largely because they are geared toward individuals who share the values of the group or are not directly hostile and ideologically committed to engaging in violence. Anti-fascists, however, are confronting individuals who thrive on violence and adhere to an ideology that valorizes its use against opponents (Berlet 1992; Schlembach 2013; Vysotsky 2013). By challenging fascists through direct confrontation, even violence, militant anti-fascists engage in a form of anarchist praxis. Rather than relying on police or the state to take action in defense of a community against fascist threats, militants organize themselves and their community to take on the threat. This is the result of a direct hostility to police and other agents of the state that stems from a belief that they represent the interests of power rather than the interests of the people. Consistent with anarchist perspectives, militants therefore blatantly display a disrespect for existing laws and legal structures as products of systems of power. Finally, militant activity ultimately represents a form of non-state action against fascists, and models a form of self-defense that is in some ways prefigurative of anarchist community defense.

Fascists and Anti-Fascists

In order to understand militant anti-fascism as a form of anarchist policing practice, one must be familiar with the ideology and praxis of both sides in this conflict. The common conception of fascist movements tends to be foreign and historical—they are often understood to be authoritarian movements that arose in Europe during the 1930s. In popular discourse, the terms ''fascist'' and ''fascism,'' have become overused as pejorative or ad hominem attacks to such an extent that they have little meaning for most audiences. In the United States, it is often more common to refer to the movement that is described in this article as the white supremacist movement. White supremacy, however, represents a racial politics that is only part of a larger ideology of supremacy that is consistent with a contemporary manifestation of fascism.[3] Fascist movements

[3] Fascist ideology places extreme significance on the importance of the nation and national identity. Such hypernationalism is often linked to a strong racial identity and informs the racism of fascist movements (Berlet 1992; Garner

have, nevertheless, prolifer-ated since the end of World War II, developing an evolving ideology and modernized tactics.

Fascist ideology is rooted in a support for traditional hierarchies. Among contemporary fascist movements, this is often publicly visible in their racial politics. Contemporary Western fascists often place great importance on asserting the validity of biological conceptions of race and hierarchical social relationships that stem from them. They are ada-mant white supremacists who call for, at best, a separate (but unequal) white society and, at worst, the full extermination of people who are identified as ''non-white'' (Dobratz and Shanks-Meile 2000; Ezekiel 1995; Kimmel and Ferber 2000; Ridgeway 1995). This position is in many ways consistent with models of classical fascism that construct a mythical community based on racial similarity and valorize the importance of nation as defined by racial identity (Berlet 1992; Garner 1996; Lyons 1995; Passmore 2002). In addition to racial hierarchy, contemporary fascists also believe in fundamental gender hierarchies and differences. One of the key foci of modern fascist propaganda and recruitment is the defense of patriarchal gender relations. Women in the movement are actively encouraged to have children as a duty to the movement. In addition, the maternal identity of white women is also applied to their relationship with men in the movement. White women are encouraged to nurture men in the movement, to provide for their daily well-being, to nurse them back to health when they are hurt in racial attacks, and to support them when they are imprisoned. Race and gender are often conflated to construct white women as victims of sexual predation at the hands of non-whites (Castle 2012; Daniels 1997; Ferber 2000; Kimmel and Ferber 2000). Ironically, women are simultaneously encouraged to take on active roles, including leadership positions, in contemporary fascist movements. Women who have grown up internalizing feminist values of autonomy find space within the movement to express their personal desires for power and control over their lives through expressions of power and control over the lives of racial and ethnic minorities (Blee 2002; Ezekiel 1995). Women who are recruited into the movement are given opportunities to establish themselves as formal and informal leaders through participation in social movement activity. In addition, participation in rallies and engagement in acts of racial violence serve to give female fascists a sense of self-efficacy and empowerment (Blee 2002; Ezekiel 1995). This is especially true for women who participate in racist skinhead groups that celebrate strength and the use of violence as an end in itself (Bowen 2009; Hamm 1993). By appealing to certain feminist sensibilities while retaining a patriarchal ideology, the white supremacist movement can present a safe space for women to simultaneously be strong leaders and continue to hold on to ''traditional'' beliefs about gender identity (Blee 2002; Castle 2012). Beliefs regarding race and gender among contemporary fascists draw direct links to traditional fascist ideology while adapting to contemporary sensibilities regarding gender identity.

Contemporary fascist ideology retains much of traditional fascism's populist critique. Fascist movements construct themselves as ''revolutionary'' movements who oppose existing elites.

1996; Lyons 1995; Passmore 2002). Since the Second World War, however, fascist ideology has spread beyond its European origins to nations where racial identities and dividing lines are not as concrete as those of early twentieth century Europe. Throughout the post-war period, fascist movements developed in Latin America which stressed class fealty and national identity over racial purity (Chomsky and Herman 1979). The spread of fascist ideology through subculture since the 1970s has also generated fascist movements in parts of Asia, most notably in Japan and Malaysia (Chester 2013). In general, it is important to note that fascist movements promote the supremacy of men, heterosexuals, and other ''traditional'' forms of hierarchy in addition to concepts of racial superiority, and that such concepts are not necessarily intrinsically tied to race.

These movements, however, simultaneously scapegoat underprivileged groups such as racial minorities and the poor. Some aspects of both traditional and contemporary fascist movements mimic concerns traditionally associated with the progressive social movements. Fascists have traditionally rallied workers around economic concerns and issues of job security (Berlet 1992; Lyons 1995; Sommer 2008; Schlembach 2013), and the fascist movement has even addressed ecological concerns by articulating an ideological link between ''the land'' and racial identity (Biehl and Staudenmaier 1995; Sommer 2008). The traditional fascist solution for social problems lies in the hands of a strong leader who can replace existing elites, suppress dissent from the underprivileged, and unite the nation (Berlet 1992; Lyons 1995). Contemporary fascist movements often do not adhere to this model of unwavering support for a central state and charismatic leadership, and favor the development of ''stateless… system of ethnically pure villages'' (Sunshine 2008). This ideological tendency in modern fascist movements is also critical of globalization, capitalism, and totalitarian states (such as the old Soviet Union). The recently articulated ''Third Position'' or ''National Anarchist'' ideology, which posits itself as a rejection of left–right dichotomies, promotes ''racist communitarian[ism]'' and racial democracy as a political program (Berlet and Vysotsky 2006; Schlembach 2013; Sunshine 2008). The ideological development of contemporary fascist movements demonstrates a clear engagement with changing social realities and political landscapes.

This ideological shift within the fascist movement is similar to the post-materialist shift to ''New Social Movements'' found on the left in recent decades (Schlembach 2013; Vysotsky and Dentice 2008). Organizing and activism for the fascist movement has therefore also shifted from a traditional political model based on building parties and organizations to one that focuses on subcultural participation in the creation of ''prefigurative space,'' a social movement practice that involves the creation of idealized social relations in social and physical spaces outside of the control of formal authority[4] (Berlet and Vysotsky 2006; Blazak 2001; Futrell and Simi 2004; Schlembach 2013; Vysotsky and Dentice 2008). Since the late 1970s, fascist groups have strongly focused on recruitment through participation in punk and skinhead subcultures, which have significant subcultural overlap,[5] Because participants were seen as particularly open and susceptible

[4] The concept of prefigurative space was developed by Polletta (1999) to describe the practices of left-wing ''new social movements'' that stressed shifts in lifestyle consistent with ideological goals of freedom as well as economic, political, and social equality. Prefigurative spaces allow such practices to occur outside of the control and constraints of conventional society. By giving movement members a space in which to experiment with ideologically oriented social projects, such spaces allow movements to develop a practical operationalization of their ideals. Recent research has identified the use of prefigurative spaces and practices as universal elements of contemporary social movements because they have been adopted by right-wing extremist movements as well in order to reflect their ideological goals of a racially pure society (see Futrell and Simi 2004; Simi and Futrell 2010).

[5] While punk and skinhead nominally represent two distinct subcultures with unique histories and styles, there is significant overlap and crossover to such an extent that skinheads often represent as subset of a broader punk subculture. This is due to the unique cultural history of the skinheads. The subculture originated in the working class communities of the U.K. in the late 1960s as white working class youth adopted the style and musical tastes of Jamaican immigrant ''Rude Boys.'' Early skinheads fused Rude Boy and Mod styles of fitted suits and designer clothing with working class elements such as denim jeans and Doc Marten work boots. The subculture was also defined by an appreciation of Jamaican Ska music. By the 1970s, skinhead subculture demonstrated extreme working class values including a distaste for authority, extreme nationalism, and the exaltation of violence. The taste for Ska music was supplemented by English pub rock which would serve as an inroad to punk subculture. When punk first appeared as a subculture, skinheads were drawn to its raw musical style and violent styles of dancing. During punk's ''first wave,'' English pub rock bands like Slaughter and the Dogs drew skinheads to punk shows, while punk bands like Sham 69 pioneered the ''Oi!'' sub-genre of punk rock often associated with skinhead subculture. In the United

to the ideology of the movement. Participants in these subcultures often experience a sense of exclusion from normative society and social strain, which has been exploited by fascists from inside and outside the subcultures as a means of recruitment (Berlet and Vysotsky 2006; Blazak 2001; Hamm 1993). These efforts, however, were largely unsuccessful because of the left-wing ideological orientation of the subculture, which generated a popular opposition (Goodyer 2003; Moore and Roberts 2009; Roberts and Moore 2009; Sarabia and Shriver 2004; Vysotsky 2013; Wood 1999). This popular opposition has formed a decentralized anti-fascist movement that organizes to confront, often violently, fascist participation in these subcultures as part of a broader struggle for liberation and human dignity.

Subculture, Pre-Figurative Spaces, and Anti-Fascism

As social movements evolve to address post-materialist concerns, they place greater emphasis on identity construction through the creation of culture and participation in subcultures (Buechler 2000; Jasper 1997; Johnston, Laraña and Gusfeld 1994; Kriesi et al. 1995). Similarly, scholars identify subcultural participation as a form of resistance to dominant culture and as political action (e.g. Clarke et al. [1976] 2006; Ferrell 2001; Muggleton 2000). Subcultures, therefore, serve as ideal ''pre-figurative spaces'' (Polletta 1999) wherein social movements may experiment with creating social structures and conditions that reflect their ideals. Punk rock has long been identified as one such subculture because of its radical break from mainstream culture, do-it-yourself ethic, and (often) anarchist ideology.

Punk entered mainstream consciousness in the late 1970s when the Sex Pistols shocked the British press with their disturbing appearance, inappropriate behaviors, foul language, and nihilistic anarchy—in addition to their unprofessional, loud, and distorted music. And while the Sex Pistols fifteen minutes of fame ended in early 1978, the subculture that they were part of flourished because of its resistant qualities and ideological orientation; ''Punk had to die so that it could live'' (Clark 2003: 223). The subculture's value of participation over professionalism and the empty sloganeering of the Pistols' ''anarchy'' inspired a thriving underground which produced and reproduced its own culture and stressed political activism[6] (Clark 2003; Culton and

States, ''hardcore'' punk often took its inspiration from the violence and aggression of skinheads who were a common element of the punk scene. By the late 1970s and early 1980s, skinheads had become a regular feature within punk scenes and co-mingled with punks to such a degree that the former were generally considered a sect of the latter. These interactions also generated conflicts as skinheads often exhibited more conservative attitudes than punks and were more prone to aggressive behavior and extreme violence at punk shows. Schisms in the skinhead scene also informed their acceptance into the punk scene with non-racist and anti-racist skinheads often being more welcome into the more radical punk community than outright neo-Nazis, racists, and more conservative factions—including nominally anti-fascist skinheads who exhibited sexism, homophobia, or extreme nationalism. For detailed histories of skinhead subculture see Marshall (1994), Schweizer and Greutert (2003), and Travis and Hardy (2012).

[6] The authenticity of the political orientation of the ''first wave'' punk bands of the 1976–1978 era is a major controversy in the subculture. In contrast to the ''second wave'' of 1978–1984/86 and subsequent iterations, the radical politics of the first wave were largely stylistic and rhetorical. While Greil Marcus (1990), among others, has made the claim that Sex Pistols music and Malcolm McLaren's fashion are linked to anarchism and inspired by the Situationist International, his assertions have been critiqued as ''attempting to ascribe a conscious political strategy to the Pistols' work where none existed, and… mimicing [sic] Malcolm McLaren's own efforts to invent an 'intentional' history of punk'' (Cross 2010: 3–4). The Sex Pistols' ''anarchy'' was a fervent individualist oppositionalism that is more akin to the philosophy of nihilism than variations on anarchism (Savage 1992). The Situationist slogans featured on McLaren and Westwood's punk clothing and the more ideologically oriented lyrics of bands like the Clash were

Holtzman 2010; Moore and Roberts 2009; Roberts and Moore 2009). By rejecting mainstream institutions, punk subculture began to serve as a pre-figurative space in which social movements could build alternative structures consistent with their ideals (Cross 2010; Culton and Holtzman 2010; Futrell and Simi 2004).

The early punks' use of left-wing slogans and right-wing imagery drew both political tendencies to the subculture. The first wave of punks notoriously decorated their bodies and clothing with swastikas without articulating a clear meaning or intent. Hebdige (1979) famously argued that the punk use of the swastika was an ironic symbol of resistance that reinterpreted it not as a marker of the wearer's fascist tendencies, but as a representation of the individual's frustration with social norms and ''polite'' society. Alternately, Cohen ([1980] 2009) critiqued this analysis by pointing out that meaning was ascribed to the swastika with little regard to the actual punks' interpretations of its usage. This ambiguity of meaning created a unique opportunity for fascism to make in-roads into a distinctly oppositional subculture. As Hamm (1993) points out, the subculture's nihilism and acceptance of violence presented an ideal recruiting ground for the fascist movement. Neo-Nazis viewed punk alienation as a key issue that they could exploit to build an active and aggressive movement. Punk's embrace of the shocking and offensive allowed fascist recruiters to frame their movement as a radical rejection of mainstream values. Despite such efforts, the subculture is primarily defined by its left-wing, anarchist orientation. Most punks embraced the anarchist stance of the subculture's pioneers and explored the ideology behind the slogans. Anarchist punks summarily rejected the mainstream music industry, media, and fashion in favor of developing their own do-it-yourself, underground institutions for the production and dissemination of music, magazines, and clothing. These practices allowed anarchist punks to build their own network outside of existing capitalist structures based on anarchist principles of egalitarianism and cooperation (Clark 2003; Cross 2010; Culton and Holtzman 2010). Punk sloganeering quickly manifested in direct action in opposition to nuclear proliferation, animal abuse, racism, sexism, and virtually any other manifestation of dominant power. Thus, punks have been at the core of political protest movements since late 1970s (see Bobel 2006; Cherry 2006; Cross 2010; Culton 2007; Dymock 2007; Ferrell 2001; Hardman 2007; Moore and Roberts 2009; O'Hara 2001; Ranaghan and Breese 2004; Roberts and Moore 2009; Ruggero 2010; Wiedlack 2013). The combination of a do-it-yourself ethic and a value of political activism has made punk an ideal subculture for the pre-figurative experiments of both fascist and anarchist movements (Culton and Holtzman 2010; Futrell and Simi 2004).

With two conflicting political ideologies operating within the same subculture, punk rock quickly becomes a space of contention between them. Anarchist punks lay claim to the authenticity of punk identity because so much of the subculture's practice reflects their ideology as noted above, yet fascists and neo-Nazis participate in the subculture out of an appreciation for the music and style as well as its utility in recruiting confederates. This presents a unique dilemma for most punks who abhor fascism: how do they maintain the ideological integrity of the subculture and its function as a left-wing/anarchist pre-figurative space when fascists insist on inserting

rarely reflected in social movement participation on the part of the early punks (Cross 2010). This stands in sharp contrast to subsequent punk bands and scenes which stressed social action both within and outside of the punk scene (Clark 2003; Cross 2010; Culton and Holtzman 2010; Moore and Roberts 2009; O'Hara 2001; Roberts and Moore 2009). While such activism has often been associated with the more politicized ''peace punk'' or ''anarchopunk'' sub-sets of the subculture, its influence has extended into the subculture as a whole and informed its oppositional stances in regard to many elements of mainstream society (Cross 2010; O'Hara 2001).

themselves into it? A second dilemma is presented when fascist participation in the subculture results in excessive amounts of violence. The combination of neo-Nazi ideology and expressive machismo often leads fascists to attack attendees at punk shows whom they view as violating the racial or gender purity of the space/''scene'' (Blazak 2001; Bowen 2009). Using anarchist principles, punks often self-organize in order to defend themselves and the subculture against the presence of fascists and the violence that they bring. Consistent with New Social Movement practice, defense of subculture against fascists quickly extends into social movement activity as anti-fascism moves out of the punk scene into militant opposition to fascist organizing on all fronts. It is my contention that this form of anti-fascist organizing serves as a form of policing based on anarchist principles.

Accessing and Understanding Anti-fascism

Subculturally oriented social movements, such as anti-fascism, are easily misinterpreted by outside observers. In order to truly understand the clash between fascists and anti-fascists, a researcher must develop a criminological verstehen (Ferrell 1997) of the actions and motivations of the individuals involved. Over the course of 7 years, I conducted an ethnographic study of militant anti-fascist organizations. This research was conducted in two phases in 2001–2005 in an Eastern U.S. city and 2007–2010 in a Western U.S. city. As a participant observer, I attended confrontational and non-confrontational protests against white supremacist groups, one regional and two national gatherings of militant anti-fascists, as well as numerous social events including, but not limited to, Punk, Oi!, and Hardcore shows, DJ nights, film screenings, house parties, and informal gatherings in bars and other social spaces associated with punk and skinhead subculture.

In addition to observation, formal interviews were conducted with 14 individuals in key organizing positions within the militant anti-fascist movement. Because of the difficulties in estimating the population of anti-fascist activists, a probability sample was unattainable. In order to obtain a national sample of participants, the formal interviews were conducted in one eastern city, one mid-western city, and two western cities. The formal interview process began with the participant answering a series of survey questions that was followed by a semi-structured interview. In addition to the formal interviews, informal interviews were conducted as part of the participant observation process with 30 additional individuals involved in militant opposition to supremacists. Interviews were conducted with anti-fascist activists who reside in all regions of the United States.

Militant anti-fascism as can best be understood as an anarchist practice using case examples derived from the data gathered in the observations and interviews described above. The examples that follow will serve as typical instances of anti-fascist confrontation with fascists which were observed over the period of ethnographic research and recounted in both formal and informal interviews. Because anti-fascist activism is an especially dangerous activity (see Vysotsky 2013), specific details such as locations and dates have been eliminated in order to protect the anonymity and safety of participants.

Militant Anti-Fascism in Pre-Figurative Spaces

For most people, the conflict between fascists and anti-fascists is evident only on the rare occasion of public events where the two clash. The everyday struggle between the two movements that occurs in pre-figurative spaces is unseen by individuals outside of the subculture, but constitutes an ''invisible revolution'' (Peterson 2001) being fought in underground social spaces. Confrontation, and sometimes violence, is employed in order to protect pre-figurative subcultural spaces from the political and physical threats posed by fascists (Vysotsky 2013); anti-fascists ensure this protection through two types of action: preventative action and direct confrontation.

The most common type of anti-fascist action in pre-figurative spaces takes the form of preventative action or preparation for confrontation with fascists. This typically involves the gathering of individuals committed to confronting supremacists should they arrive at a space and/or patrol around or near the space. This is a defensive action taken when threats have been made against either the space or individuals who are known to be there. For example, individuals who attended a regional gathering of anti-fascists were asked by organizers of a local punk show to be present in the event that fascists arrived to violently disrupt it. Antifascist activists spent the evening inside the venue and the adjacent parking lot in the event supremacists would arrive. Similarly, a ska music DJ night that served as a regular gathering of anti-racist skinheads and anti-fascist activists typically included individuals who served as security beyond that provided by the bar because the event had been a target of supremacist violence in the past. Anti-fascists maintained a clear presence outside the venue as a visual show of force to indicate that any attempts at violence would be resisted. In such cases this type of presence serves to dissuade fascist participation in subcultural pre-figurative spaces because they find themselves facing mass opposition. Fascist violence typically occurs in subcultural spaces when they have significant numeric or physical superiority to intimidate attendees (Blazak 2001; Bowen 2009). By amassing a clear, confrontational anti-fascist presence, spaces become distinctly delineated as un-hospitable to fascist participation or intimidation.

A similar defensive practice is also employed when fascists threaten individual activists or subcultural participants. It is not unusual for anti-fascists to be asked or volunteer to gather at the home of an individual who is being threatened by supremacists. For example, an activist who was not affiliated with an organized anti-fascist group, but filmed an anti-racist rally organized by the group and posted it on YouTube, was targeted by a group of fascists attempting to ''out'' anti-fascists as a form of intimidation. Flyers were posted in his neighborhood identifying him as an ''anti-white'' activist signaled a potential threat to his safety and that of his household. Because the fascists in this city had a history of violence, including attacks on the homes of people identified as anti-fascists, this activist called upon the anti-fascist organization in his community to provide protection for him in the event that his home was attacked. The anti-fascist group organized a series of protective actions designed to dissuade potential fascist violence including maintaining a presence inside and outside his home, surveillance of the block on which the home was located, and patrols of several blocks surrounding the home. These types of activities serve as a typical response in the immediate aftermath of credible threats or incidents of fascist violence against individuals or households. In general, these gatherings serve not only as a demonstration of a show of force against the potential fascist threat, but also give the threatened individual a sense that he/she is genuinely being protected. In most cases, police are unable to provide the kind of protection necessary to dissuade the threat of fascist violence. In the case above, the flyer

would not serve as a direct threat that justifies a protective detail, yet interview subjects consistently noted that these tactics were a common form of intimidation and a precursor to violence. Moreover, if a fascist attack does occur, police response is after the fact and involves a criminal investigation. When the victims are fellow subculturalists, police investigation often reduces the incident to gang violence and is accompanied by a victim-blaming attitude that does not signal a sense that justice will be served to anti-fascists. A militant anti-fascist response, therefore, not only serves to reassure the threatened party that it is protected, but also provides direct response to a threat that may not be appropriately handled by the state and legal institutions.

In most cases, the type of mass gathering described above is supplemented by small groups of anti-fascists who patrol the immediate area in search of potential fascist threats. This practice expands the sphere of protection beyond the immediate location under threat and can serve as a means of avoiding violence and confrontation at the threatened site. Anti-fascists deploy this tactic in a variety of circumstances. In some cases, these patrols may be part of a defensive action against an individual or they may focus on a venue that has a likelihood of fascist targeting, as noted in examples above. Anti-fascists deployed the patrolling strategy at the rally filmed by the activist who called upon their protection discussed above. This rally was organized by anti-fascists in response to a national gathering of fascists in their city. The potential for a large number of fascists in the community presented a unique threat to the attendees of the mass rally. In order to provide security, anti-fascists established teams of activists who patrolled the perimeter of the park in which the rally was held in the event that fascists would attempt to disrupt the rally with violence or confrontation. If fascists were spotted in the vicinity, individuals engaging in a patrol would be able to inform other activists. This type of action allows activists engaging in defensive presence at a site to prepare for a potential confrontation.

In many circumstances, anti-fascists can also choose to confront the fascist located on patrol before they reach the site. This moves the conflict onto the street and therefore serves to shield the venue or individuals under threat. In addition, such patrols serve as a signal to any fascists who may have plans to attend an event or attack an individual that a resistant force has been organized, and that they will be confronted and stopped. These patrols, therefore, serve to enhance the effectiveness of defensive mass gathering.

The actions discussed so far generally serve to avoid or prevent violence and confrontation. What categorizes them as militant is the implicit conflict that would occur should fascists arrive and challenge the safety of the space or individuals. The anti-fascism discussed in this article is truly made militant by its confrontational aspect. Unlike the defensive and preventative actions described above, clashes between fascists and anti-fascists generally have a much more spontaneous quality to them. These typically occur when fascists enter, or are present, in subcultural pre-figurative spaces. As stated above, fascists and anti-fascists often find themselves involved in similar subcultures, and because the fascists threaten both the ideological orientation of the subculture and the physical safety of its participants (Blazak 2001; Bowen 2009; Vysotsky 2013), they often represent an unwelcome presence in these spaces. Contemporary fascist subculturalists are in part motivated by an ideology of ''fuck you-ism'' blended with virulent racism (Hamm 1993: 28), which motivates an offensive oppositionalism even in subcultural spaces. Put simply, they do not leave when they are made to feel unwelcome or asked politely to do so; therefore, it becomes incumbent on the anti-fascists to motivate them to leave a space where they are unwelcome and/or pose a threat. This generally occurs through a process of escalation. Fascists are first aggressively confronted about their presence and ordered to leave by large group of people

(in many cases, the entirety of the venue). If fascists do not leave when confronted, force is often used to eject them from the space, either in the form of physical removal or through a violent clash between them and anti-fascists.

The confrontational and violent tactics being employed here are interpreted and understood by participants in the subculture as being defensive. They are deployed against individuals who, by virtue of their ideology, represent a threat to the subculture as a whole, and the individual participants within it, and who do not respond positively or affirmatively to nonconfrontational tactics or attempts at de-escalation. In this regard, confrontation and violence are successful in that they remove the immediate threat and secure the safety of the space in subcultural participants.

Conclusion: The Anarchy Police

The actions discussed in this article represent a controversial approach to maintaining the safety of individuals, the integrity of a social space, and the ideological orientation of a subculture. For most criminologists, criminal justice professionals, and the general public, the confrontation and violence described represent either gang violence or vigilantism. For some anarchists and other radicals—including criminologists—the violent use of force is antithetical to their belief system.[7] Yet I argue that these methods represent a challenge to the pacifist orientation of anarchist criminology by situating these actions within some of the basic tenets of anarchism: spontaneous action, direct democracy, and direct action.

Anarchism has a history of arguing for spontaneity as an alternative to the rigidity of life constrained by institutions such as the family, religion, the state, and work (Ferrell 2001). Anarchist criminology, similarly, argues for not only the redefinition of spontaneous lawbreaking (Ferrell 1998), but also spontaneous action in defense of the collective and social order (Ferrell 2011; Niman 2011). The confrontational and violent actions described above are consistent with the spirit of spontaneity. Such confrontations are generally not preplanned or organized because in many cases the fascists enter a space without the prior knowledge of organizers or other participants, often with the desire to engage in violence (Blazak, 2001; Bowen 2009). Under such circumstances, resistance to the fascists is spontaneously organized by individuals committed to anti-fascism. These individuals make on the spot decisions regarding the most effective and appropriate tactics for ensuring safety and order. Such spontaneity ensures that one individual or group does not necessarily hold power in these situations because anyone can organize and/or take part in such a confrontation.[8] Power is also decentralized because it is deployed temporarily

[7] The question of the use of violence as a tactic has been extremely controversial in anarchist circles. Anarchists in the late nineteenth-century became notorious for the practice of ''propaganda by the deed''— the use of bombings and assassinations as a means of challenging state and capitalist oppression (Avrich 1988; Guerin 1970). Yet, in the same era, a pacifist tradition of anarchist thought was articulated by Tolstoy, among others (Avrich [1967] 2006; Ostergaard 1982). These traditions continue to this day, with some anarchist factions repudiating violence while others incorporate it into a broad tactical repertoire (see Juris 2005; Paris 2003; Richards 1993).

[8] The concepts of spontaneity and organization are not contradictory in anarchist praxis. Anarchist philosophy is largely predicated on the cooperative actions of individuals working collectively to achieve their goals (Berkman [1929] 2003; Ferrell 2001; Kropotkin 1904). These organizations lack formal hierarchy and are often open to anyone wishing to become involved which allows them to act spontaneously rather than following strict bureaucratic procedures (Ferrell 2001). In such cases, long-standing anarchist organizations are not bound by formal rules or traditions and can respond in any manner chosen by the plurality of members. It is also possible for new groupings to form

rather than being asserted through a social institution. The individuals acting against the fascist threat have no power beyond the immediate situation, and any attempt to assert additional forms of power or control would be resisted by members of the subculture and even their anti-fascist compatriots.

Unlike a professional police force, which requires specialized training, certification and a rigid hierarchy, militant anti-fascism is directly democratic. Much like the processes of ''Omming'' and ''corking'' (Ferrell 2011; Niman 2011), anti-fascist actions are open to anyone willing to participate. The spontaneous confrontations described above by their very nature are inclusive of all people who wish to confront the fascist presence in the space. The more organized actions required for securing a space or providing protection for individuals being threatened by fascists are often equally democratic based on the decision making processes of the groups involved. Organized anti-fascist groups tend to be less open in terms of membership for reasons of security as a result of threats from fascists and police, but their internal decision-making processes reflect anarchist principles of non-hierarchy and direct democracy. Anti-fascists have no formal leadership, with decisions being made by the group as a whole. This is true both of small, local groupings and larger regional and national bodies. The decision-making processes reflect anarchist practices by striving for consensus and/or requiring super-majorities for ratification. Individuals are always free to dissent or not participate in actions with few consequences.

Finally, and most importantly, anti-fascist militancy represents a form of direct action against the threat posed by fascists. Rather than relying on the state, anti-fascists self-organize for their security because they generally have distrust for the state, and specifi-cally, the criminal justice system embodied in police and courts (ARA 2004a), born from their adherence to anarchist ideology and their subcultural experience. From a practical standpoint, police are unreliable for providing security when a conflict arises with fascists over a subcultural space. Because their interest lies in protecting public order, police will at best escort fascists away from the area and at worst arrest anti-fascists. As anarchists, anti-fascists are unlikely to call police on principle since they represent the state and an arbitrary display of power. Anti-fascism, therefore, serves as a means for participants in a subculture influenced by anarchism to self-organize for their own security. This represents a unique form of direct action in that it not only rejects the state's legitimate claim on violence, but it also prefigures a model of community safety and self-defense in a society without police.

The anti-fascist practices outlined in this article represent a major break from and contribution to anarchist criminological theory. Much of the work in this theoretical tradition has been focused on presenting a critique of dominant understandings of law and order (Ferrell 1998; Pepinsky 1978; Tifft 1979) without presenting alternative models. When such alternatives have been theorized or proposed, they have generally been rooted in pacifist and nonviolent practice. Anarchist theories of restorative justice use nonviolent, non-hierarchical practices after violations have occurred (Brisman 2011; Pepinsky and Quinney 1991; Tifft and Sullivan 1980). The work on proactive anarchist responses to questions of public safety and order has largely focused on movements and subcultures where individuals share ideologies and goals (Ferrell 2011; Niman 2011). This article posits that there may be confrontational, even violent, forms of action that can be taken to ensure safety and order that are consistent with anarchist principles. In

based on this principle of spontaneity depending on the context of the situation. In either case, anarchists are able to be simultaneously organized and engage in spontaneous action.

such cases, these actions are taken by groups who identify as—or are influenced by—anarchists, and reflect the practices of spontaneity, direct democracy, and direct action. While such actions may not be ideally anarchist or serve as an ideal alternative to contemporary policing, they can serve to initiate a discussion of what a proactive anarchist, or alternative, practice of community self-defense should entail.

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