Movement for No Society

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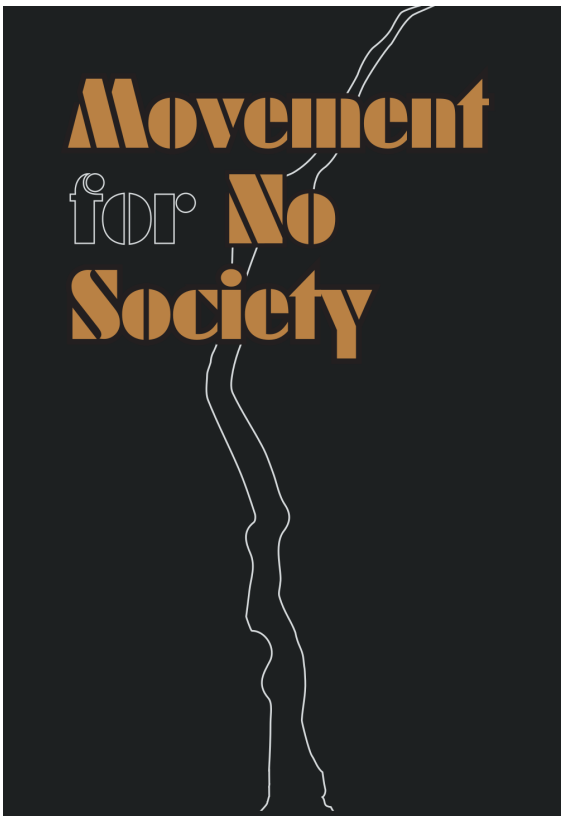

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Introduction

When we first started writing this book, things in Philly were really boring. One of ways in which we attempted to overcome our mundane political prospects was through a reading group on insurrectionary anarchy, as well as a series of talks that we called "Movement for No Society." These discussions and the research that followed eventually became this book, in which we collectively attempt to understand and describe the historical conditions for the situation we find ourselves in, talk shit on the Quakers, dig into the past and attempt to recover more interesting possibilities and their paths through history.

Up until recently, a culture predominated in Philly of so-called radicals and civil anarchists who sacrifice anarchy for progress, dialogue with power, seek out mass appeal, and embrace activist and non-profit lifestyles. Since Trump's election, we've seen an increased interest in popular violence against the far right that we predict will be circumstantial. How long will it last? How long can a liberal hold their breath under water? Despite an influx of new militant people interested in fighting fascists, populism and leftism has prevailed. The need continues to shatter the dishonesty, passivity, reformism, and compromise that characterize most anarchists' projects here.

As people who are not originally from this city, we both lack certain important contexts and bring in external perspectives. This doesn't necessarily make us more qualified or disqualified from speaking or acting in this context. We view claims to authenticity based on the purity of neighborhoods and communities as just nationalism in miniature. The observations and actions recounted in this book are part of an ongoing process that involves learning and adapting.

The name of this book, "Movement for No Society," is a response to the misery of the Philadelphia-based organization Movement for a New Society and its legacy. Movement for No Society is • Summer of Rage • idiotic and cowardly • outside agitators • not from here • literally not a member of any community • ruining the demonstration • professional anarchists • littering • jobless • so-called anarchists • antifa supersoldiers • extreme sports enthusiasts • proles on the stroll • anarchists committing seduction • doing being totally out of control

The book begins by discussing the terrain we're in from a decolonial perspective. It attempts to recover a settler colonial history that is rarely discussed in most radical circles here, and one that shows that progressive approaches to settler colonialism, specifically that of the Quakers in Pennsylvania, were actually more effective in eradicating Native people than many of the more violent colonial conquests on Turtle Island.

We then move on to examining a period of anarchist resistance in Philadelphia – specifically, the insurrectionary bombing campaigns during the 1920s – that posed a severe threat to law and order and the wealthy individuals who maintain it. Following this is a history of the Revolutionary Action Movement, which shows that insurrectionary anarchist tactics didn't just originate in Europe, but were rather mostly developed by black liberation groups in the US in the 1960s, and specifically by a group that was headquartered in Philadelphia. Black liberation groups who were trying to organize riots during that time were organizing hierarchically, but found that the riots

were too decentralized and always exceeded the direction of the group's leadership. Following that chapter is a closer look at local armed resistance to the police later during that time period.

Our chapter on Movement for a New Society pushes back against the story about the Quakers' influence on anarchism in the US and tries to undermine what remains of that influence. The next chapter, "Activism as Recuperation," describes the hegemonic influence of activism over the radical imagination in the US and attempts to understand how activist approaches originated and came to be pitted against a more marginal insurrectionary current.

In contrast, the chapter "What is Direct Struggle?" introduces insurrectionary ideas and places them within a framework to use against specific aspects of domination. It tries to shake up the context of activist approaches to anarchism that have predominated in the Philly anarchist space. The following chapter, "Destroy It Yourself," develops these ideas in a local context, examining the leftist tendencies of anarchy in Philly and seeking ways to abandon them. The last chapter is a translation from different authors that further elaborates ideas of anarchist attack. We end the book with an incomplete timeline of clandestine actions, public conversations, rowdy demonstrations and anti-fascist confrontations in Philly from 2011 to the present,[1] giving a glimpse into some of the practical experimentation in which our reflections here are based.

Fuck Larry Krasner and long live anarchy!!!![2]

[1] This timeline begins in the year 2011 somewhat arbitrarily, since that is when consistent coverage of insurgent activities in the city began via the local anarchist periodical *Anathema*. All in all, the timeline depicts a cycle of struggle that spans the years of Occupy Philly to anti-police struggles to the anti-fascist current, and charts the emergence of a clandestine insurrectionary tendency alongside those movements.

[2] Heralded as a "revolutionary," civil rights attorney Larry Krasner was elected as the District Attorney of Philadelphia in 2017 thanks in large part to major organizing efforts by anarchists and other radicals.

1. The Quaker Art of Genocide
An incomplete settler colonial history of Philadelphia

This chapter should be read as a very partial account of Philadelphia's colonial history. It was written by settlers, piecing together what we could find from the remaining Lenape tribes' official writings and reading between the lines of colonial scholarship on the origins of the city and what came before it. Traditional Lenape oral sources are missing from this account. There are also almost certainly many acts of violence – both against the Lenape and in resistance to colonization – that have been covered up and completely left out of the accounts that we've read, as well as other major gaps in the narrative we've put together here. Despite the serious inadequacies that we see in this approach, the indigenous history and settler colonial context of the current political situation in Philly is too often completely excluded from the ideas and activities of radicals in this city for us to not touch on it at all here.

This chapter attempts to recover the history of the original colonization of the land that is now Philadelphia, from the earliest contact with roaming fur traders to the final land grabs of the 1700s, and to analyze the ways in which progressive settler ideologies made dispossession in this area possible. We also include some discussion of the most recent transformations of the city's landscape. While we can make some guesses about what life was like before colonial contact, and we do so here in order to begin to illustrate the genocidal damage done to the original land and Native inhabitants by colonization, those stories can really only be told by the people who experienced it.

Contact with colonial invaders in the mid-Atlantic region began some time after 1524. The first Europeans in the Delaware Valley itself were fur trappers and traders who wandered in around the 1550s; permanent settlements did not begin until around the 1620s. European diseases preceded actual contact. In 1600, there were around twenty thousand Lenape; by the time of William Penn's arrival in 1682, there were four thousand.

The Lenni Lenape are colonially known as the Delaware; they were so named by English settlers because of their proximity to the so-called Delaware River, which had been named after Sir Thomas West, 3rd Baron De La Warr and first governor of Virginia. The Lenape lived in a wide region of the mid-Atlantic that spanned from what is now northern Delaware up to the western side of the lower Hudson Valley in New York, and from the Atlantic Ocean to the woodlands of eastern Pennsylvania (to around where Scranton and Reading are now). This land was called Lenapehoking, meaning "land of the Lenape."

The Lenape were understood by other Algonquian-speaking tribes to be the "grandfathers," those from whom other related tribes had descended. Lenape living in the northern areas (above the Raritan River and the Delaware Water Gap) spoke the Munsee dialect of Eastern Algonquian, while those living down the river and in the area that is now Philadelphia spoke the Unami

dialect. The Lenape have three clans – Wolf, Turtle, and Turkey – which are traced through the mother's lines.[1]

European invaders described the Lenape as living in dispersed, semi-permanent villages throughout the Delaware Valley. The Lenape were into hunting and gathering and practiced less agriculture than some of their neighbors. They did develop large fields of beans, corn and squash, though in such a way that each of the three crops' growth was sustained by the other two. They hunted upland in the winters, and spent the summers fishing at the mouths of the rivers, collecting clams, crabs, and oysters; they also gathered herbs and roots and picked berries, wild fruit, and nuts during the summers. Early Swedish settlers observed that Lenape corn harvests were much more abundant than those of Europeans, and noted that the Lenape had no desire to take up European agricultural practices, which required more labor and yielded less produce.

The Lenape were not migratory, but they completely resettled their villages every ten to twelve years in order to not permanently deplete the resources surrounding the area. According to settler archaeologists, their living places apparently show no signs of stockades, ditches, or embankments, meaning their way of life was very low on conflict and military reinforcements were unnecessary.

Unlike the capitalist worldviews that would justify and require the total conquest of land and people by colonizers, the Lenape saw everything else around them as having their own powers and personalities – "rather than expecting submission from all other living things, the Lenapes believed they shared reciprocal obligations with the forces of life on the earth" (Michael Dean Macintosh, "New Sweden, Natives, and Nature," 9).

Their ability to grow crops was made possible by vast knowledge of the seasons, changes in which were understood especially through observing regular variations in the skies. Lenape women in particular were skilled stargazers – intimately familiar with the stars, they were able to foretell and interpret events. Swedish historian Gunlög Fur writes: "Lenapes paid great heed to signs and dreams that could offer insights into coming events and uncover hidden aspects of the present" (*A Nation of Women: Gender and Colonial Encounters Among the Delaware Indians*, 17). This information was necessary for successful farming, but was also "embedded in myth, ceremonies, and games through which people affirmed their relationship to their environment, and taught and learned necessary skills" (Fur, 17).

Fur goes on to discuss the combined practical and spiritual importance of recurring rituals and celebrations, indicating the severe damage that widespread death and dream loss due to colonial contact would have on the Lenape:

> Ceremonies and celebrations in a sense constituted the engine that propelled the cycle of human life. Without proper ceremonies crops would not grow, game would not appear in reach of the hunters' bows and arrows, and the health of the community would not be maintained. Ceremonial responsibilities were handed down in different lineages or could come to individuals in dreams. If no one who knew how to carry out the ceremony remained or if people were no longer receptive to dream messages, then the ceremony would vanish. The gravity of such a loss should not be underestimated. Ceremonies and celebrations constituted a sort of *remembering*

[1] Some say that there were previously numerous different clans, but by the time that clan structures were recorded by Europeans, they had been consolidated into those three after contact with settlers had decimated the prior Lenape population.

> *ahead*, a memory that contained the future. In some ways Lenapes perceived history as circular. […] People 'remembered' some of the events that were going to occur and within the framework of this knowledge dealt with new or unique events. […] The cultural reservoir of memories, knowledge of rituals, and access to visions, was vital to the continuation of Lenape life and their ability to remember ahead (24–25).

The Lenape did not have a system of political governance, at least not one that was recognizable as such to Europeans. Social life was centered in villages of a couple hundred people, in which the head of the family had a nominal leadership position. There was no centralized authority.

Familial relationships, shared language and trading systems were the only things that Europeans were able to identify as consolidating a shared identity amongst the Lenape. The Lenape's identity as a nation seems to have been retroactively constructed after colonial contact – that is, it became necessary for the Lenape to present themselves in categories like nationhood and identity that colonial powers could understand.

There were at least seventeen Lenape villages where Philadelphia is now, including:

- *Pahsayunk* ("in the valley"), now western South Philly, along the east shore of the Schuylkill, where it empties into the Delaware River. According to the Dutch, as of 1654 it was the largest Lenape village on the future site of Philadelphia, encompassing six smaller villages, each containing several hundred people. It is now an industrial area; its name remains as the street that cuts diagonally through the southern part of the city. The side of Passyunk Avenue east of Broad Street was once a Lenape trail.
- *Kingsessing* ("a place where there is a meadow"), now West Philly, ie the land between Cobbs Creek and the Schuylkill. Kingsessing was later converted into a Swedish, then English town, and its name survives as Kingsessing Ave that cuts east-west across the original region.
- *Arronemink* ("place where the fish cease"), just south of what is now the Woodlands Cemetery, at the mouth of Mill Creek where it meets the Schuylkill.
- *Coaquannock* ("grove of tall pines"), north of Center City, on the east bank of the Schuylkill.
- *Wequiaquenske*, later Wicaco, just below what is now South Street on the bank of the Delaware; the first place within the present bounds of Philadelphia to be settled by Europeans.
- *Sakimauchheen Ing* ("meeting place of chiefs"), mispronounced Shackamaxon, now Fishtown/Kensington/Port Richmond, along the Delaware. SakimauchheenIng was a summer fishing place for the Lenape and a place where they held tribal councils.
- *Wisameckhan* ("catfish stream"), a fishing place in what is now called the Wissahickon Valley. Lenape are believed to have also held pow-wows there until 1756. There is now a colonial statue of an inaccurately dressed tribal chief on the so-called "Council Rock" in the area.

The stories of how settlers destroyed these particular living places and killed and pushed out their inhabitants have not been found, and seem not to have been recorded. We do know that the

first invaders to actually settle in the Delaware Valley were Dutch and Swedish. The Dutch established contact around 1609, trading furs and attempting to take Native land. The first permanent settlement was on what is now called Tinicum Island, south of where the Philadelphia Airport is now, and was established in 1643 as the seat of the Swedish government. Another Swedish settlement was established in 1644 in what is now Chester, PA. At its height, New Sweden had only four hundred settlers.

By 1655, the Swedish had to surrender their land to the Dutch. Around this time, during the late 1660s and early 1670s, colonial settlement took away Lenape fishing spots and replaced them with mills, pushing many Lenape out of their summer stations further upstream from the area that would become Philadelphia.

Meanwhile, the loss of subsistence due to colonial invasion led Native communities to rely more and more on trade with settlers. Settlers had massively increased demand for beaver pelts, which forced Native people to adopt colonial time-saving tools like copper pots, knives, and guns, in turn making Native people even more reliant on trade with Europeans to get these things. This reliance, as well as deliberate European intervention, pitted Native populations against one another. Along with repeated outbreaks of smallpox, often intentionally transmitted by settlers, much of the devastation of the original Lenape population during the 1700s occurred through warfare with other Native groups. The Lenape began feuding with the neighboring Susquehannocks of the Susquehanna Valley over trade with the Europeans; after another devastating smallpox outbreak in the 1630s, the Lenape were defeated and became subject to the Susquehannocks. When the Susquehannocks were then defeated by the Haudenosaunee Confederacy in 1675, the Lenape became subject to the Haudenosaunee. Disease, coupled with internal warfare due to the pressures of colonization, had severely weakened and reduced the Lenape by the time of William Penn's arrival.

When King Charles of England "gave" the land to William Penn in 1681, which was primarily a move to disrupt the Dutch empire in the so-called New World, the land was already privately owned by settlers, including around fifty mostly Finnish and Swedish farmers occupying the area that would become Philadelphia. Penn's commissioners arrived in 1681 and found that other settlers already had most of the land along the Delaware and wanted too high a price for it, so they moved further up the river. The Swanson brothers of Wicaco sold them three hundred acres, a mile of which faced the river – the area between what is now Vine and South streets. A year later, William Penn bought an additional mile from two Swedish farmers along the bank of the Schuylkill, across from his land on the Delaware. The earliest grid of the city of Philadelphia was then laid out along the one mile north-south and two miles east-west that these purchases produced.

The Lenape had never been militarily defeated by the Dutch or the Swedish. Settler historical accounts endlessly praise William Penn for "voluntarily" purchasing his land from the Lenape despite his already having a claim to it – that is, he could have chosen to impose his claim solely by violent military force, as had many other colonial powers. In reality, it was more strategic for Penn to legally obtain a title to the land. Outright warfare would have created an unsightly and destabilizing situation that would have made his investors in the Pennsylvania utopian project uncomfortable, and it was impractical to try to take the land by force. Besides, prior colonial powers had already paved the way for Penn to manipulate his way into a legal land grab – the Dutch and Swedish were able to inform Penn which Lenape representatives to talk to and who

to pay in order to get treaties signed. This helped Penn impose a capitalist understanding of property in the area and the hierarchical relationships that come along with it.

Unlike the Dutch and Swedish, William Penn aimed to utterly transform the cultural and ecological landscape of the Lenape and their homelands. Colonization in the Delaware Valley prior to Penn's arrival had been relatively modest and often unsuccessful. Penn's vision involved bringing thousands of colonists to live among the Lenape in what would become Philadelphia, a process that forced Lenape subordination and compromise while Penn maintained a rhetoric of brotherhood and friendship. Around 1,400 Quaker colonists were brought to West Jersey in the four years leading up to 1681 alone, doubling the number of settlers who had been in the entire region for the past century. For the first time, these new settlers were mostly families instead of individuals. This completely changed the cultural dynamics of the area, imposing patriarchal gender and kinship models and creating hostilities with the Lenape, who apparently hated the new Quaker colonists (*James O'Neil Spady, "Colonialism and the Discursive Antecedents of Penn's Treaty with the Indians,"* 27). Lenape groups had to choose to either vacate their homelands in the Delaware Valley, or to stay and assimilate.

Even colonial scholars doubt that William Penn ever signed a treaty with the Lenape (Spady, 19). The official origin myth of the state of Pennsylvania is that in 1682, shortly after his arrival, Penn met with several chiefs in the village of Sakimauchheen Ing under a "peace elm" tree to sign a "Great Treaty of Peace" that would guarantee eternal harmony between their peoples. (Despite all this, the Lenape were of course not able to remain much longer in Sakimauchheen Ing, which is now Kensington.) Scholars seem genuinely confused about how to maintain this myth, however, because there is no real evidence of this treaty ever happening except for some colonial artworks (for example, *Penn's Treaty with the Indians* by Benjamin West, and some approving statements by French Enlightenment icon Voltaire) and an area of Kensington on Delaware Ave that the state later named "Penn Treaty Park."

Despite Penn's renowned "peace" with the Lenape and talk of a diverse community coming together in a "holy experiment," Philadelphia was designed for wealthy Quakers who purchased large amounts of land in the colony, not for Native or non-white people. For each acre that settler buyers purchased in town, Penn gave that buyer eighty free acres in what the colonizers called the "liberty lands" in the northern or western suburbs of town. The "Northern Liberties" neighborhood in Philadelphia still retains this grossly colonial name – free "liberty" lands for invaders as a reward for staying and colonizing; displacement and death for the land's forgotten original inhabitants.

In addition to questions about the Great Treaty of Peace, several official complaints by Lenape chiefs have been recorded that indicate deception on the part of Penn and his agents. In signing treaties, the Lenape had intended to admit Penn to the position of a sachem, or chief, and, as was customary, to share the land as among brothers. Penn, on the other hand, demanded absolute property rights. When his agents began surveying lands that they had paid for, which included Lenape planting grounds, the Lenape got fed up. Penn nevertheless insisted on expansion into Lenape lands. Lenapes retaliated in 1686 by killing the entire family of the neighbor of Penn's deputy surveyer, Israel Taylor, near Philadelphia. For weeks afterwards, they held dances at the Falls of the Schuykill at which they reiterated a threat to kill Taylor if he continued to survey (Spady, 36).

But as the 18th century began, the combined displacement and assimilation of the Lenape became irreversible. The Lenape people who chose to stay in the Delaware Valley were forced

to live on reservations set up by Penn and his agents. Others moved westward in Pennsylvania, attempting to maintain versions of their traditional hunting and gathering practices and matrilineal social ties, while others relocated further west. Lenapes began to refuse land sales or demand much higher prices and payment in wampum instead of colonial trade goods.

By the time of the 1737 Walking Purchase, in which settlers acquired the region northeast of Philadelphia (now Pike, Monroe, Carbon, Schuylkill, Northampton, Lehigh, and Bucks counties), the Lenape had already been mostly displaced from that region as well by settlers. The treaty was more a symbolic acknowledgement of a process that had already occurred. The Walking Purchase started when William Penn's sons claimed they had a deed from the Lenape from the 1680s that granted them additional land beginning at the junction of the Delaware and Lehigh rivers (which became Easton, PA) for as far as a man could walk in a day and a half. This alleged deed from the 1680s is universally acknowledged to be fraudulent.

The "dispute" about the land (which settlers were already living on without permission) was settled by having three settler men walk north from Wrightstown, Pennsylvania for a day and a half to mark out where the Penn brothers' land claim began and ended. But the Penn brothers' land agent, James Logan, chose the fastest settler runners in the colony to be the walkers, and they ran seventy miles instead of the estimated forty, ending in what is now Jim Thorpe, Pennsylvania. The exertion of this cheating was such that one of the runners, James Yeates, died three days later, and another, Solomon Jennings, never fully recovered. Only the third runner, Edward Marshall, finished the walk. The runners had been incentivized to assist in the land grab by being promised five hundred acres of land each within the borders of the newly stolen territory.

The Lenape had to vacate their fishing rights along both rivers. They attempted to formally complain about the Walking Purchase's fraudulence for some time, but the colony of Pennsylvania ignored and silenced these complaints. The colony ultimately pressured a Haudenosaunee chief, Conassatego, into "giving a scathing speech to the Lenape claiming they were a conquered nation, had no right to the land, and should leave it immediately," publicly humiliating the Lenape (Daniel Gilbert, "What Ye Indians Call 'Ye Hurry Walk"'). As discussed above, by that point, the Lenape were subjects of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy.[2]

In 1747, Lenape warriors attacked the family of Edward Marshall, the Walking Treaty runner who had personally marked the boundaries of the land grab. One of Marshall's sons was killed. The attack was successful in that Marshall and his family had to abandon their stolen land and move to New Jersey. In 1756, when the Marshalls tried to move back to "their" Pennsylvania land, their home was attacked again by sixteen Lenape warriors, who killed Marshall's wife.

The Walking Purchase forced the traditional Lenape bands to completely leave their ancestral homelands in the Delaware Valley. During the 1750s, they began a long westward trek to Paxtang on the Susquehanna River; some settled as far west as the Allegheny and Ohio valleys. But the Lenape did not passively accept death, displacement and the state's attempts at public humiliation. A series of Lenape raids on settler homesteads occurred simultaneously with their forced displacement – by 1755, over fifty settlers had been killed in the territory stolen by the Walking Purchase.

[2] In the 2004 case *Delaware Nation v Pennsylvania*, the Delaware nation attempted to claim 314 acres of land from the original purchase. The case was dismissed, even though the court acknowledged that the Lenape title to the land had been fraudulently extinguished.

In 1763, a group of settlers called the Paxton Boys retaliated by brutally attacking and killing every Native person in Conestoga, one of the only remaining Native villages in the area, and nearby Lancaster, in what is called the Conestoga Massacre. They then proceeded to make their way to Philadelphia, the seat of the colony, by this time having gathered a mob of at least a hundred people, though they were eventually dissuaded from continuing by a Philadelphia statesman.

By the time the French and Indian War (a continuation in the colonies of the Seven Years' War in Europe) had begun in 1756, many Lenape sided with the French over the British, despite having been ordered by the Haudenosaunee to fight on the side of the British. In 1763, after the French surrendered, the Ottawa chief Pontiac called for war on the British. Many Lenape warriors (now living in Ohio) joined this struggle, which was the earliest pan-Native American anti-colonial resistance movement.

After the American War of Independence, Philadelphia became the seat of settler colonial governance, managing America's invasion into the West and the displacement of Native peoples for the remainder of the 18th century. The first treaty signed by the US government was with the Lenape, and was not honored. US colonial leaders in Philadelphia signed countless other fraudulent and broken treaties, led the creation of new settler colonial national policy, and organized genocidal military campaigns against Native peoples, such as the Sullivan-Clinton Expedition in 1779 that ordered the "total devastation" of the once-powerful Haundenosaunee Confederacy. Far from a peaceful city whose gentle colonization of Native lands is long over, Philadelphia, as one of the first and most powerful industrial American cities, continues to shape and uphold the ongoing project of US settler colonialism by marketing itself as a bastion of progressive values and erasing the fact that Native peoples ever existed.

The liberal ideology that continues to sustain the city of Philadelphia in spite of its brutal and exploitative reality – the idea that Philadelphia is an enlightened, tolerant city of brotherly love, an exception among the backwards and intolerant reactionaries in the rural areas surrounding it – was made possible by the friendly Quaker flavor of William Penn's colonial invasion. Quakerism was a product of Western and Christian ideology, the authoritarian belief system that justified colonial conquest through the conviction that humans are at the pinnacle of what god created and have a mandate to "fill the earth and subdue it." Within that tradition, though, Quakerism masqueraded as a progressive alternative, objecting to state violence and implementing some less coercive decision-making practices (which were not extended to those beyond its membership).

The colonial Quakers are congratulated because they believed that Native people were also "children of God," but all that really means is that the Quakers were more optimistic about their ability to get Native people to assimilate to the western Christian traditions being imposed on them. This forced assimilation strategy that Quakers pursued towards the Lenape, along with displacing them from their ancestral homelands, is a strategy of genocide. Assimilation does not necessarily kill colonized subjects physically, but it aims to eliminate Native lifeways and kill their souls through psychological indoctrination. Both assimilation and displacement are also genocidal in that they deliberately separate Native people from their homelands, with which they are practically and spiritually intertwined.[3]

[3] See "The Psychology of Place" in Gregory Cajete's *Native Science*, pp 186–188, which explains why displacement is a form of genocide. Cajete writes: "Relationships between Native peoples and their environments became so

Despite being widely understood by Native people as a strategy of genocide, assimilation continues to be understood by settler progressives and liberals as a relatively good way of negotiating colonial conflict. The same type of liberal tolerance and saviorism – the condescending and racist assumption that marginalized people could be more civilized if white settlers just reach out and help them adjust to western cultural norms – continues to underlie many progressive and "radical" political organizations and projects in Philadelphia today.

Because it was probably the Dutch who originally destroyed some of the Lenape's Delaware Valley homes and Penn's sons who completed the task with the Walking Purchase, we are able to celebrate the myth that the original founders of Pennsylvania were not guilty of mass genocidal colonial conquest and that the Walking Purchase was just an unfortunate aberration from Pennsylvania's utopian mission. But while Penn and his Quaker followers were progressive enough to talk about religious tolerance and not engage in outright warfare, they were not radical enough to risk losing the capital they built or comforts they enjoyed as colonizers.

During the colonial era in England, Quakers were part of a spectrum of left-leaning Christian sects, the most radical of which was Antinomianism, a sect that rejected the rule of law in favor of individual freedom and desire. But once the Quakers were faced with state repression and persecution of the religious "left" under Oliver Cromwell, they distanced themselves from people on the more radical end of the spectrum and adopted positions of pacifism and non-resistance (as opposed to the open struggle against authority by sects like the Levellers or Ranters). It was this disavowal of radicality and the adoption of a pacifist strategy that made Quakerism "respectable enough to be granted its own American utopia in Pennsylvania" (Peter Lamborn Wilson, "Caliban's Masque: Spiritual Anarchy & The Wild Man in Colonial America," 181). This utopian experiment, along with its associated Quaker values of egalitarianism and religious tolerance, has since become the story of America itself.

Philadelphia and its Quaker founders have thus been able to present themselves as "radically egalitarian" while also being extremely "materially prosperous," ie exploitative. Profit was the motive from the start for both William Penn (who needed to get rid of his debts) and his settler vigilantes. Initially, the Quaker Monthly Meeting in Philadelphia practiced something like mutual aid – if someone needed something, there was social pressure to help out, and the meeting itself would award funds for particular projects, like if someone needed to buy a new cow. But as Quaker settlers actually gained economic power, what residual radicalism they had became channeled into individual acts of philanthropy instead of collective systems of mutual aid (Frederick B. Tolles, *Meeting House and Counting House: The Quaker Merchants of Colonial Philadelphia, 1682–1763*, 80).

Capitalist practices predominated, with a liberal veil. In the mid-1700s, radical Quaker Anthony Benezet noted that many Philadelphia merchants "equated labor and wealth with piety and grace." Benezet commented on the Quaker merchants' immense hypocrisy, juxtaposing their purported social values with their stolen wealth: "What a paradox it is, that people should imagine themselves to act [as Stewards], or that they are indeed fulfilling the second command of loving thy neighbor as themselves … and at the same time live in the utmost ease and plenty" (qtd in Michael Kammen, *People of Paradox: An Inquiry Concerning the Origins of American Civ-*

deep that separation by forced relocation in the last century constituted, literally, the loss of part of an entire generation's soul. Indian people had been joined with their lands with such intensity that many of those who were forced to live on reservations suffered a form of 'soul death"' (188).

ilization). Hypocritical Quaker behavior was not an accident, though, but rather a key element of the origins of capitalism and American settler colonialism. Quaker values enable capitalism because they are just radical enough to present themselves as novel and progressive, while in reality only entailing sociopolitical projects that consolidate capital, both for themselves and for the future of white civil society.

Philadelphia's colonial Quakers are also still celebrated as the original slavery abolitionists, even though many of these abolitionists owned slaves and Philadelphia's wealth was originally acquired by Quakers through the transatlantic slave trade. Historian Gary B. Nash notes: "Members of the Society of Friends (Quakers) had been in the vanguard of the small antislavery movement in America since the 1680s, although it was not until the 1750s that the Society at large began to take action against slaveholding among its own members" (*First City: Philadelphia and the Forging of Historical Memory*, 187). It wasn't until 1756 that the number of slaveholding Quakers in Philadelphia was reduced to ten percent, down from seventy percent in 1681.

While the earliest Quaker settlers were "troubled" by slavery, they still bought slaves because it economically benefited them – as one scholar creatively describes it, "The problem was [...] that slavery worked well as an economic institution in this region" (David Hackett Fisher, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America,* 601). William Penn owned slaves; he argued that this was acceptable "if slave owners attended to the spiritual and material needs of those they enslaved" (Betty Woods, *Slavery in Colonial America*, 14). As with many other cities in the US, the original wealth that has made the economy of Philadelphia possible was accumulated through the transatlantic slave trade, in which the majority of Quaker merchants participated.

The earliest progressive Philadelphia settlers were able to own slaves while becoming renowned as antislavery advocates because they were part of a "radical" subculture that had become the dominant culture by disavowing more militant spiritual-political tendencies like Ranterism and advocating pacifism and non-resistance. These settlers thus were well positioned to posture and cover up their culture's underlying patterns of domination and exploitation.

These Quaker tendencies in colonial Philadelphia paved the way for the stories today's liberal radicals in Philly tell each other about their "work" – the phrase "doing the work" having originated with Christian missionary work, and now referring to political organizing. Today's radical "work" aims to improve the nation-state through gradual reforms, and in the process continuing to impose European values through their charity-like organizational approaches. This work is made possible by distancing themselves from more controversial political activities, ignoring the context of settler colonialism, and luxuriating in abundance on stolen and rapidly gentrifying land. "The work" furthers the settler colonial project, in part by appearing to challenge critical aspects of its infrastructure.

What is now called Philadelphia lies atop where two major physiographic provinces meet – to the southeast, the inner Atlantic coastal plain (which has low elevation, and is wet and marshy); and to the northwest, the Piedmont plateau (lowlands and gentle slopes and hills). The fall line between these regions is marked at the Falls of the Schuylkill River, where the Philadelphia Museum of Art is now. Colonial cities often originate where rivers meet fall lines, because of the availability of waterpower for mills, the labor that's necessary for those mills, and resultant

commercial trade. Native villages had previously occupied these places because fish were so abundant there.

Capitalism has always required what it politely calls "development," meaning the process by which potential assets like previously "valueless" or low-value land are conquered, bought up or otherwise integrated into the capitalist economic system in order to sustain the rate of growth necessary for the economy's survival. Settler colonialism across Turtle Island played an integral role in the original process of accumulating capital that was necessary to jump-start capitalism as a global system. In the particular history of Philadelphia, capitalist accumulation has similarly gone hand in hand with settler colonial desecration of the ecosystem, which, having been heavily plundered for centuries, now sits in relative stagnation along with the rest of the US economy.

One of the first things that Philadelphia's urban development destroyed was the intricate network of streams that once emptied into the Delaware River and provided sustainable drinking and fishing sources for its inhabitants. The mouth of Coocaconoon, later called Dock Creek by English invaders, and which is now the intersection of Front and Dock streets, was where the first tavern in Philadelphia was built. The earliest elite Philadelphia settlers had their homes built there, alongside so many breweries and tanneries that the creek got totally trashed and had to be filled in with dirt and built over. Coocaconoon became Dock Street. Dock Street Brewery, a popular West Philly gentrifier outpost, is named after that process of colonial destruction.[4]

The Philadelphia region also has excellent soils, but intensive agricultural exploitation, urbanization and other forms of land engineering have eroded the soil's composition almost entirely in some places. The chestnuts and elms of the forests are now mostly gone due to a blight that accompanied colonial invasion; the entire city has been cleared of trees altogether – but at least we have tree-themed street names to remember them by! Timbering and agriculture have dramatically changed the ecology of the remaining woods. The black bears, wolves, mountain lions, panthers, elk, and mastodon (now extinct) that once populated the area are all gone; deer, wild turkeys, beavers, raccoons, rabbits, woodchucks, foxes, porcupines, squirrels and skunks are still around, but in extremely reduced numbers.

The grid of the city of Philadelphia, even in its earliest version, counteracted the logical organization of the region, especially its streams and floodplains. Everything that resisted the city's forced architecture had to be bulldozed, filled in and covered over. We don't know exactly what lies under our feet here.

Although William Penn claimed to envision living in harmony with nature in Philadelphia, in reality, colonization immediately created a segregated and exploitative city in which environmentalism was available only for the elite few. From the start, living in nature and comfort was for the affluent; the working classes lived in the increasingly crowded and polluted parts of the city. By the end of the 1770s, there was a culture of "gentleman farmers" who owned gentry estates in the north and west parts of the city that highlighted their cultivated interest in the natural order. Wealthy landowners like John Bartram and William Hamilton collected and displayed exotic species to evoke a feeling of the "wild" on their carefully crafted colonial estates (now Bartram's

[4] Some of the earliest lawless settlers attempted to reimagine and repurpose Dock Street to the detriment of the Philadelphia elite, however. According to one source, "Still some of the waters of the creek could be seen in the big archway, or culvert, at the outlet, and at one time, after the Bank of Stephen Girard had replaced the Bank of the United States, on Third Street, a story was told of a plot that was said to have been formed by some desperadoes to the end of kidnapping Girard by going through the archway in a boat" ("Dock Street," William Perrine, *Evening Bulletin*, January 27, 1919).

Gardens and the Woodlands Cemetery, respectively, in West Philly). Landscape gardening was a competition for status and was intimately intertwined with the ongoing colonial project; for example, Lewis and Clark gave seeds from their westward invasion to Hamilton to be planted at the Woodlands (Dominic Vitiello, *Nature and the City: Ecohistory and Environmental Planning in Philadelphia*, 1681–2000, 29). This cultivated, inauthentic relationship to "the natural world" – that is, the reconstructed remnants of the world that their ancestors had pillaged and destroyed less than a century earlier – lives on in the city today.

During the 20th century, capitalist industrial overdevelopment led to further decline and decay. New suburban development accelerated (consuming farmland and open space at an average of one acre per hour, according to DVRPC, *Guiding Regional Growth*, 1994) while the city became overgrown, trashed and abandoned, the groundwater got contaminated, and some homes and streets sank into underground creeks.

The Quaker progressivism of William Penn's approach to colonial conquest has more successfully produced dispossession than that of any other colonial leader or state. According to the 2000 federal census, Pennsylvania is the last-ranking state in the percentage of its population that is classified as Native (0.01%). The state has no Indian reservations or Native groups that have won legal recognition from the state or federal government. The Lenape Nation of Pennsylvania counts around three hundred Lenape people remaining in the state.

The United States government is currently in violation of its 1778 treaty with the Lenape. The Nanticoke Lenape website states:

> The first treaty that was signed by the United States government, after its Declaration of Independence, was with the Lenni-Lenape (also called "Delawares") in 1778 during the Revolutionary War. The revolutionary government promised that if the "Delawares" helped their fight against the British, they would be given statehood in the future … a promise that was not kept. Because of continuing conflict with European settlers encroaching upon Tribal lands, many of the Tribe's members were killed or removed from their homelands. Some were able to continue to live in the homeland, however, they lived in constant fear. Those who remained survived through attempting to adapt to the dominant culture, becoming farmers and tradesmen.

The Lenape were continually pushed further west, to Ohio, then Kansas, then Missouri, and finally to Oklahoma.

The Nanticoke Lenape and the Ramapough Lenape Nation (both of whom traditionally speak Munsee, an Algonquian dialect, as opposed to the Umani dialect spoken by the Lenape who lived in what is now the Philadelphia area) have state recognition from New Jersey; both are still trying to get federal recognition. After struggling since 1867 to legally establish their independence from the Cherokee Nation, the Delaware Tribe of Oklahoma finally achieved federal recognition in 2009. Small contingents of Lenape also live on reservations on the other side of the colonial border: the Delaware Nation at Moraviantown and the Munsee-Delaware Nation.

In 2001, Lenape tribes in so-called New Jersey won a long-term campaign to protect Black Creek, an ancient Lenape site at the confluence of two streams that the town government of

Vernon, NJ, had attempted to bulldoze in order to develop baseball fields. The campaign brought together many scattered descendants of the Lenape, including members of the Ramapough, the Nanticoke, the Lenape Tribe of Delaware, the Eastern Band of Lenape, and the Delaware Tribe of Oklahoma.

As of 2018, the Ramapough Lenape are fighting against the Pilgrim Pipeline, which is slated to carry oil and gas from fracking sites in North Dakota through thetribe's land, which is on the other side of the Delaware River. In 2016, the Ramapough began an encampment in Mahwah, NJ to stop the pipeline.

In addition to the genocidal destruction that capitalism and its liberal settler colonial attitudes have wrecked, rifts between those who sought to cooperate with settler leadership and those who chose to directly struggle against it have also posed serious threats to Native struggle and survivance, here in the Delaware Valley as elsewhere. The ways in which the Lenape were pacified in part through divide and conquer tactics, involving the Haudenosaunee and the selection of certain Lenape leaders to sign treaties, will be familiar to those who have borne witness to the internal controversies around leadership and pacifism within today's Native struggles, most significantly the dynamics at Standing Rock that ultimately assisted in bringing down the encampment.

Decolonization, beyond trying to stop any further desecration of land, will mean at minimum the destruction of any settler colonial institutions, practices, and beliefs that have helped perpetuate or justify ongoing exploitation and domination. This includes the progressive ideals and reformist strategies that were never intended to support direct struggle and have not succeeded in challenging this ruthless settler colony – and, in fact, were instrumental in its creation.

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2. Dynamite Speaks
Anarchist bombing campaigns in Philadelphia, 1917–1927

History can be a powerful tool and a powerful distraction. It is important to learn from it so as not to repeat mistakes, but it is just as important to not get caught staring backward and unable to see where we're going. We are in constant motion, after all. So we try to better our peripheral vision, turning our head slightly to account for what's ahead and what's behind. In this way we get a glimpse of a flare-up of activity in circles much like our own, in this city, one century ago.

In the lead-up to the United States involvement in World War I, anarchists agitated strongly against the patriotic sensation and military conscription efforts. Luigi Galleani, a major but mostly forgotten contributor to anarchist thought, considered by some the progenitor of insurrectionary anarchist theory, advocated that anarchists avoid the draft by moving to Mexico. He spread these and other incendiary ideas through his internationally influential newspaper, *Cronaca Sovversiva*, which was based out of Barre, Vermont, and whose pages always carried an advertisement for his infamous bombmaking manual called *La salute è in voi!* (Health is in you!). Due to Galleani's influence, many of the more conflictual anarchists and their activities disappeared from the US during the summer of 1917. Despite this, or maybe because of it, the 1917 Espionage Act began to criminalize any criticisms, insubordinations, or attempts to interfere with recruitment within the US military. The 1918 Sedition Act furthered punishable offenses to include any criticism of the government at all during a time of war.

The Sedition Act was considered a powerful tool in the suppression of the Italian migrant insurrectionists associated with Galleani, as it aimed to correct the shortcomings of the 1917 Espionage Act and the 1903 Anarchist Exclusion Act that banned immigrants who were "anarchists, or persons who believe in or advocate the overthrow by force or violence of the Government of the United States, or of all government, or of all forms of law, or the assassination of public officials." The 1903 act had been passed in response to anarchist Leon Czolgosz's 1901 assassination of President McKinley that incited Theodore Roosevelt to declare that "the anarchist is the enemy of humanity, the enemy of all mankind, and his is a deeper degree of criminality than any other." Abandoning its previous stance on asylum for political refugees with the 1903 legislation, the US government continued to exacerbate its criminalization of anarchists and grew its toolbox that had allowed the execution of anarchists for their beliefs as early as the Haymarket incident of Chicago in 1886.

Many of the Galleanist insurrectionaries who took to Mexico saw their time there as a sabbatical while they lay in wait for the revolution to spread from Russia to their homeland in Italy. After some Mexican comrades had helped them cross the border to avoid conscription, the anarchists bided their time, struggling to eke out a living with few job prospects, waiting for a revolution that would never come. In the meantime, they got to know one another. The infamous

bomb maker Mario Buda, the *Cronaca Suvversiva* editor and bomb-thrower Carlo Valdinoci, the soon-to-be-famous pair Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, and a quiet-tempered but militant anarchist from Philadelphia by the name of Giovanni Scussel, among some sixty total Galleanists, developed their affinities and conspired abroad.

When revolution failed to manifest in their Italian homeland, and interpersonal tensions grew with their idleness and impatience, they reentered the United States at varied times and by different routes that autumn to reinvest in the struggle here. Upon returning, they reintegrated into their previous political circle, which continued to provide the means for editing, publishing and distributing what the US Justice Department called "the most dangerous newspaper published in this country," as well as getting housing, jobs and money to those most frequently on the move or building bombs. Paul Avrich describes how they returned to trying "to live the anarchist life on a day-to-day basis… They formed … little nuclei of freedom, as they saw it, which they hoped would spread and multiply throughout the world" – a more comprehensive predecessor to the collective life and affinity groups many of us know today. They had theater groups, picnics, dances, and prepared guns and dynamite for armed retaliations against the government and bosses.

They were often involved in leafleting their workplaces and were on the frontlines of worker strikes, though they had a great disdain for both socialism and syndicalism. Vanzetti called the strike "an elemental expression of labor discontent, not an affair for organizations or theories," and "applauded the strikers' refusal to submit themselves to the authority of union officials" (Avrich, 40). They worked in numerous industries; some were cigar workers, and at least one – Giovanni Scussel – was a brick mason in Philadelphia.

Many of those who went to Mexico had spent time in prison for agitation and demonstrations, having been convicted on charges of conspiracy and inciting to riot, but they continued or escalated their involvement upon their return, and would later become prominent members of various Sacco-Vanzetti Defense Committees during that pair's infamous trial.

The Galleanists' ire grew as the government raided *Cronaca Sovversiva* groups in the years 1917–18, then banned the perodical from the US mail system and penned the Espionage Act of 1918 to focus on deporting foreign anarchists, resulting in the death of Peitro Marucco of the "Demolizione" anarchist group after he was abducted in Latrobe, Pennsylvania and deported. Last but not least was the warrant issued for Galleani in November 1918 and his subsequent deportation in 1919. As repression of anarchists increased, anarchists' responses escalated.

The April 1919 parcel bombs, cleverly disguised as packages from Gimbel's department stores, were intended to arrive and detonate on May 1st. They were the first to clearly target those most culpable for the attacks on and imprisonment of anarchists. The bombs were addressed to notable figures like John D. Rockefeller, J.P. Morgan, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, Pennsylvania Governor William C. Sproul, Pennsylvania Attorney General W.J. Shaffer, and a wealthy employer named T. Larry Eyre of Chester, Pennsylvania. Thirty-six packages were shipped in all, with staggered mailing dates so they would all arrive on the same day. "Authorities declared them the most deadly contrivances in their experience," but most were not even delivered after a postal clerk accidentally discovered their purpose while opening one strike-breaking mayor's package upside down, disarming the explosive in the process. In the end only one package, the first to arrive, detonated – and this cost the recipient's maid her hands.

On June 2, 1919, bombings were attempted again, this time by hand delivery to the recipients' homes. Powerful 25-pound explosives, again lauded by the authorities for their assembly, were delivered to prominent authority figures in eight different cities. Two bombs exploded in

Philadelphia between 11pm and midnight at Our Lady of Victory Catholic Church at 54th and Vine, and at the private residence of businessman Louis Jajieky at 224 South 57th Street. It has been suggested that both bombings were carried out by the same men, using a car stolen at 12th Street and what is now Cecil B. Moore Street, though the lack of flyers at Jajieky's home led the Bureau of Investigation to drop that particular case. The flyers that were distributed with the other bombs, titled *Plain Words*, were printed on pink paper and read as follows:

> The powers that be make no secret of their will to stop, here in America, the world-wide spread of revolution. The powers that be must reckon that they will have to accept the fight they have provoked.
>
> A time when the social question's solution can be delayed no longer; class war is on and can not cease but with a complete victory for the International proletariat.
>
> The challenge is an old one, oh "democratic" lords of the autocratic republic. We have been dreaming of freedom, we have talked of liberty, we have aspired to a better world, and you jailed us, you clubbed us, you deported us, you murdered us whenever you could.
>
> Now that the great war, waged to replenish your purses, and build a pedestal to your saints, is over, nothing better can you do to protect your stolen millions, and your usurped fame, than to direct all the power of the murderous institutions you created for your exclusive defense, against the working multitudes rising to a more human conception of life.
>
> The jails, the dungeons you reared to bury all protesting voices, are now replenished with languishing conscientious workers, and never satisfied, you increase their number ever day.
>
> It is history of yesterday that your gunmen were shooting and murdering unarmed masses by the wholesale; it has been the history of every day in your regime; and now all prospects are even worse.
>
> Do not expect us to sit down and pray and cry. We accept your challenges and mean to stick to our war duties. We know that all you do is for your defense as a class; we know also that the proletariat has the same right to protect itself, since their press has been suffocated, their mouths muzzled; we mean to speak for them the voice of dynamite, through the mouth of guns.
>
> Do not say we are acting cowardly because we keep hiding, do not say it is abominable; it is war, class war, and you were the first to wage it under cover of the powerful institutions you call order, in the darkness of your laws, behind the guns of your bone-headed slave.
>
> No liberty do you accept but yours; the working people also have a right to freedom, and their rights, our own rights, we have set our minds to protect at any price.
>
> We are not many, perhaps more than you dream of, though but are all determined to fight to the last, till a man remains buried in your Bastilles, till a hostage of the working class is left to the tortures of your police system, and will never rest until

> your fall is complete, and the laboring masses have taken possession of all that rightly belongs to them.
>
> There will be bloodshed; we will not dodge; there will have to be murder: we will kill, because it is necessary; there will have to be destruction; we will destroy to rid the world of your tyrannical institutions.
>
> We are ready to do anything and everything to suppress the capitalist class; just as you are doing anything and everything to suppress the proletarian revolution.
>
> Our mutual position is pretty clear. What has been done by us so far is only a warning that there are friends of popular liberties still living. Only now we are getting into the fight; and you will have a chance to see what liberty-loving people can do.
>
> Do not seek to believe that we are the Germans' or the devil's paid agents; you know well we are class-conscious men with strong determination, and no vulgar liability. And never hope that your cops, and your hounds will ever succeed in ridding the country of the anarchistic germ that pulses in our veins.
>
> We know how we stand with you and know how to take care of ourselves. Besides, you will never get all of us … and we multiply nowadays. Just wait and resign to your fate, since privilege and riches have turned your heads.
>
> Long live social revolution! down with tyranny.
>
> THE ANARCHIST FIGHTERS.

In all, there was only one casualty of the June bombings: a notorious anarchist named Carlo Valdinoci. Onetime editor of the inflammatory periodical *Cronaca Sovversiva* and comrade of Luigi Galleani, he died when the bomb he was carrying exploded on the doorstep of Attorney General Palmer's home. Up until that point he had been celebrated for his repeated evasion of the police, who had been looking for him for since before the excursion to Mexico. The bomb decimated Valdinoci and even blew out the windows of the mansion across the street, which belonged to future president and Japanese internment camp architect Franklin Delano Roosevelt. On Valdinoci's person were many things, now scattered in pieces about the neighborhood, including two pistols, an Italian-English dictionary, a ticket stub from the train he had boarded at 24th and Chestnut in Philadelphia, and a hat that had been made at Deluca Brothers at 919 South 8th Street, also in Philadelphia.

As such, Philadelphia became the epicenter of the investigation into the nationwide bombings. As historian Paul Avrich asserts, this was mostly in vain, as much of the organizing likely occurred in Massachusetts, where Valdinoci had begun his train journey. In any case, six days later an unexploded bomb was found in Philadelphia, this time outside the Frankford Arsenal.

One *New York Times* article focused on a socialist bookstore at 1330 Arch Street in Philadelphia that remained open, carrying the "latest IWW literature," including such titles as *The Liberator, The New Solidarity,* and *The Class Struggle.* In an unintended irony, the authorities said this literature was "inciting revolution … that would bring violence of the worst type," while the same issue of the *Times* carried a story on the German invasion of Poland.

So investigators moved their headquarters to Philadelphia, looking into an earlier unsolved bombing from December 30th, 1918, as a possible beginning to a larger nationwide terrorist plot. On that occasion, bombs had destroyed the homes of Justice Robert Van Moschzisker of the

Pennsylvania Supreme Court (2101 Delancey Street), William B. Mills, Acting Superintendent of Police (1139 North 41st Street), and Ernest T. Trigg, President of the Chamber of Commerce (64th Street and Church Road, Overbrook). A fourth bomb had failed to go off outside the office of United States Attorney Francis Fisher Kane, with flyers strewn about the Post Office Building and Federal Building there. At least nineteen homes of prominent citizens were damaged by the bombs, most of them on Delancey Street, but there were only two minor injuries. The target on Delancey Street itself suffered severe damage, as the *New York Times* reported the next day: "The vestibule was blown out, windows in the house were shattered and bricks were torn out of the front wall." The door was blown to splinters, slugs had bored their way into other parts of the house, and the street "was strewn with anarchist circulars, probably 100 of them," according to the resident. The flyers denounced "the priests, the exploiters, the judges and police, and the soldiers."

The bombers' target, Judge Von Moshzisker, was hated for having convicted four Italian anarchists for shooting a policeman during a demonstration ten years before the bomb destroyed his home. The 1908 demonstration had appealed for jobs during a particularly high level of unemployment. Before the demonstration, the cops had been tipped off and they set an ambush. In the ensuing conflict, a cop was shot and several were arrested for conspiracy against the state and incitement to riot including local anarchists Chaim Weinberg and Voltairine de Cleyre.

Eight thousand people had been under suspicion for the 1918 bombing, many having been discharged from jobs at war-work factories "because they were suspected of complicity in plots to set fire to munition works." Others were "known members of various red radical organizations," with two thousand "known to have expressed Bolshevist or IWW sentiments." Their names were compiled during the war for association with "clans of terror," and their associations were all but convicted by the papers as they immediately attributed such transgressions to "red" associated groups. Under Mills' investigation, nine men and one woman were ordered to be arrested, but only Industrial Workers of the World member Edward Moore was picked up. Acting Superintendent Mills had said, "He will be held incommunicado. No lawyer will get access to him. I shall recognize no writs to produce him. No one will see him or know his name until we have had a chance to investigate further," conveying how little one can rely on fair treatment from the state. Police Chief Cortelyou went so far as to say that "there is a lamppost for every Bolshevist," suggesting that they would all hang for their associations (and despite Bolsheviks and anarchists being very different). This was not a terribly surprising sentiment, as even the *Philadelphia Inquirer* said in 1917 that anarchists were "pests" to be gotten rid of. Nonetheless, despite being an anarchist, a Revolutionary Party member, and former secretary to Wobbly "Big Bill" Haywood, Moore was released by January 3, 1919, with no new suspects announced.

Italian neighborhoods of South Philadelphia are largely known today for their conservative tendencies and vigorous support of police. While these bombings were going on, however, there was a significant aspect of that neighborhood that was home to radical Italian immigrants who were investigated for these bombings. For a time, in fact, it was specifically suspected that the bombs had been constructed in the heart of the Italian neighborhoods on Reed Street near 5th. The changes to these neighborhoods that dissolved their radical associations likely had something to do with the changing shipping industry at the nearby docks, as well as the reclamation and political assimilation of union organizing into more conservative tendencies like the AFL-CIO.

Throughout 1919, radical agitators in Philadelphia were arrested for distributing flyers and suspected as leads in the bombing cases. One particularly cogent circular, reported in February, was entitled "Go-Head!":

> The senile fossils ruling the United States will see red!
>
> Smelling their destruction, they have decided to check the storm by passing the Deportation law affecting all foreign radicals.
>
> We, the American Anarchists, do not protest, for it is futile to waste any energy on feeble minded creatures led by His Majesty Phonograph Wilson.
>
> Do not think that only foreigners are anarchists, we are a great number right here at home.
>
> Deportation will not stop the storm from reaching these shores. The storm is within, and very soon will leap and crash and annihilate you in blood and fire.
>
> You have shown no pity to us! We will do likewise.
>
> And deport us! We will dynamite you!
>
> Either deport us or free all!
>
> THE AMERICAN ANARCHISTS

The same message had circulated throughout New England; Avrich claims that Italian anarchists Mario Buda and Carlo Valdinoci were among those responsible for its publication. No charges were ever levied on either distributors or alleged publishers of the circulars, however, let alone trials or convictions.

Meanwhile, a group of Spanish anarchists called *Grupo Pro Pensa* were arrested in Philadelphia and New York City on February 22, 1919, and held for deportation, accused of plotting to assassinate President Wilson.

The circulars and bombs were obvious responses to the deportation threat, especially with what became known as the Palmer Raids, which targeted foreignborn radicals but often swept up all sorts of people in the process. Many were deported, including Emma Goldman, Alexander Berkman and Luigi Galleani. Many of the deported were put aboard a ship dubbed *The Soviet Ark*, and sent to the newly established USSR, only to face a new and particularly insidious phase of repression from the Bolsheviks.

These raids, deportations, and other processes of criminalization led popular sentiment to tend temporarily in favor of immigrants and anarchists, and led to the ruin of Attorney General Palmer's political aspirations. Another target of the bombing campaigns, one Rayme W. Finch, who had previously arrested Scussel in Ohio and trailed Valdinoci around the country, ran and hid in the mountains of southern Pennsylvania before leaving the Bureau of Investigation for safer employment.

In the following years, dictators rose to power in Spain and Italy. The anarchist response in Philadelphia was tenacious. Bombs exploded at both nations' consulates, at 7th & Pine Streets and Broad & Tasker Streets respectively, only minutes apart one night in November, 1923. This speaks to some truth in the circular that said the anarchist "storm" would survive the deportations. Again the milieu didn't cooperate with police, and again no one was charged.

Certainly quite a few "Galleanists" died in the United States of old age, including another of the more famous would-be-assassins, named Nestor Dondoglio. Assuming the name Jean Crones while working as cook in Chicago, he had poisoned the soup stock to be served at a dinner honoring a new Roman Catholic archbishop in February 1916. Some say the stock was diluted, while others suggest Dondoglio added too much arsenic; in any case, the politicans, businessmen, bishops, bank presidents, judges and the superintendent of schools who ate the soup ended up on the floor vomiting it back up before it could kill them. Dondoglio escaped capture and later died quietly in Connecticut in 1932.

Elsewhere, insurrectionary Italian anarchist immigrants continued to be prominent targets of the US government, and anarchist militants Bartolomo Vanzetti and Nicola Sacco were railroaded by a Massachusetts court after being charged with robbery and murder in a town called Braintree in 1920. The two Galleanists, who had been members of the exodus to Mexico, were picked up for their association with Mario Buda. They were charged with the shooting death of a paymaster and his guard during the robbery of a shoe factory. They were armed at the time of their arrest, and lied to the police, but had substantial alibis, no prior convictions, alleged witnesses lied for the prosecution, nothing was presented to the jury about any other suspects (the robbery had involved four bandits), and the $16,000 in stolen money was never connected to the pair nor their comrades. Paul Avrich also notes that "the district attorney … conducted a highly unscrupulous prosecution, coaching and badgering witnesses, withholding exculpatory evidence from the defense, and perhaps even tampering with physical evidence." The DA played on the prejudice and emotions of jurors, and the judge revealed his own bias after sentencing the pair to death. A worldwide campaign for Sacco and Vanzetti's lives began in earnest, with Philadelphia being no exception, but it was ultimately in vain. As the situation became more hopeless, the solidarity became increasingly explosive. Two weeks before their execution in August 1927, a church was bombed in West Philadelphia after the presiding pastor delivered a sermon against the death row anarchists. This occurred amid bombings in New York and Baltimore the very same night, with extra guards posted and perimeters drawn out around US consulates overseas. Once the two were executed, their friend Buda crafted a huge explosive, placed it on a horse drawn carriage, and exploded it on Wall Street in revenge, killing thirty-eight people. It was the first car bombing in history. Now nearly friendless in America, Buda escaped to Italy.

With this, the anarchist bombings in Philadelphia tapered off, and radical labor struggles followed suit. The last account from the IWW in Philadelphia, prior to its renewal during the anti-globalization era of the 1990s, was when dock workers refused to load arms onto a ship bound for Franco's Spain in 1936. Bombings did continue elsewhere, largely in solidarity with and targeting those culpable in the murder of Sacco and Vanzetti, from Massachusetts to Argentina and beyond.

Much of the more violent Argentinian struggle and solidarity actions are credited to anarchist Serverino di Giovanni, who, despite not fitting the mad-bomber anarchist trope, was still vilified by some of his more civil anarchist contemporaries. Still, memories of insurrectionary ventures from Philadelphia to Argentina and beyond live on and continue to inspire insurrectionary activities today. In 2017, Philadelphia anarchist periodical *Anathema* reported in an article touching on topics from Galleani to di Giovanni, called "Health is in you," that "contemporary anarchists the world over" continue to have "similar discussions on disseminating the means to safely produce explosive and incendiary devices in recent years, in an attempt to proliferate these means in or-

der to escalate conflict and the effectiveness of their actions … these discussions have advocated the utmost precaution."

We look to these campaigns as uncompromised anarchist praxis. These bombings occurred around a period of time during which striking mine workers and anti-prohibitionist criminals in the state sometimes used the same methods, and though some were anarchists and some not, they all had in common a contempt of the authority imposed on them and sought to do the utmost in destroying these authorities and their abilities to control. While the conditions and circumstances that factor into our actions vary over time, Bruno Fillipi's adage is certainly always true: "dynamite speaks."

3. "We All Float Down Here"

RAM's "floating tactics" & the Long Hot Summer of 1967

In our present moment, street fighting and anticapitalist action are often synonymous with what Viewpoint's Salar Mohandesi has called the "floating tactic" of the black bloc; the recent brawls with fascists and attacks on yuppie property in Philadelphia are no exception. By now, it should be obvious that the black bloc is a tactic – involving wearing all black and masking up – and *not an organization*. While it would be misleading to reduce the black bloc to donning black clothes, the outfit is the innovation that gives this specific configuration of tactics its name. Like many before him, Mohandesi traces the black bloc to the squatters of 1980s Germany, arguing that it was primarily a self-defense tactic tied to the institution of the social center. But when the black bloc became unmoored from that institution whose defense gave it meaning, he argues, it became a "floating tactic" doomed to repetition without a specific purpose to anchor it. While Mohandesi's "floating tactic" points us to an important distinction between the black bloc and fixed sites or institutions, he does not fully grasp *why it floats*. What we need to consider in reevaluating this tactic is why floating through the streets and other sites of circulation has proven to be one of its primary strengths. In order to understand the circulation of street fighting, we must go back further, before the prevalence of black uniforms.

We can trace the hallmarks of this street fighting, including mobile crowds, window breaking, projectiles, back much further, but the best place to turn is likely the riots in the United States fifty years ago, commonly known as the "long hot summer of 1967."[1] To his credit, Mohandesi recently revisited this question in light of Antifa actions and explored earlier antifascist actions in France's Mai '68.[2] While locating the development of these tactics in anti-racist struggles is a step in the right direction, we should view the focus on Europe with skepticism: not only does this focus reproduce a Eurocentric history of struggle, it also follows a dubious pattern of associating disruption with foreign invasion and outside agitation that anarchists are all too familiar with. The period of uprisings known as the "long hot summer" of 1967 not only witnessed some of the most explosive urban riots in American history, it also marked a major turning point in organization. Significantly, the street fighting we see happening in Philadelphia currently can trace its repertoire of tactics to events close to home. If the outside agitator is a mythic whirlpool we need to avoid, we should also be careful not to crash on the rocks of American exceptionalism. American history has demonstrated an almost inexhaustible ability to recuperate uprisings as examples of American freedom of expression. But these summer riots were never a dramatic outburst by the "unheard"; they were part of a struggle for Black liberation. This struggle should be understood as a movement to abolish "America," an entity constituted by racist oppression.

[1] Almost 51 years at the time of this writing. The riots of 1967 took place approximately 50 years after a string of significant insurrectionary anarchist actions based on propaganda of the deed, discussed in the previous chapter. 1967 marks a mid-point or semicentennial between this history and our own.

[2] See Mohandesi, "Back In Black", *Viewpoint*, February 8, 2017.

Finally, it is important to resist the tendency to reduce Black liberation struggles or any struggle for liberation to leadership of "The Movement": legitimate, representative, and most importantly, identifiable.[3]

These floating tactics are not always recognized by social movements, nor even necessarily identifiable as anarchist. Attacks against the State and property circulate in both anarchist space and broader liberation struggles. The history I will discuss below should draw our attention to the similarities between recent actions clustered under the heading of "Antifa" and prior events known by the names of cities (like "Ferguson" or "Baltimore"), which are often included under the banner of Black Lives Matter (BLM). Since the events adopted by or ascribed to BLM were both large-scale and highly mediated, the similarities with anarchist actions often get lost in the framing and focus. For example, BLM is often credited for a massification of traditional protest tactics, but these protests were also remarkable for popularizing the blockage of highways by mobile crowds. Moreover, the events in Ferguson took the form of vigils and marches in some instances, while in others highly mobile crowds outmaneuvered the police, surrounded police cars, confronted riot cops with bottles and broken bricks, and lit fires. In Ferguson, Baltimore, and elsewhere, some participants (often masked) opened up the space for smashing windows, widespread looting, and burning down stores. In Baltimore, one person in a gas mask even cut the firehoses being used to put out the flames. Although popular discourse contrasts these actions with the "organized" or "peaceful" protests, this activity could be better understood as adjacent to each other. Insisting on the division between two types of actions only serves to further the view that the more anarchic riot is an ahistorical, spontaneous reaction. Riots have a history. The overall composition of recent events strongly suggests that the Ferguson and Baltimore riots and the so-called black bloc tactics have a shared history in the riots of the long hot summer of 1967.

In this chapter, we turn to the Black liberation organization known as Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM) to examine their role in developing the street fighting tactics used during the 1960s riots. We turn to RAM not to valorize their leadership in these events, but to explore a homegrown manifestation of an insurrectionary tendency in America. As we will see, the historical documents of RAM provide a fascinating template for subsequent actions, but from the beginning these "floating tactics" have already exceeded the bounds of the identifiable organization. Still, we should call into question the narrative of spontaneity and disorganization that often accompanies histories of riots. Riots do not emerge from nothing. At least three factors contributed in 1967: (1) the pattern of racist police attacks on Black people that invariably catalyzed events, (2) the crisis in Capital emerging in this period, including the rising specter of deindustrialization and the falling rate of profit in manufacturing, that, as Joshua Clover points out, shifted the focus from wage-based struggles in the workplace to sites of circulation, that is, from the factory to the streets[4] and (3) the renewed focus on cities as sites of struggle for Black liberation. Traditionally,

[3] While we can appreciate *Viewpoint's* attempt to assess and evaluate street fighting, their rubric opens the door to this reduction and the subsequent recuperation of struggles. See, for example, their more recent analysis of the black bloc in the context of the Juggalo March on Washington, where they distinguish between "authentic" Juggalos and the black bloc, arguing that the "real" Juggalos were capable of defending themselves without the assistance of those wearing black. Again, *Viewpoint* misses the reason for the black bloc: not a uniform for street fighting but a tactic for remaining anonymous – something clown makeup can't always accomplish.

[4] Although the mid-60s seems too early for financialization, Black people, as Clover notes, bore the early weight of the process of industrial contraction. The collective *Endnotes* points out that automation begins to ramp up just as the Civil Rights movement gains ground against segregation. Deindustrialization played a crucial role in the shape of Black Liberation struggles, creating new terrain that contributed to the popularization of Black Power, especially RAM

Black liberation struggles are periodized by associating nonviolence with struggles in the rural South in the early 50s and violence associated with Black Power in the urban North in the 1960s, even though these struggles and tactics overlap. Here, we are less interested in the distinction commonly drawn between nonviolence and violence than a distinction within "violence" itself: roughly, the shift from stationary "self defense" to mobile offense.[5] The history of RAM provides us with an instance where Black liberation struggles intentionally organized a mobile offensive in response to their conditions and in spite of its potential to exceed their leadership.

This chapter provides a history of RAM from an insurrectionary perspective that situates them within the broader, informal networks struggling against white supremacy in the 1960s.[6] RAM was a Black liberation organization in the 1960s with a large network and a headquarters in Philadelphia. As a Philadelphia-based group, RAM can help us trace the chthonic channels connecting the insurrectionary currents of the 1960s to the anarchist actions happening in the city today (see the timeline at the end of this book). Equally, our perspective, which privileges decentralization over hierarchy, can aid in retelling this history without making RAM's Philadelphia-based leadership the authors or protagonists of these events. It might seem strange then to rely on a formal organization like RAM at all to tell this history but, since formal groups keep better records, they often become the main medium through which we can access a history of informal and decentralized action. By concentrating on RAM, we can at least begin to complicate the history that (when it refers to them at all) relegates RAM to a catalyst and antagonist of the better-known Oakland-based Black Panther Party. From the point of view of public record, the Black Panthers were at the center of the radical forces known as Black Power, but what if we were able to view this period from the point of view of the underground? Then, perhaps, even RAM would appear too popular, too public, too formal and structured. Ultimately, focusing on RAM has three main benefits for unearthing an insurrectionary history in Philadelphia: (1) dislocating the Eurocentric history of insurrectionism, (2) decentering the Black Panthers from the narrative of Black Power, and (3) since it is dangerous and nearly impossible to investigate the networks that directly led to rioting, RAM provides us with a relatively public access point to explore this period without accidentally conducting volunteer police work.

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and the Black Panthers' focus on the unemployed. Proponents of Black Power were uncommonly perceptive in regard to the consequences of automation. However, the relationship between Black Liberation and early developments in automation and "cybernetics" are still relatively understudied in the historical narratives fixated on the spatial differences of North and South rather than technological/economic change. For examples of Black Power-era writing on automation and cybernetics, see C.E. Wilson's "Automation and the Negro: Will We Survive" in Liberator (July 1965); James Boggs's *The American Revolution*, an obscure book cited by *Endnotes*; Sidney M. Willhelm's *Who Needs the Negro?*; and the *Black Panther* newspaper.

[5] Self-defense remained the watchword in most armed groups, but it should be remembered that the common purpose of self-defense groups was to provide security for talks or demonstrations (or in the Panthers' case, a neighborhood), which should be distinguished from the offensive maneuvers of the rioters and guerrillas. For example, in a book review of Regis Debray's *Revolution in the Revolution?*, the reviewer, Weusi, took note of the distinction between self-defense and offense in order to critique the rioters in Detroit for taking up defensive positions "instead of taking the battle to the honkies."

[6] The details of this history are drawn from archival material and several accounts of RAM by historians, including Robin D.G. Kelley, Peniel Joseph, and Akinyele Umoja. A crucial history of RAM was written by RAM leader Muhammad Ahmad, which first appeared as his MA thesis under his former name Maxwell C. Stanford. Much of this material was included in his book, *We Will Return in the Whirlwind*, published as Muhammad Ahmad. Due to a few significant omissions in the latter book, this chapter primarily refers to the "Stanford" text.

What Was Revolutionary Action Movement?

The basic story of RAM follows the expected conventions of student activists: RAM formed as an off-campus chapter of Students for a Democratic Society in Cleveland, Ohio in 1962. They grew out of a group called Challenge and took the name Reform Action Movement in order to run for student government at Central State College. After winning student elections, some members left for other communities to organize. Muhammad Ahmad (known at the time as Max Stanford) and Wanda Marshall returned to Philadelphia, where they openly organized a chapter of Revolutionary Action Movement. During this period, Marshall and Ahmad met with Malcolm X to discuss the possibility of joining the Nation of Islam, but Malcolm advised them to build an independent organization. Based in Philadelphia, the RAM leadership set out to build a national organization through regular travel.

Characteristically, the insurrectionary tendency within RAM was never rooted to a specific location but began by floating out. One of the most significant trips for the development of this tendency was, curiously, the 1963 Progressive Labor sponsored trips to Cuba. While RAM members were in Cuba, they connected with other militants from across the US and started to develop an underground network. This is where RAM met Robert F. Williams, who would become a figurehead of sorts for the fledgling organization. Williams was infamous for using his tenure with the NAACP to organize armed self-defense against the KKK in North Carolina and, at the time, was in exile in Cuba, having fled kidnapping charges in 1961. While in Cuba, RAM members also established ties with militants from Detroit's Black liberation group Uhuru and San Francisco's Afro-American Association. They agreed to help RAM build a national organization, which was called the Black Liberation Front of the USA. Additionally, RAM formed ties with international groups, including affiliates of the Front de libération du Québec, who would play an important role in events discussed later. Returning to the US, RAM was positioned to play an influential part in the mid-60s development of Black liberation struggles.

1961

- Robert F. Williams flees United States
- Challenge, SDS chapter established (Fall)

1962

- Reform/Revolutionary Action Movement established in Cleveland
- Robert F. Williams, *Negroes with Guns*
- Marshall and Ahmad meet Malcolm X (Thanksgiving Break)

1963

- Revolutionary Action Movement study/action group established Philadelphia (January)
- PL sponsored trip to Cuba (July)

1964

- Robert F. Williams, *Crusader* (February)
- Roland Snellings, "The Long Hot Summer" (June)
- Malcolm X announced founding of OAUU (June)
- Harlem riot (July)
- Philadelphia riot (August)
- *Black America* issue 1 (Fall)
- Deacons for Defense and Justice established in Louisiana (November)

1965

- BLF arrests (early February)
- Malcolm X killed (February 21)
- Watts Riots (August)
- Lowndes County Freedom Organization aka the Black Panther Party founded in Alabama

1966

- Hough riot, Cleveland, Ohio (July)
- Formation of the Harlem Black Panther Party (c. July)
- Oakland Black Panther Party (BPPSD) (c. October)

1967

- Series of arrests of RAM leadership (June)
- Long, Hot Summer of riots in Newark, Detroit, etc.
- STDW protests (October)

1968

- Shootouts among Black Guards in West Philadelphia (October)
- Followed by mass arrests
- RAM dissolves (October) into other groups (Black Liberation Party, DRUM, RNA, etc.)

Over the next year, RAM developed their political connections through continued travel and a large print culture. RAM maintained a headquarters in Philadelphia and advanced their political analysis in their publications *Black America*, a bimonthly publication, and *RAM Speaks*, a weekly newsletter. On the other side of the country, members of San Francisco's Afro-American Association created *Soulbook*, an influential publication that put members in contact with older generations of the Black Left.[7] The Philly cadre, too, began connecting with local mentors, including Ethel Johnson, who had organized with Robert F. Williams in North Carolina, and Queen Mother Moore who held monthly meetings that "practically served as a school for a new generation of young black radicals" (Kelley 78) in her West Philadelphia home. Through these mentors, RAM developed their political analysis, but they also turned to their experiences on the street.

RAM became one of the first groups to advocate for the significance of youth and street gangs taking part in the riots.[8] When a white cop shot an epileptic Black man in 1963 in Philadelphia, a small riot erupted in response. Witnessing this event led RAM to rethink their organizational structure and to reevaluate the potential of spontaneous urban uprisings. There were some theoretical precedents to RAM's insights: their comrades in Detroit who were affiliated with the Johnson-Forrest tendency were theorizing the possibilities of non-worker-based revolutionary struggle. Additionally, Robert F. Williams was speculating about the possibilities of widespread rioting. Around the same time, Malcolm X began to speak of similar possibilities in terms of guerrilla warfare, echoing the sentiments of RAM. But it was largely RAM's direct experiences in Philly that led to their sympathy for urban conflict. In the summer of 1964, a series of riots swept across Philadelphia, New York, and elsewhere, marking the first of many large-scale urban uprisings within the "Civil Rights period" (i.e. since 1943). Just before the riots, Malcolm X broke with the Nation of Islam and founded the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU), a secular Black liberation group with ties to RAM.[9] Although Malcolm spent the following months traveling internationally, the networks around OAAU helped push toward broader militant action. Famously, the crowds in the Harlem riots chanted "We want Malcolm," and Ahmad indicates that the paramilitary wing of Malcolm X's fledgling organization, including RAM, responded by joining them in the action (Stanford 103).

Malcolm X was an inspirational figure for armed struggle and insurrection in the 1960s, but he remained primarily a figurehead in the riots because he travelled regularly until his assassination in 1965. In contrast, RAM actively participated in the events of the summer of '64, which helped them prepare for the subsequent long hot summers. In his history of RAM, the scholar Robin Kelley makes the dubious claim that RAM was an entirely theoretical outfit dedicated to writing

[7] Robin Kelley names the former member of the African Blood Brotherhood Harry Haywood as one of the most significant contacts they made through Soulbook (76).

[8] They were, of course, not the only ones to do so. Significant in the context of this book, Jonathan Leake's anarchist group Resurgence Youth Movement also took up organizing with street gangs around this time.

[9] Ahmad claims that this OAAU was intended as a front organization (with RAM as its underground wing) that could connect with and possibly take over Civil Rights struggles in the South (Stanford 102). Members of RAM continued their efforts in the South, working with and sometimes in conflict with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). In 1965, SNCC spokesperson Stokely Carmichael was asked to intervene in Greenwood, Mississippi, where RAM was coordinating armed self-defense groups. In Atlanta in 1966, a RAM-affiliated SNCC chapter aroused the ire of elements with SNCC with its confrontational stances.

about political violence but not acting on it.[10] While it is not my intention to implicate RAM further in illegal activities, the historical record as well as Ahmad's fieldwork refutes Kelley's claim.[11] It is difficult to imagine that no RAM member was drawn into the events exploding across their neighborhoods in the mid-60s. However, Ahmad reminds us that the riots were not organized by black revolutionaries, even if they consistently participated.

Blueprints for the Summer

As a formal organization, one of RAM's most significant contributions was the distribution of a strategic vision for urban rebellion. The main way they distributed this vision was through a set of interrelated print publications. These publications supplemented their political actions and organizing with a clear articulation of their revolutionary ambitions and speculations on how to escalate the struggle. What is interesting for our purposes is how RAM's innovative vision of insurrectionary struggle was adapted to American cities. Rather than building on the Leninist or Maoist revolutionary models that so many Marxists continued to roleplay, RAM developed on the lessons learned from the rioting Philly youth. Additionally, they drew from Robert F. Williams' exceptional and visionary analysis outlined in his newspaper *The Crusader*. As early as 1964, Williams was fantasizing about mobile groups without central organization that could intervene in capitalist circulation of goods: "All transportation will grind to a complete standstill. Stores will be destroyed and looted… Essential pipe lines will be severed and blown up and all manner of sabotage will occur… The economy will fall into a state of chaos." The blockage of circulation that Williams envisioned would be facilitated by a new "concept of revolution [that] defies military science and tactics" of traditional leadership, with its "lightning campaigns." According to the House of Unamerican Activities, RAM made similar use of writing in various forms, such as posters attacking the police, flyers instructing in the production of Molotov cocktails, graffiti calling for the creation of armed groups, and print publications. Through their written work, Williams and RAM promoted a vision of insurrection that, according to Muhammad Ahmad, led to affiliated groups virtually competing to create the largest riot.[12]

Although Williams was insistent that his writing was not a blueprint for revolution, he foresaw many of the tactics that would come into practice in the summer of '64. With the limits of pacifist Civil Rights struggle clearly in sight, Williams advocated a shift to urban guerrilla warfare in "Potential of a Minority Revolution," an article which drew together potential tactics into a strategic vision. While this vision is sometimes more wish fulfillment than grounded strategy, the tactics he describes are accessible and generalizable:

> The weapons of defense employed by Afroamerican freedom fighters must consist of a poor man's arsenal. Gasoline fire bombs (Molotov cocktails), lye or acid bombs (made by injecting lye or acid in the metal end of light bulbs) can be used extensively. During the night hours such weapons, thrown from roof tops, will make the

[10] Kelley writes, "It should be clear that RAM members never attempted to implement Williams's military strategies, and they never engaged police or anyone else in an armed confrontation. They only wrote about it. In print, at least, RAM's official position was that a guerrilla war was not only possible but could be won in ninety days" (80).

[11] See, for example, Muhammed Ahmad's thesis, specifically his interviews with former RAM members (67–68).

[12] Due to the structure of aboveground front groups, central committees, and underground military units, it is difficult to ascertain the structure of this organizing outside of their writings.

> streets impossible for racist cops to patrol. Hand grenades, bazookas, lights mortars, rocket launchers, machine guns and ammunition can be bought clandestinely from servicemen, anxious to make a fast dollar. Freedom fighters in military camps can be contacted to give instructions on usage. Extensive sabotage is possible. Gas tank on public vehicles can be choked up with sand. Sugar is also highly effective in gasoline lines. Long nails driven through boards and tacks with large heads are effective to slow the movement of traffic on congested roads at night. This can cause havoc on turn-pikes. De-railing of train causes panic. Explosive booby traps on police telephone boxes can be employed. High powered sniper rifles are readily available. Armor piercing bullets will penetrate oil storage tanks from a distance. Phosphorus matches (kitchen matches) placed in air conditioning systems will cause delayed explosions which will destroy expensive buildings. Flame throwers can be manufactured at home. Combat experienced ex-service men can easily solve that problem. (*Crusader* 5.1, p 5)

This description may be simply speculation but the attention to detail could also be interpreted as instructions. In advance of the summer, RAM distributed this newspaper throughout their networks and, moreover, wrote similar tracts of their own that further developed Williams' thoughts.

In *Black America*, RAM set out possible actions for urban struggle in terms similar to Williams'. In June of 1964, Askia Touré (aka Roland Snellings) described these possibilities as a coming "long hot summer" that would move past the "bourgeois reformism" toward "a new kind of freedom fighter."[13] He saw the signs of a coming insurrection in recent "waves of indiscriminate terrorism in the northern cities."[14] Building on Touré, Muhammad Ahmad located potential weak points to target in cities, arguing that

> Charlie's[15] system runs like an IBM machine. But an IBM machine has a weakness, and that weakness is its complexity. Put something in the wrong place in an IBM machine and it's finished for a long time. And so it is with this racist, imperialist system. Without mass communications and rapid transportation, this system is through. The millionaires who control this country would be isolated from their flunkies who do their dirty work. When war breaks out in this country, if the action is directed toward taking over institutions of power and complete annihilation of the racist capitalist oligarchy, then the black revolution will be successful… The revolution "will strike at night and spare none." Mass riots will occur in the day with the Afroamericans blocking traffic, burning buildings, etc. Thousands of Afroamericans will be in the street fighting – for they will know that this is it. The cry will be "It's On!" This will

[13] In the fall issue of *Black America*, prefaced with a note explaining it was written before the summer riots.

[14] This is likely a reference to the prequel to the Harlem riot known as the Little Fruit Stand riot and the murders attributed to a semi-fictional group called the "Blood Brothers," which the *New York Times* described as an anti-white youth gang in Harlem trained in martial arts and formerly affiliated with Malcolm X. The accused were later known as the Harlem 6. There is evidence that the Blood Brothers was the name given to an informal network of autonomous groups in Harlem that laid the groundwork for the Five-Percent Nation, a splinter from the Nation of Islam – a sign, at least, that Malcolm X's lessons in self defense quickly spilled out of the confines of any specific organizations. For their part, RAM organized with the Five Percenters in Harlem for a period of time.

[15] "Charlie" or Mr. Charlie was once a popular term used to refer pejoratively to white people.

> be the Afro-American's battle. for human survival. Thousands of our people will get shot down, but thousands more will be there to fight on. The black revolution will use sabotage in the cities – knocking out the electrical power – first, then transportation, and guerrilla warfare in the countryside in the South. With the cities powerless, the oppressor will be helpless. Turner's philosophy[16] of "strike by night and spare none" is very important because it shows us that Turner knew the psychology of White America, and that we had leadership with guerrilla instinct. (*Black America* 1.1, p 2).

As we can see, the strategy privileged disrupting sites of circulation (of commodities, traffic, electricity, communication). Moreover, RAM emphasized the destructive possibility of uprisings rather than taking over and holding space. They took from the guerrilla the idea of prioritizing mobility over conserving or protecting space. RAM analysis can account for the rioters' penchant for "burning down their own community." In the months following this publication, thousands of people would take part in similar actions in American cities, most notably in Watts in 1965.

Burn Baby Burn

The riots demonstrated the viability of much of RAM's strategic vision but, at the same time, these events exposed the limit of RAM's control of events. RAM's presence in the Watts riot was strong. One RAM member recounted a story where he was graffitiing during the Watts riot only to be approached by an unfamiliar RAM cadre (Stanford 67). However, when RAM reflected on the riots, they recognized how these events exceeded the direction of any leadership.

The writing of their mentor Robert F. Williams exemplified this potential contradiction in RAM's strategy by simultaneously arguing for central leadership and promoting autonomous small groups who didn't need to follow a blueprint. Williams wrote two follow-up articles to the "Potential of Minority Revolution," the first following the Watts riots of 1965 and the second following the string of riots in Detroit, Newark, and elsewhere in the long hot summer of 1967. In 1965, he argued for the need to develop "fire teams," which he defined as small groups operating autonomously and secretly to perform acts of sabotage. These groups of three or four people would not have any connection with the Civil Rights movement or even with each other and would instead focus on setting strategic fires (forest fires, wastepaper baskets, air conditioning systems) and otherwise sabotaging circulation (placing tacks on road during rush-hour traffic) (*Crusader* 7.1 5).[17] But, in 1967, Williams argued for an insurrection with "central planning and a national supreme command," while still maintaining the importance of the small bands of autonomous guerrillas able to "constantly shift its position when sniping to avoid detection" (*Crusader* 9.2 1–7). In theory, RAM needed to account for the difference between their leadership and the need for decentralized maneuvers in mass actions. On the ground, RAM needed to come to terms with their relationship to hierarchy within their own organization.

[16] A reference to Nat Turner, a slave who led a massive rebellion in Virginia 1831 and consequently became a hero of Black liberation struggles.

[17] In the same article, Williams developed a more robust argument about how to deal with the deployment of national guard and militarized police: "Cops and troops must be disarmed and their weapons turned against other cops to obtain weapons of defense. Tanks and armoured cars must be knocked out with Molotov cocktails and captured when possible. Bazookas and mortars must be taken from troops and national guard armories to prevent heavy concentration of troops and invasion by overwhelming force" (7).

As RAM developed through their experiences, different tendencies emerged, as did divisions over the question of hierarchical structure. The official leadership had its headquarters in Philadelphia, but as a national organization with loose communication, there were factions and leadership elsewhere. By 1965, RAM had faced important splits in which one side, headquartered in Philadelphia, took up democratic centralism,[18] while the other attempted to develop a loose network of cells, retaining the name Black Liberation Front (BLF). Though RAM was at this point characterized by central leadership, they continued to emphasize spreading generalizable tactics to Black youth in impoverished neighborhoods. It might be more helpful, then, to view the structure of their organization as dispersed and decentralized with factions competing to represent it.

Reflecting on the events in Watts, RAM insisted the newspapers were wrong to describe the riots as leaderless since the youth, in fact, had led the riots. Their print response to the Watts riot, a journal called *War Cry*, reproduced Williams' analysis of the riots and Ahmad's articles from *Black America*.[19] This ambiguous category of "youth" is maintained over any specific organizational structures as the journal pinpoints gangs as the "most dynamic force" that could be trained to fight "Charlie" (aka whitey). While RAM split over democratic centralism, they were perfectly willing to engage in informal organizing as long as fomenting an uprising remained the priority. The decentralization of their network ensured that the riots went on with or without the direct participation of a particular cell or grouping. Just months before the Watts riot, members of the BLF were arrested for conspiring to blow up the Statue of Liberty with the aid of the Front de libération du Québec, who they had made contact with in Cuba in 1963. The arrests of the BLF foreshadowed the repression that befell RAM in 1967, which followed a similar pattern of preemptive strike before the riots took place.[20]

In the interval between the Watts riot and the long hot summer of 1967, RAM experimented with tactics that could be used in different cities and without their direction. The Watts riot became a standard to emulate for many of the Black Liberation groups of the 1960s. While earlier riots in Philly and New York City were important to RAM's development, the scale of Watts shifted the emphasis in Black liberation struggles from the sit-ins in Southern towns to the mobile tactics in larger cities. Not surprisingly, RAM set out to recreate the Watts riot in other cities. The Ohio RAM members recounted that their attempt to create another Watts in Cleveland in 1966 was a chance to "test urban guerrilla warfare" and they formed a group calling itself the Black Nationalist Army that fought police "door-to-door" in Hough, Cleveland (Stanford 67–68). The grand jury convened to investigate the Cleveland riot claimed that RAM used their headquarters in Hough, called the Jomo "Freedom" Kenyatta House (or JFK house), as a training ground for

[18] Democratic centralism was later taken up by the Black Panthers as well and is traditionally associated with Marxist-Leninist groups. The decision by the Philadelphia headquarters to follow this structure may have been influenced by their mentor Queen Mother Moor, a former member of the Communist Party. It is interesting to note that Huey P. Newton's Oakland-based Black Panthers' adherence to democratic centralism was at the heart of their split with the Black Liberation Army. More curious still, at least one suspected member of the BLF, Bob Collier, would later be part of the Panther 21 trials, often seen as a direct predecessor to the Black Liberation Army.

[19] *War Cry* also examines another armed formal organization, the Deacons for Defense, who are, intriguingly, referred to as "the black liberation army."

[20] When the BLF was arrested, the FBI tried to make the connection to RAM in order to indict them as well. However, they concluded that they were no longer members, remarking that Bob Collier had left RAM for being "not sufficiently militant."

riots, including drills for snipers (Stanford 64).[21] From the point of view of the State, RAM was virtually franchising Watts to other communities.[22] However, the resulting pattern of arrests and police repression made their role less than straightforward.

The long hot summer of 1967 saw the most explosive and widespread riots in American history, but the RAM leadership viewed it from prison. These preemptive arrests are likely the basis for Kelley's claim that RAM did not participate in the riots, although I suspect his motives have more to do with respectability politics. The FBI confirmed that they believed RAM was neutralized during this period.[23] But is it correct to say RAM did not participate in the riots because their leadership had been jailed? The onus on leadership only makes sense from the point of view of mainstream history that follows the logic of representation. This is the same logic that led to the arrests, which had a great impact on RAM but failed to prevent the riots. Before their arrest, the mainstream press began a series of exposés, claiming RAM was "plotting a war on whitey," and blaming a failure of leadership among Civil Rights groups that opened the door to "extremists." The publication of these articles spurred police raids on RAM leadership in Philadelphia and New York City in June, which led to charges of conspiracy to riot, to poison police officers, and to assassinate moderate Civil Rights leaders.[24] While most of these charges reek of a governmental counterinsurgency strategy, RAM's involvement in preparing and training for the riots seems indisputable. By the time the riots happened, though, the events had taken on a more anti-authoritarian character.

In fact, RAM's approach to the 1967 riots already followed Donald Freeman and the BLF's model of a loose coalition more than a hierarchical cell structure. Thus, despite the BLF's faltering under state repression, the tendency toward decentralization won out in the split since the hierarchical faction of RAM still had to reckon with the ungovernability of the rioters. In the months leading up to the riots, RAM visited Detroit and called on militants to prepare for armed confrontation. Instead of recruiting for their organization, RAM emphasized a decentralized network of prepared participants.[25] By this time, they were also heavily connected to the Black Power networks and forming coalitions with powerful groups like Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). In August of 1966, a month after the Cleveland riot, RAM formed a chapter of the Black Panther Party in Harlem in collaboration with SNCC. There is evidence of Black Panther presence in the Detroit riots, and at least one member of RAM stayed on to organize militias. Yet, for the most part, the events of the summer of 1967 took place without the direction of RAM leadership.

[21] See HUAC, *Guerrilla Warfare in the US*. Furthermore, HUAC claimed that Lewis G. Robinson, whom they named as the head of JFK House, was a member of a myriad of armed groups, including the Deacons for Defense and RAM. The namesake of JFK House, Kenyatta, was famously the leader of the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya.

[22] According to Bloom and Martin, there were multiple networked groups preparing for the riots in Detroit: "In addition to RAM and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, these activists included Uhuru, Reverend Albert Cleage and the Black Christian Nationalist Movement, the Afro-American Unity Movement, radical activists and authors Grace Lee and James Boggs, and the Malcolm X Society. A SNCC delegate from Cincinnati at the Second Black Arts Conference in late June said, 'We already had our riot and we're here to show you how it's done."'

[23] An FBI memo from J. Edgar Hoover in 1968 summarized Philadelphia police intervention in the summer of 1967, claiming that "[RAM] were arrested on every possible charge until they could no longer make bail. As a result RAM members spent most of the summer in jail and no violence traceable to RAM took place."

[24] In Philadelphia, these raids were ordered by then Police Commissioner and future mayor of Philadelphia, Frank Rizzo.

[25] According to one of Muhammad Ahmad's anonymous sources, "No one was asked formerly to join RAM. They were only requested to participate and get down in their neighborhoods in the summer" (Stanford 68).

The decentralization of the riots meant that participants came from differing ideological and political backgrounds, including anarchism. Like RAM, the anarchist milieu developed their own lessons from their experiences participating in the riots. In an article by Detroit anarchist Allan Van Newkirk, a "Burn Baby Burn" banner with an accompanying Black Panther hung above the headquarters for several of the local anarchist publications during the riots.[26] Van Newkirk contextualized the riots in an insurrectionary and pro-situationist framework as a broader attack on the representational politics of leadership and property. Van Newkirk seems particularly interested in the cross-racial alliances forged in the streets, pointing to the participation of white anarchists in what the local news referred to as "the first integrated looting in history" (qtd in Van Newkirk, 8). As a result, his account verges on useless ethnocentrism that only serves to re-center the white anarchists' protagonism. Although Van Newkirk places too much stock in the participation of white looters, his account of the events does remind us that the rioters were not all affiliated with hierarchical organizations or even any organization.

What remains essential in the anarchist reception of the riots is the Black insurrection "against the tyranny of white property" (Van Newkirk, 6). The anarchists distributed their succinct analysis of the events in real time through leaflets that simply read "Summer Plunder Festival: get the big stuff and don't get caught" (8). Van Newkirk's post-riot reflections can only add to this already clear objective by a) analyzing the economic implications of the riot and b) distributing a model for the future. For the former, Van Newkirk's situationist-inflected analysis focuses on how the riot can extend beyond reacting to police violence and become an attack on property. There is a false distinction here: while we can appreciate the 60s anarchists' ability to recognize the interrelation between police repression and the regime of property, it is dubious to prioritize opposition to one over the other as more "insurrectionary." The attack on police is already an attack on property, just as the riot in the street, as RAM described, is already a disruption of Capital.[27] This is why window-breaking sometimes includes looting but other times does not, contrary to critics like the Young Lords who quipped about the Weatherman's Days of Rage: "who ever heard of breaking windows and not taking anything?" (qtd in Varon 85). Many would soon hear about these types of actions since the anarchists had a substantial influence in the Underground Press, a network of independent newspapers, which supplied a forum relatively unmediated by the activist leadership. In the Underground Press, the anarchists helped distribute ideas for future actions.

Does It Float?

In the late 1960s, militants from varying backgrounds sought out models for small group organizing that could operate within mass mobilizations. Models inspired by the riots were particularly important for the Stop the Draft Week demonstrations (STDW) in October 1967. The STDW organizers were drawn to the potential synthesis of the riots and their ongoing anti-war protest marches. Their marches were public events composed predominantly of students, often

[26] The Artist Workshop was the center for anarchist activity in Detroit. The Detroit anarchists published *Guerrilla, The Fifth Estate*, and several other papers. The editors of *Fifth Estate* were singled out and criticized by the anarchist rioters for not showing up in the streets. Through their glaring absence, we can see the importance of participation among anarchists.

[27] As Joshua Clover eloquently puts it, while expanding the Situationist analysis of riots, "The police now *stand in the place of* the economy, the violence of the commodity made flesh."

middle-class and white, who were unlikely to adopt the most combative tactics of the riots, such as clandestine sniping. Still, they drew on central tenets gleaned from the riot: small groups, mobility, confrontation, and autonomy from leadership. But since open armed struggle was taken off the table by these student groups, less-specialized tactics were needed. The first sign of the spread of these tactics might be the prevalence of karate lessons advertised in the Underground Press. These advertisements sometimes explicitly linked this training with fighting the police and were in fact listed along with instructions for Molotov cocktails as prohibited in new riot laws the following year. Small bands of karate-trained militants would conceivably act the part of guerrilla foci without the Cristobal Carbine rifle.[28]

The STDW protests at the Oakland Induction Center provide an opportunity to study the evolving repertoire of street fighting tactics that is worth examining closely if not simply because of the extensive coverage it received in the Underground Press. One paper, *The Movement*, dedicated an entire issue to reflecting on the events. As a newsletter affiliated with both Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), *The Movement* acted as an intellectual bridge between Black Power militants and the student movement in a period in which they attempted to create alliances for anti-war protests. Since SNCC had excised its white membership earlier in the year as part of their shift to a Black Power strategy, *The Movement*, with its white editors[29] was less connected to SNCC. However, SNCC had always been a decentralized organization with autonomous "projects" instead of chapters and *The Movement* continued to publish under the modified subheading "affiliated with SNCC and SDS" (Cannon). While the exact relationship between SNCC, SDS and *The Movement* is complicated, it is worth pointing out that the STDW protests in Oakland were widely viewed as attempts by Berkeley students and other non-black activists to win the respect of Black Power groups. While the outcome looked quite different than the strategies that became popular among groups like the Black Panthers (discussed below), the STDW demonstrations were visibly indebted to the riots of the long hot summer. To be clear, these primarily white protesters are not the best historical example of the influence of those riots, but the disproportionate coverage in the press (in part, no doubt, because of their whiteness) clearly records a legible set of tactics.[30] Like RAM's publications, participants in the STDW used the pages of *The Movement* to essentially create manuals for small group direct action.

The Movement's coverage of the STDW protests described the actions of mobile, decentralized participants in a way that conveyed the reproducibility of their tactics. Images of overturned cars as barricades and protesters confronting the police illustrate possibilities for the reader, while the captions point out important details, such as helmets and shields. The articles detail the repertoire of possible actions from spray paint to projectiles, while multiple maps guide the reader through the street, illustrating communications across groups and methods for blocking flows of traffic, like using newspaper boxes used as makeshift barricades. The maps illustrate the movement of

[28] In fact, *East Village Other* commenters on one of the Pentagon and STDW actions referred to the mobile units of anti-war protesters as "nonviolent" guerrillas.

[29] The primary editor of *The Movement* was Terence Cannon, who was born into a Quaker family and joined SNCC in 1964. He helped establish the San Francisco project and created *The Movement* while also taking part in SNCC work in the South, including the famous Lowndes County, Alabama voter registration drive in the mid-60s that led to the first group to be called the Black Panther Party, the Lowndes County Freedom Organization.

[30] White people controlled a disproportionate amount of the Underground Press and, moreover, did not face the same repercussions as Black militants, which helps explain why there was more coverage of this event and why it would be unlikely to find photos documenting RAM's participation in riots.

groups through the streets, and their confrontations with the police. These pages of *The Movement* present a virtual manual of the floating tactics used in street fighting, containing many of the familiar features we see today.

The experiments in street tactics continued to circulate in the following years, exposing limitations but also possibilities. For the anarchists, Berkeley continued to be a site of growth with the emergence of "revolutionary gangs," families, and communes. The Berkeley Commune, made up of informally organized affinity groups, celebrated May '68 with riots on Telegraph Avenue. Anarchistic tendencies emerged within the formal Black Power organizations as well, leading to fragmentation and rifts that produced the Black Liberation Army (discussed below). Not confined to specific groups, the riot has remained a common occurrence in American streets, notably in the massive Los Angeles riot in 1992 that witnessed days of street fighting, looting, and over 900 structure fires. In retrospect, the LA riot marks a high point in a cycle of struggle that includes the Oscar Grant riots in 2009, as well as those in Ferguson and Baltimore. Yet the aptitude and general knowhow of the LA rioters suggests an intellectual lineage back to 1967. Similar conclusions should be made about the recent responses to the growth of fascism in the USA, often attributed to Antifa but clearly more generalized in many cases, like the street fights in San Jose in 2016. In these moments, we can see that street fighting does float, but it is not, as *Viewpoint*'s Salar Mohandesi suggests, because it is a tactic "cut adrift" from a familiar shore in a social movement. Street fighting was never bound to the role of defending social movement institutions. It floats away from institutions and movement leadership to new locations, floating *through* the actions of rioters.

Black Panthers Liberation Army

Within the networks of rioters, there was space for reflection on organization, adapting lessons for different contexts and plans to act more effectively. Famously, the Black Panthers tried to go beyond the riots altogether. The Panther leadership understood the riots as an important response to the police, but in the aftermath of the long hot summer of 1967 they developed a critique of mass action that favored small groups of guerrillas. Yet the turn to small group organizing within the Panthers is best understood as an outgrowth of the riots, since it drew on the formats made popular by the riot: small bands of looters and snipers.[31] There is an implicit tension between the Panther leadership's claim to represent a broad base and their advocacy for the small group form, especially since small autonomous groups were generally understood as an alternative to top-down command structure. However, this dynamic should not be understood as a contradiction in the Black Panthers but rather as a sign of the heterogeneity of their organization. While certainly some members held self-contradictory views, the Black Panthers' antithetical positions make more sense when we take into account the distinct political tendencies within their networks. What is often ignored in histories of the Black Panthers is their emergence from a relatively decentralized milieu and how their organizational structure left the door open to a return to decentralization.

[31] This is a conclusion Joshua Clover arrived at, albeit for somewhat different reasons. While analyzing the ambiguity in the *Black Panther* newspaper around this issue, Clover argues that the Panthers are on the side of the riot despite Huey's protestations, not least because of his rejection of the strike.

No single cadre is solely responsible for the historical phenomenon known as the Black Panthers. The iconic image of the Oakland leadership looms so large in the legacy of the Panthers that it distorts our understanding of their rise. By visualizing the early development of the Black Panther Party without focusing on the Oakland leadership, a different picture emerges entirely. If we begin with the contributions of RAM, we can decenter the traditional focus on the Oakland cadre led by Huey Newton. Newton's Black Panther Party for Self Defense (BPPSD) is the often-cited exception to what Robin Kelley has called "a general conspiracy of silence against the most radical elements of the black freedom movement" (62). That historians break their silence when discussing the history of the BPPSD is certainly due in part to their focus on self-defense, obscuring their affinity with guerrilla offensives.[32] Since the history of the Panthers has become dominated by the Oakland cadre, it is necessary to point out the "self-defense" modifier in their name serves as a reminder that they were not the only group claiming the Black Panther title. Although when the Oakland chapter grew into a national organization they dropped this modifier, they initially distinguished themselves from other organization by their focus on self-defense and, specifically, their patrols. However, even with the patrols, we should resist the "great man" narrative that suggests these tactics were the invention of the cadre leadership. As Joshua Bloom and Waldo E. Martin point out in their history of the Black Panthers, *The Movement* reported on the activities of the Community Alert Patrol (CAP) in Watts several months before the BPPSD patrols began. Members of CAP "Brother Lennie" and "Brother Crook" spent the year after the Watts riots attempting to prevent another incident of police brutality by patrolling the neighborhood in a car with the Black Panther logo on the side (Bloom and Martin 41).

The fact that this logo first appeared in Lowndes County, Alabama has become well known in recent years. What seems to be less acknowledged is that chapters of the Black Panther Party had already begun to pop up across the country through a network of Black Power militants even before the formation of the best-known chapter in Oakland.[33] The Black Panther Party first appeared outside Alabama as the name of a front group with murky connections to other established Black Power groups. At a SNCC rally in August 1966 featuring speeches by Stokely Carmichael and RAM's Muhammad Ahmad, Ahmad was introduced as head of the Harlem Branch of the Black Panther Party.[34] Curiously, this rally took place three months be-

[32] Additionally, the much-discussed "survival programs" that extended their self-defense strategy from monitoring the police to providing basic necessities.

[33] Martin and Bloom provide an admirable account of the dispersed network of early Black Panther groups inspired by SNCC. While this recent history has offered a necessary corrective, Martin and Bloom's book defaults back to a Newton-centric narrative. At times, the protagonism of Newton leads to strenuous formulations such as the formation of the "first chapter" of the BPP in Los Angeles, whose first act, paradoxically, is to force the pre-existing RAM-linked BPP chapter to close up shop. It was not until the spring of 1968 that the Oakland BPP, under the leadership of Bobby Seale and David Hilliard, began to "charter" the various chapters that had sprung up into a national organization. Prior to this centralization, the affiliations of groups were more nebulous, many with connections to RAM and SNCC. The Harlem Panthers provide a relatively well-documented case of these confusing origins. RAM formed a Black Panther Party in Harlem in 1966 with the approval of SNCC leader Stokely Carmichael. However, in April of 1968, a new Black Panther chapter emerges in Harlem with affiliations to the national organization developed by Seale and Hilliard and, again, with the assistance of the SNCC, now aligned with the Oakland Panthers. The Harlem Panthers grew to become an important headquarters in charge of many chapters in the region, including as far away as Philadelphia. Despite its size, it is not clear if its membership included Panthers from the original Harlem chapter, but it is often given credit for their earlier actions by historians. Former-BLF member Bob Collier, discussed above, was a member of the Harlem chapter.

[34] This rally is recounted in *Black Against Empire*.

fore the Black Power conference in Berkeley that is commonly cited as the event that spread the concept of a Black Panther Party outside of Lowndes County.[35] At the August rally, the speakers were less interested in recruiting for party membership than advocating self-defense and the decentralized tactics of the riots. Ahmad went so far as to argue that the United States "could be brought down to its knees with a rag and some gasoline and a bottle" (qtd in Bloom and Martin, 43). Bloom and Martin acknowledge that some scholars even argue that the Oakland chapter was initially a chapter in this SNCC network. Considering the SNCC-Panther championing of rioters' autonomous action, it would be misleading to replace Newton with Ahmad or Carmichael as the originator of the Panthers. In these initial stages, the Black Panther is best understood as a unifying symbol that provides legibility, affinity, and inspiration to a burgeoning network consisting of relatively autonomous small groups.[36] Despite the tendency of historical narrative to focus on a particular leadership, the Panthers provides an example of decentralized organizing indebted to the underground networks.

Within a brief few years, this volatile combination of underground network and aboveground party ruptured, giving way to the decentralized Black Liberation Army (BLA). In both RAM and the BPP, the BLA existed principally as a speculative future, an organization they were building in preparation for the coming revolution. The existence of the BLA as a formal organization was always debatable until the emergence of groups referring to themselves as such in 1971. The Black Panther Party, like RAM and the BLF,[37] experienced a split over the question of central leadership.[38] Once the party split, BLA communiques proliferated, as if they sprouted fully-formed overnight. However, the groundwork was already prepared by BPP members like Geronimo ji Jaga who spent the late 60s training BPP chapters in military tactics.[39] Considering his strained relations with the central committee, ji Jaga's actions are best understood as continuous with the underground activity seen in the riots rather than properly Black Panther-inspired. Many

[35] Ahmad claims that the Black Panther Party began in the "The Black Nationalist Action Forum" held at the YWCA in Harlem in July 1966. This was the first of weekly meetings, organized by Queen Mother Moore, which Ahmad remembers using for BPP recruitment with the blessing of Stokely Carmichael. They had 250 members by the end of the month.

[36] It is worth remembering that even the national BPP led by the Oakland cadre developed through the accumulation of heterogeneous small groups and gangs, not to mention that their accomplishments, like the Free Breakfast Program, depended on a network of supporters who were not party members. The accomplishments attributed to the BPP were never simply the result of a stereotypical, homogenous "party."

[37] The BLF is sometimes referred to as a forerunner of the BLA but it is not a straight line from one to the other. Even Bob Collier's membership in the BLF and association with members of the BLA cannot confirm any direct continuity. As a result of his prior charges in the Statue of Liberty plot, Collier's involvement in the Black Panthers was closely scrutinized by the State. He was arrested with the Panther 21 conspiracy in 1969 and when he was acquitted in 1971, the police sent an undercover to live in his community for two years. When he was arrested again in 1973 on the testimony of undercovers that he planned to sell grenades, the newspapers and informants claimed that he was a known leader of the BLA. However, there was never any evidence that he was part of the BLA, and he avoided imprisonment when the judge unexpectedly took his side against the police tactics.

[38] The leadership perceived the armed groups as a threat to their authority, but there were other consequences. Another locus of tension was likely the costs of maintaining an underground organization without central leadership. Many of the expulsions occurred while Panthers were on trial for what were judged to be "adventurist" actions.

[39] Ji Jaga acknowledges that his influence was felt outside of the BPP proper: "I had to help build the Ministry of Defense not only for the Black Panther Party. I also had to help build it for the Republic of New Afrika, for the Mau Mau, for the Texas Black Liberation Front, for the Alabama Black Liberation Front [to be distinguished from RAM's BLF], and many other groups in the sixties. And though I wasn't behind a microphone doing it, I didn't hide it" (*Liberation, Imagination, and the Black Panther Party* 75).

members of the BLA were undoubtedly indebted to their experiences of the riots, as well as their contact with more-or-less informal groups trained in arms by gangs like the Slausons or political organizations like RAM.[40] Despite this ongoing clandestine organizing, Assata Shakur describes the BLA in 1970 as barely an "organization." It seems ji Jaga and others were more focused on training people for actions than attempting to produce a formal organization.

The BLA drew on the membership and organizing of the BPP, but its structure reflected the areas the BPP could not contain. Shakur does not acknowledge that the BLA emanated from the BPP; rather, she claims that "the idea of a Black Liberation Army emerged from conditions in Black communities" (169). Furthermore, she argues that "There is, and always will be, until every Black man, woman, and child is free, a Black Liberation Army" (52), which suggests that whatever the BLA was (or is), it was not a traditional organization. Although Shakur attempted to provide the group with leadership and ideology, she had to acknowledge the unexpected conditions of this kind of group.[41] In her autobiography, she remembers that the BLA

> was not a centralized, organized group with a common leadership and chain of command. Instead, there were various organizations and collectives working out of different cities, and in some of the larger cities there were often several groups working independently of each other… It became evident, almost from the beginning, that consolidation was not a good idea. There were too many security problems, and different groups had different ideologies, different levels of political consciousness and different ideas about how armed struggle in amerika should be waged (241–2).

Simply put, Shakur acknowledged that her presumptions about the underground were a "fantasy" and the reality was much less structured.

But from the perspective of some in the BLA, it was precisely this decentralized network that formed the basis of struggle within which the BPP was only one aspect. As Zayd Shakur put it, "The Black Liberation Army, to which the Black Panther Party belongs" (qtd in Faraj, 153). It is ultimately too difficult to determine the nature of the relationship between the BPP and BLA since so much of the history of the BLA must out of legal necessity remain secret. No matter how we choose to understand their relationship, it is certain that the growth of the BLA led to tension and eventually a break with the central leadership. Elements in the Party sympathetic to the BLA produced a publication called *Right On!* that competed with the central committee's *Black Panther* newspaper. Articles in *Right On!* consistently critiqued the leadership, especially on the question of conflict, and argued that the riots had already set the conditions for the conflict whether BPP leaders like Newton agreed or not.[42] The tipping point came when the leadership

[40] Akinyele Umoja argues that the BPP split didn't create the BLA, but it certainly replenished its ranks, especially in Harlem. Furthermore, the Harlem BPP, he points out, had friendly relations with many recruits affiliated with RAM and was influenced by RAM strategist Herman Fergusen, who may have inspired the Harlem BPP to form a clandestine wing from the beginning. On the West Coast, the former member of the Slauson Renegades, Bunchy Carter, is often said to have brought a fully-formed armed wing with him when he became leader of the Los Angeles BPP.

[41] Assata states that "The Black Liberation Army is not an organization: it goes beyond that. It is a concept, a people's movement, an idea." Her formulation leaves us with a bit of a puzzle: if the leadership provides the ideological unity, isn't it strange that the idea transcends the organization?

[42] The BLA, for the most part, continued the vanguardist line that was increasingly popular in this period, but their understanding of the vanguard differed somewhat since, for them, it was grounded in action rather than an official position. In an issue of the BLA-affiliated paper *Right On!*, Landon Williams accused the Oakland leadership

implemented a stationary defensive strategy, which proved incompatible with the increase of mobile groups.[43]

In some cases, the development of armed self-defense had proved to be a significant development in Black liberation struggles, leading to daring and innovative escalations, such as the defense of the Los Angeles office against a siege by the newly formed SWAT. The success of the LA office's resistance was due in large part to the paramilitary measures taken by the Panthers under the guidance of ji Jaga: sandbagging, trenches, and gun towers.[44] These provisions allowed the Panthers to protect the office even when a bomb was dropped on the roof, much like the one a decade later in Philadelphia that destroyed the MOVE house and burned sixty-five neighboring houses.[45] However, prominent members of the BPP like Assata Shakur diagnosed the strategy of defending stationary positions as deeply flawed.[46] Many groups agreed with Shakur, remaining on the offensive despite the executive mandate that made the defense of Panther institutions official policy.

By the early 1970s, the BLA floated away from the institutions of the Black Panthers. Key figures in the development of the BLA, like ji Jaga, had consistently managed to navigate the wider networks of the Black liberation struggles and avoid the restraints of the hierarchical leadership. Although he had a leadership role in the LA chapter, ji Jaga maintained political connections outside of the Party that included future BLA members like his close friend Mutulu Shakur.[47] Ji Jaga's eventual expulsion from the Panthers inaugurated a series of expulsions within the Party. In this context, ji Jaga and others were quick to realize that future struggles would emerge from their more heterogeneous networks rather than the central committee.[48] The Panther leadership's focus on protecting Party offices served the purpose of institutional self-preservation, but

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of being right-wing for calling the people to wait for the revolution, a position which Williams viewed as counter to an armed conflict that he claimed had already been ongoing since the 1965 riots in Watts. He rejected any leadership standing in the way of conflict with the slogans: "ACTION IS THE VANGUARD! THE GUERRILLA IS THE COMMAND! ALL BLOCKERS MUST GO!"

[43] Executive Mandate Number Three, March 1st, 1968

[44] Flores Forbes described the LA headquarters in his memoir: "This may have looked like a normal house to the untrained eye, but once you stepped inside, you easily noticed the difference… We had been 'tunneling for freedom' for the past two months. We dug straight down through the floor of a closet in one of our bedrooms for about ten feet and then hollowed out an area, like a vestibule that had two tunnels heading in different directions… Each of the tunnels went directly to an exit under our neighbors' homes… In the attic, Simba, Jimmy Johnson's deputy and one of the many Vietnam veterans in the Party, constructed an 'eagle's nest.' This location was sandbagged and would be used as an elevated firing position. Under the house was a trench system that bordered the house and facilitated seven reinforced gun ports."

[45] In a talk in Philadelphia in 1997, ji Jaga revealed that the SWAT team in 1969 used a bomb similar to the one used on MOVE in 1981, but that the blast did little damage since the Panthers had sandbagged the roof. He noted that "we shot the helicopter down through the hole that they blew the roof in and I'm very proud of that."

[46] In regard to Executive Mandate Number Three, Assata Shakur remarked: "It said Panthers were supposed to defend the office against pig attacks. I was all in favor of self-defense, but i couldn't see giving my life up just to defend the office. 'It's the principle of the thing,' they told me. I didn't understand what principle they were talking about. One of the basic laws of people's struggle was to retreat when the enemy is strong and to attack when the enemy is weak. As far as i was concerned, defending the office was suicidal."

[47] Mutulu Shakur's history included membership in RAM, founding the Republic of New Afrika, working with the New York Black Panthers, and later joining the Black Liberation Army.

[48] What is commonly referred to as the "split" in the BPP could also be interpreted as the Panther leadership's failure to channel the militant elements into a defensive position. Ji Jaga argued that the so-called split in the Party was nothing of the sort, since the current leader, Huey Newton, had been too far out of touch to have the authority to re-shape the party.

only at the expense of the members called to defend it. In the end, the Panthers prioritized an aboveground presence that reinforced and reproduced the hierarchical command structure over and above attacking the power structures of State and Capital. The next chapter takes a closer look at individuals in Philadelphia who prioritized the continued assault on State and Capital, went underground, and made connections with likeminded individuals within the BLA.

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4. The Black Liberation Army

It was August 1970, and an unarmed black child had been killed by police in Philadelphia. It was a familiar story, another legal lynching, a continuation of the slave patrols that police had descended from, but this time a few took it upon themselves to seek revenge.

It was a time of heightened political awareness and militancy in black neighborhoods nationwide, and Philadelphia was no exception. The Revolutionary Action Movement spray-painted "Join the Black Guards" all over the city, and similar groups had been forming citywide since at least 1968. One group is said to have thrown hand grenades into a police parking lot, damaging patrol cars.

It was in this context that the Black Unity Council formed, consisting primarily of former gang members who had become convinced by Malcolm X and RAM that the notoriously racist police who preyed on black folks were not bulletproof. One goal of the BUC was to prepare for violent repression from the National Guard should another rebellion occur like the 1964 riot that began at 22nd and what is now Cecil B. Moore Street.

At the forefront of this budding organization was one Russell "Maroon" Shoatz, former member of the 30th and Norris Street Gang, that brought together men and women from Germantown and Southwest Philadelphia neighborhoods.

They chose no officers for their group, starting out with a consensus-based model until their paramilitary aspirations went into full effect in 1970. A year before that, the BUC had folded themselves into the local Black Panther Party, considering themselves better equipped to deal with the intense police repression that had been raining down on the Panthers nationwide. Shoatz criticized the BPP's authoritarian leadership and their insistence on fighting from fixed positions, saying that these had limited the Panthers to the point of getting them jailed and killed, a failing that the BUC hoped to alleviate with their paramilitary training.

The BUC had already armed themselves with "shoulder-fired weapons, side arms, and even hand grenades. [They] belonged to shooting/hunting clubs, practiced karate, went on outdoor maneuvers, and fortified all of [their] homes." Indeed they even had stockpiles of "food, water, first aid stocks, and all," in addition to doing work like negotiating truces between gangs in the area.

So when the black child was killed by an unrepentant police force, Shoatz and a handful of others put a plan into action, targeting a Fairmount Park Police outpost near 63rd & Catherine Streets – at that time the third largest force in the state, after Pittsburgh and Philadelphia proper.

On August 29th, 1970, Shoatz and others surrounded the police structure with trip-lines to grenades they had allegedly stolen from Fort Dix, New Jersey. But the plan quickly deteriorated, and they shot the station's attending officer, killing him, and shot one of the officers arriving by car in the jaw. They went underground and continued to struggle for New Afrikan self-determination as part of the Black Liberation Army; they were known as the Philadelphia Five.

By January 1972, all suspected had been captured, except for a sixth suspect named Richard B. Thomas. He evaded capture until 1996 in Chicago, and the charges did not hold up in court after so much time had passed.

Shoatz was the only successful escapee of four during an attempt in 1977, which allowed him to breathe free air for 27 days before the slave patrol picked him up again. In March of 1980, he again escaped prison, this time with a fellow revolutionary, after a New Afrikan activist smuggled a revolver and sub-machine gun into the institution. Three days later all three were captured after a gun battle with local, state, and county police as well as FBI agents.

They kept fighting from within prison. On May 31, 1973, Philadelphia Five member Muhammad Kafi (formerly Fred Burton) collaborated with former 30th and Norris Street gang member Joseph Bowen (who had become politicized during a previous incarceration, and would be imprisoned again for killing a cop in 1971), to assassinate the prison warden in retaliation for intense repression against Muslim prisoners in the Holmesberg Prison in Philadelphia, where they were being held. They created a fake pass to see the warden, which they gave to a rookie guard who was filling in for a regular guard at the prison. When they entered his office, the two closed the door and attacked him. The noise drew in the deputy warden and guard commander, who were killed and wounded, respectively.

On October 28, 1981, Bowen led a mass liberation attempt from the state's largest prison at Graterford, a short distance outside of Philadelphia, after arming other prisoners with two shotguns and two revolvers. Bowen and three others attempted to scale the prison's 40-foot wall but were stopped by a rifle shot from a guard tower. After returning fire, they captured three guards and retreated into the prison kitchen, where they captured three kitchen employees and twenty-nine inmates. Three other inmates joined in the action.

Bowen and the six others held off the prison's guards, state police, and FBI for five days until an agreement was struck. Bowen was sent to the Federal Prison in Marion, Illinois, where he met up with fellow prisoners of war such as Sundiata Acoli, Hanif Shabazz Bey, and Ray Luc Levasseur.

In 1972, Police Commissioner Patrick V. Murphy lamented that the BLA was terribly difficult to infiltrate, spy on, or capture due to their mobile, decentralized organization. A high-ranking police source also told the *New York Times* that the BLA members were difficult to find because of "an alleged failure of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and most local police forces to 'effectively use trained black officers' because what he called an inherent racism 'that prefers to use unreliable pimps and informants.'" Ultimately, though, it was the limitations of the BLA's material support that did them in.

The demise of political organizations like the BPP limited recruitment into the movement that would provide new people and energy that could have better supported the underground, whose infrastructure never compared to such predecessors as the Underground Railroad.

Meanwhile, racial sensitivity trainings began to accommodate for black power at the Fort Dix boot camp as early as 1971, and the integration of the police force sought to undermine the revolutionary ardor that drove many of these vengeful tactics.

After a flurry of police shootings, bank robberies, a successful plane hijacking by two men who had simply walked out of a New Jersey prison near the airport, and the successful liberation of Assata Shakur from another Jersey prison, the story of a fully operational BLA began to close. The 1981 Brinks armored truck robbery in Rockland, NY resulted in the capture of all involved. The last of these was Abdullah Majid (formerly Anthony Laborde), who was captured while walking

on Old York Road in North Philadelphia while wearing a bulletproof vest and carrying a tote bag containing a 9mm, in early January 1982.

Majid died in prison on April 3, 2016. Joseph Bowen has maintained a revolutionary infamy among fellow prisoners, many of whom become aware of his story immediately upon entering the Curran-Fromhold Correctional Facility – named for the warden and deputy he had assassinated in 1973. After forty years in segregation Bowen was finally transferred to general population inside State Correctional Institution at Coal Township on August 1, 2017. Russell "Maroon" Shoatz survived more than twenty-two tortuous years in solitary confinement and was released into general population at nearby SCI Graterford in February of 2014. A book of his writings, *Maroon the Implacable: The Collected Writings of Russell Maroon Shoatz*, was released in April 2013 with both new and old work, and he continues his indomitable fight to this day.

5. Against the New Society

A critique of MNS

Attempts to attack the socioeconomic order in Philly today inevitably come up against the vast landscape of activists and formal organizations in this city, which channel any resistance into preexisting formulas. One of the reasons for this tendency is the brutal state repression that took place against militant Black liberation groups in the city, most notably former police commissioner Frank Rizzo's mission to crush the Revolutionary Action Movement in the late 1960s, and the city's bombing of the MOVE organization's house in 1982. Decades of sustained repression had a chilling effect on radical organizing, and was a factor in developing the current unspoken consensus – which we'll discuss in the following chapter – that unthreatening types of activism and community organizing are the only ethically acceptable options for political action.

While political repression is a legible and predictable reason for faltering militancy, activists rarely note that the groups that they valorize and mimic also played an important role in spreading the docile atmosphere that now exists within our milieus. Activists conveniently ignore how many of their historical role models never posed a threat to the established order and all but welcomed this present, more "civil" climate.[1] By the time the MOVE bombing had happened, networks of (mostly white and Quaker) radicals were already reorienting anarchists towards more respectable, nonviolent models of action. One of the major architects of this landscape, and one of the reasons for the continuing appeal of activism in Philly today, was Movement for a New Society.

A Brief History of Recuperation

Movement for a New Society (MNS) was a network of activist collectives active from 1971–88 that originated in Philadelphia and spread nationwide. Their organizational structure has become a kind of archetype for the activist vogue known as "prefigurative politics" – seeking to create the same social relations now as that of their ideal future society, one free from domination and violence. They drew on various trends that had circulated in the New Left, with a particular emphasis on organizational forms that are often viewed as both prefigurative and anarchistic: direct democracy (of Students for a Democratic Society, or SDS), horizontalism (of Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee), and alternative lifestyles (the hippie communes). While the Industrial Workers of the World's idea of "building a new world inside the shell of the old" was not new to political organizing, the Philadelphia-based Quakers who began Movement for a New Society had background in facilitation and consensus decision-making that helped put this idea into practice.

[1] Or have their legacy otherwise washed clean of its conflictuality in the minds of activists, who would reduce the Black Panthers to a breakfast program and MOVE to guerrilla gardeners.

From the outset, these Quaker affiliates and the institutions they started looked a lot like largely white, relatively affluent youth moving into and reorganizing a black neighborhood. Although MNS drew on organizing strategies associated with direct action, they spent much of their energy building organizations and institutions that re-shaped West Philadelphia in ways that resemble what is recognized today as gentrification. In many ways, MNS helped establish the current class and race relations in West Philly.

At the time, the alternatives that they presented appeared as a rejection of the capitalist environment and their institutions were broadly understood to provide a competing way of life. Along with modeling and spreading prefigurative lifestyles, MNS developed what they called counter-institutions, which aimed to meet needs in a manner opposed to oppressive social configurations. David Graeber writes:

> Rather than a cataclysmic seizure of power, they proposed the continual creation and elaboration of new institutions, based on new, non-alienating modes of interaction – institutions that could be considered 'prefigurative' insofar as they provided a foretaste of what a truly democratic society could look like. Such prefigurative institutions could gradually replace the existing social order (235).

These institutions included a West Philly neighborhood food co-operative (now Mariposa Food Co-op), community watch squads, and the A-Space, an anarchist social center. While none of these organizations were necessarily divorced from struggles on their own, MNS made sure that taken together, and placed within a nonviolent strategy of alternativism, these institutions would provide not an alternative to capitalism, but to struggle itself.

At the time of MNS's origins, moreover, struggles had been exploding that understood that revolutionary transformation could not occur by gradually phasing out the state. Direct and violent attack against enemies was necessary, and these struggles posed the threat of doing exactly that. In this context, Movement for a New Society's moral authority helped establish the anarchist respectability that was being threatened by other groups active at the same time, such as the Revolutionary Action Movement and other insurrectionary tendencies. Movement for a New Society doubtless helped distinguish the realm of anarchism from threats to wealth and white supremacy in the eyes of many budding civil anarchists.

Nowhere was this kind of recuperation clearer than in their modification of the anarchist organizing tactic known as the affinity group. Participants in affinity group-based actions have long recognized the origin of this term in the decentralized armed combat groups of the Spanish Civil War, but this tactic later also circulated and became popular in non-combat and even "nonviolent" situations. When the affinity group became widespread in summit-hopping "antiglobalization" groups around the turn of this past century, most participants recognized its practicality and malleability for mass protests – small groups could travel and organize autonomously, adding their contribution to the crowds without training or belonging to an official organization. Many in the media commented on the uncontrollable crowds and spontaneous actions of affinity groups, particularly when they came together as the black bloc. Since the black bloc tactic had a German history, it was easy to obscure the longer legacy of the affinity group. In the years since the 1999 World Trade Organization summit in Seattle, much of this history has come to light, but in a way that only furthers the confusion around MNS's popular version of the tactic.

MNS most famously helped popularize affinity groups within the American anti-nuclear movement, particularly within the Clamshell Alliance. However, the affinity group had become a well-

known organizational form a decade earlier within the New York anarchist scene that included Resurgence Youth Movement, the East Side anarchists, and Up Against the Wall/Motherfucker. The Motherfuckers first articulated the potential for affinity groups in the 1960s, showing how under insurrectionary conditions they would have the capacity to morph from protesters to armed cadres:

> In the pre-revolutionary period affinity groups must assemble to project a revolutionary consciousness and to develop forms for particular struggles. In the revolutionary period itself they will emerge as armed cadres at the centers of conflict, and in the postrevolutionary period suggest forms for the new everyday life (Hahne 127).

The Motherfuckers imagined an affinity group that would adapt and change depending on the context, and in so doing invented a protest tactic. MNS adopted this tactic, but since they opposed militant revolution altogether, they hypostatized the tactic into a prefigurative lifestyle, freezing it in what the Motherfuckers had envisaged as its larval form.

MNS took a tactic originally understood as an essential part of a revolutionary struggle and transformed it into a mere protest tactic, intended to manage autonomous groups. MNS's strategy of creating alternatives through nonviolence could not help but to lead to discomfort with the autonomy of small groups acting outside their project. Their transformation of the affinity group into a nonviolent practice succeeded partly because the state had by then long been engaged in repressive measures against anything considered "violent," but it also arose from MNS's own efforts to undermine anarchist autonomy.

After the Motherfuckers disbanded in 1969, the concept of the affinity group was spread mainly by the Weather Underground and Murray Bookchin. Bookchin's "Note on Affinity Groups" in his well-known *Listen, Marxist!* contained much that illustrated his indebtedness to conversations with the Motherfuckers, but appeared largely stripped of any reference to confrontation or violent overthrow of the government. Weather Underground, on the other hand, took the notion of affinity groups from the Motherfuckers mainly as a hip term for military cells with centralized command structure intact, but potentially more attractive to the hippie commune movement. After these attempts failed and political repression forced Weather and like-minded groups underground, the organizers of May Day 1971 found themselves able to more successfully mobilize by rebranding affinity groups within nonviolent protest.

This left the door open for MNS's use of the affinity group, changing it from a tactic that enabled diffuse autonomous action into a tool for the nonviolent trainings that spread their brand of civil anarchism. Far from forwarding an anarchist project of overthrowing the State and capital, Movement for a New Society modified anarchist practices to contain and channel rebellious forces into successful alternatives that could exist within this status quo. It is not too far of a leap to see how these alternatives that exist comfortably within capitalism can also exist *for it.*

Reception of MNS: Opposing *Oppose and Propose* and Other Quakers

As we have seen, MNS worked to manage and funnel rebellion within their contemporary milieu. In the years since, their historical legacy has also been mobilized by commentators to further

empty activism of conflictuality. Radical historians of the 60s and 70s have generally placed the era's politics in a reductive framework of "prefiguration," transforming any oppositional strategy into an "alternative" practice and dissolving any militancy into a performance of ethical superiority. Whatever conflictual power these organizations may have had is intentionally disavowed in favor of an ethical marketplace of historical models.

Written histories of MNS in particular show the ways in which many of their activities outside of direct action were easily coopted by capital, yet remain influential practices in anarchist milieus. Andrew Cornell, in his book *Oppose and Propose! Lessons from Movement for a New Society*, credits MNS as being among the most outspoken and influential proponents of many of the practices that define anarchist politics today – consensus decision-making, collective living in major cities, affinity groups, spokescouncils, confrontational demonstrations, pacifist direct action, and alternative business models.

Cornell's celebratory assessments of MNS's influence are somewhat overstated. Consensus decision-making and pacifist resistance have existed worldwide for a very long time. As mentioned above, the autonomous affinity group and decentralized spokescouncil were used as modes of anti-authoritarian organizing as early as the Spanish Civil War in the 1930s. Urban communes in San Francisco and Germany's West Berlin emerged during the 1960s, and there were also countercultural European urban communes dating back to the 11th and 12th centuries. The idea of prefiguration itself comes from Christian hermeneutics and had already been adopted, usually in other terms, by religious and political organizations alike, most notably by the Industrial Workers of the World.

One thing that was new and historically important about Movement for a New Society's approach to anarchism was the influence of Quakerism. As we discussed in chapter 1, Quakers have brought a special approach to radicalism that has allowed them to manage and/or disavow conflictual struggles while profiting from Quakerism's appearance of progressivism.

Throughout their history in the US, Quakers have posed as radical dreamers while limiting their actual political engagement to reformist campaigns that ultimately improve the functionality of America's genocidal project – and manage to do so in ways that also build Quakers' social and/or financial capital. As we noted in chapter 1, the colony of Pennsylvania was awarded to colonizer William Penn because of his ability to portray his settler colonial project as a utopian, progressive one, and because of English Quakers' successful efforts to establish themselves as the "safe" radical sect, worthy of state approval. The original accumulation of wealth that made the city of Philadelphia's economy possible was accumulated by a mostly Quaker merchant class, many of whom dealt in the African slave trade while also being, in principle, slavery abolitionists.

Quakers and Quaker-adjacent protestants in the 18th and 19th centuries also ensured the future of America's white supremacist capitalist project through their efforts to establish imprisonment as the new form of punishment. Prisons have since blossomed into the new form of slavery, legally allowing America's tradition of capturing and expropriating the labor of Black and Native peoples to continue unabated. Angela Davis notes that "Quaker reformers in the United States – especially the Philadelphia Society for Alleviating the Miseries of Public Prisons, founded in 1787 – played a pivotal role in campaigns to substitute imprisonment for corporal punishment" (68). The ideology behind this reformist campaign stemmed directly from Quaker principles. Reformists were able to misrepresent incarceration as a potential form of rehabilitation by appealing to ideas "reminiscent of Quaker traditions of silent prayer, 'suffering' introspection, and faith in the illuminating power of God's light… [They] conceived of a convict's process of reformation

in terms similar to the spiritual awakening of a believer at a Quaker meeting" (Ignatieff, qtd in Davis, 53). Walnut Street Jail in Pennsylvania was the first state penitentiary in the United States.

These peculiarities of historical Quaker "radicalism" live on today in Philly's civil anarchists and activist networks, whose main project is now prison abolition. In addition to the questionable decision to take up prison abolition (a term that harkens back to 19th-century slavery abolitionists, who merely wanted to end slavery while preserving the rest of American civil society), the reforms they are pursuing – for example, to end life sentences and to elect a progressive District Attorney – will make the prison system more efficient, not destroy it. And even if prisons were destroyed, the history of capitalism and white supremacy shows that that would just mean that prisons' function of holding people captive and stealing their labor would get incorporated into some other aspect of American society, unless that society itself is destroyed.

The Quakers who created Movement for a New Society followed their ancestors in failing to recognize the inefficacy of their attempts to both reconcile and overcome the oppressive conditions of capital. For Andy Cornell, however, the success of MNS lies in the legacy they left to activist groups, including their influence on consensus, collective living in major cities like Philadelphia, and the prevalence of call outs (4). Cornell characterizes these practices as anarchistic, distinguishing them from the anarchist tradition by emphasizing their transferable ethical principles (made possible by Quakerism).

Cornell's lack of hesitation in anachronistically applying an ethical and prefigurative framework currently in vogue onto this history is less concerning than how it highlights the contradictions of MNS's organizing. Not surprisingly, these contradictions are most felt around the question of nonviolence. Whereas Cornell points out that MNS's small membership had a disproportionate influence through their (nonviolent) trainings (14), he must also acknowledge that this connection to mass organizing led them to coordinate defense for the American Indian Movement, a militant organization decidedly outside their nonviolent sphere of influence (28). MNS popularized nonviolent training within their networks to manage and control rebellion but their growing popularity brought them into contact with autonomous tendencies that could not be channeled into this framework. As a result, MNS's currency as purveyors of nonviolent training, paradoxically, placed them in a broader network that resisted the label of nonviolence. This paradox emerges again and again in the groups indebted to MNS's legacy, in part because of a refusal to account for this problem in their history.

Since, despite its general focus on trainings, MNS itself was never a completely homogenous movement, they are open to multiple interpretations. Yet the predominant narrative avoids any conflictual tendency within MNS much more than the actual history seems to allow. One of the distinguishing characteristics of MNS, in a sea of experimental communal living, seems to have been their emphasis on direct action. In fact, one member of MNS, George Lakey, recounts that visitors looking for a new niche of alternative living were often disappointed with MNS, who favored preparation for political action over their experiments in drugs, free love, vegetarianism, and nudity. Lakey recalls arguing that their counter-institutions were best understood as basecamps for the revolution (Cornell 40–42).[2]

While academics like Andy Cornell seem drawn to MNS's history precisely because of their involvement in political action, they imagine this action in the same terms as the alternative

[2] Lakey points out that many of the communards looking solely for alternative living quickly left MNS because of the risk of getting arrested (70).

lifestyle choices. If a direct action is treated as formally and reductively prefigurative, then what distinguishes action from ethical lifestyle?[3] Direct action, it seems, would be just another way of participating in the alternative community. Cornell, as a historian, thus appears in this narrative in a similar role as the commune tourists, looking for another way to ethically live under capitalism. This leads to an interesting moment in Cornell's Oppose and Propose when his interpretation is challenged by George Lakey, who refuses the framework of alternativism.

Yet when direct action is subordinated to the development of a prefigurative community, "alternativism" becomes an accurate description. Since MNS produced a form of counter-institutions that fit neatly into the alternative communities with no antagonism towards capitalism, their main achievement was a synthesis of lifestyle alternatives and political action in a form that no longer threatens the establishment on either side. In essence, MNS provides the kind of political action that fits well in a liberal marketplace of ideas, so nonthreatening as to be attractive to bourgeois academia, and particularly suited to contemporary trends in the reorganization of the urban landscape (aka gentrification). In the case of MNS, their alternatives go beyond cooptation or compromise, since they actually take part in capitalist production.

Legacy of MNS: Prefiguring Small Businesses

The influence of Movement for a New Society on the city of Philadelphia has certainly been deep, though not for the reasons that have been publicly recorded.

MNS staked out its terrain in the West Philadelphia neighborhoods that cluster around Baltimore Ave. At one point occupying twenty collective houses in a ten-block radius in the Baltimore Ave corridor, MNS consolidated their hold on the area by buying up property, which has since been transferred into a land trust (the Life Association Center, or LCA). Young radicals currently living in West Philly have had their lifestyles made possible in part by MNS's territory grab, even though this current generation may be unaware of this fact. Many of them live in the eight collective houses currently owned by the LCA.

What were once anarchist affinity groups became institutionalized into small businesses in the neighborhood. It is a defining feature of West Philly that many formerly informal organizations provided the blueprint for the current small business models of co-ops, vegan donut shops, bike stores, and cafes.

While the affinity group was popularized as an antidote to the vulnerabilities and bureaucracies of mass organizations, the non-hierarchical small group can still function within a capitalist economy, especially an economy that looks more and more like the "creative" fantasies of petit bourgeois hippies. Midnight Notes remarked on the economic characteristics of the affinity group in their early heyday of the Clamshell Alliance and their direct action strategy against nuclear energy, noting the difference from traditional class-based organizing:

> Not being based on economic relationships, the affinity-groups require a continuous effort, ideologically and socially, to keep them together. It seems that those affinity groups which were not able to develop a certain type of para-economic activities

[3] In a different context, one could potentially pose the question more usefully and consider how practices normally relegated to the category of lifestyle can actually contribute to the social reproduction of insurrectionary tendencies.

> (mostly reproductive, like being in the same yoga-sessions) proved to be very unstable. This organizational problem was partly resolved by the establishment of nonviolence training sessions, which were publicly announced by posters and leaflets.

Midnight Notes takes for granted that the affinity groups intended to stay together after a particular action or project, a premise backed up by MNS and other activists of the period who embraced affinity groups only to encourage them to increasingly immerse themselves in a nonviolent "social movement" strategy. This reduced the small autonomous group to a mere building block for a "new society," under the direction of MNS's pacifist hegemony.[4] As potentially long-term projects, Movement for a New Society's affinity groups thus tended to take two routes to maintain cohesion, either "trainings" (usually for respectable activities) or developing an economic identity through their extracurricular activities. The longevity of their affinity groups, then, was often rooted in their participation in legal and therefore recuperable activity.

While the association between affinity groups and "trainings" is well known, the affinity group's "para-economic" activity is little studied, despite its growth into full-blown economic activity in the past two decades.[5] Writing in the 1980s, Midnight Notes describes yoga as mainly "para-economic" reproductive labor, which would be difficult to imagine them saying in today's world of Lululemon and beer yoga. In addition to the exploding yoga industry, the DIY anarchist scene of the 90s saw countless squats become property, collective houses become family homes, collective bike shops become entrepreneurships, and food coops go commercial. Despite resistance from some anarchist participants in these ventures, the affinity group form did provide the groundwork for providing these new properties and companies with cheap labor, volunteer organizing, and the illusion of unalienated employment. The anarchist bookstore, with its tendency to provide early job training for resumés, introduce young zinesters to the world of budgets and publishing, and to operate on an entirely volunteer staff to produce a total surplus value, would be the quintessential version of this kind of collective if not for the fact that bookstores rarely turn a profit in the internet era. Although many factors contributed to the 90s recuperation of anarchist projects into capitalist enterprises, Movement for a New Society's transformation of the affinity group into a unit to be sustained and managed, along with MNS's counterinstitution-based theories of revolutionary change, certainly has contributed to the tendency of radicals to embrace small businesses in West Philly.[6]

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[4] For historical descriptions of affinity groups as the basis of long-term projects, see Murray Bookchin's *Listen, Marxist!* in which he equates them with collectives and communes, or the many similar organizing pamphlets for mass environmental actions in the 1980s, such as the Abalone Alliance, who described affinity groups as a basis for a myriad of projects, including "poetry, gardens, parties, alternative tech, tofu factories, etc."

[5] Trainings on anti-oppression and nonviolent direct action, for example, have become professional industries, modeled by groups like the Catalyst Project and the AORTA cooperative.

[6] To be clear, we are not suggesting that the lesson to be learned from MNS's experiments is that we should forsake informal organizing around affinity. Much of insurrectionary theory and practice about organization today involves embracing the necessarily temporary nature of affinity formations, coming together with particular groups of people when a particular project or context makes doing so advantageous, rather than prioritizing sustaining a group for its own sake, as do official formal organizations. By developing the flexibility and impermanence of informal organizing, this approach avoids the pitfalls of what seem to be MNS and other groups' prioritization of the longevity and stability of their affinity groups, which, as Midnight Notes points out, led them to often embrace shared economic enterprises in order to reproduce themselves. See *Archipelago* and *A Wager on the Future* for recent examples of contemporary insurrectionary writings on organization.

As the collective houses (or prefigurative communes) disbanded by the late 1980s to early 90s, the attempt to live revolutionary transformation departed as well, and the West Philly activists who have inherited this terrain have taken the original MNS strategy, in which communal lifestyle would reflect and contribute to revolutionary change, and severed it into the two disconnected aspects of lifestylism: collective living as an end in itself, and activism as politically-inflected social work. The latter is also part of the Quaker inheritance of West Philly activists. The common sense that we should act to support others (often at the expense of our own desires, and with such a strong sense of obligation that we commonly refer to it as doing "the work") is a type of service work that is perfectly in line with both religious duty and economic trends away from the factory that have been developing since MNS's origins.

In sum, Movement for a New Society helped popularize a particular definition of "anarchism" as pacifist and small business-y, recuperated a militant organizing tactic for both nonviolent and capitalist purposes, and promoted some very inaccurate assumptions about the nature of revolutionary transformation. Since, they claimed, revolution would happen by building up counter-institutions until the state would no longer be necessary, there was no need for conflict, confrontation, or violence (whether against people or property). These ideas continue to maintain a stronghold over the radical imagination of this West Philly neighborhood.

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6. Activism as Recuperation

My first experience with nonviolent direct action was a post-Earth First! Rendezvous blockade that everyone at the camp was invited to. The target was a fracking site with a single access road in the middle of a forest. One small group rigged a person in a massive tree platform that blocked the access road. Meanwhile, fifty of us ran silently into the woods at the break of dawn and set up slashpiles of logs and forest debris to further slow down anyone trying to get to the fracking site.

Seeing others throwing logs into the road to build blockades and realizing that I could do it too was one of the most exciting moments of my life. I had never seen anything like that before and didn't know that it was possible. But I was still new to activism and had misunderstood the goals of the action. I thought that we were trying to blockade the fracking site's road indefinitely, and that when that ended, we would set up and live in a Free State in the forest from which we'd try to shut down the fracking site for good. I was confused when it became clear that the organizers only planned for us to shut down work at the site for one day. I had had visions of dropping out of my life and joining an uncontrollable insurgency in the woods.

Others shared this dream. Earth First! campouts were haunted by campfire stories of unmanageable Free States of the past, whispers of those who had gone into hiding or prison for attacking the industrial infrastructure we all hated, of those who could no longer show up at these kinds of gatherings. I spent many nights in parking lots adjacent to the campsites talking with friends about what else we could be doing. All the while, it was becoming more and more obvious that the only actions that would emerge from ecodefense scenes were highly scripted ones that fit in with the messaging a particular campaign was trying to send to authority figures.

Increasingly resorting to managed activist spectacle in practice, while on some other level knowing very well that clandestine sabotage and attack would be more fulfilling and effective, Earth First! and much of the ecodefense world sits uncomfortably between the two different styles of radical activity that have developed in opposition to one another over the past two decades. Tensions between these two styles – between what I would call activist and insurrectionary approaches – are notable even within direct action contexts, such as the blockade at Standing Rock, where many of those engaged in the massive encampments against colonial energy infrastructure sought to gain public support by portraying the blockade as nonviolent, and thus felt that they needed to undermine and eventually expel many of the people living at the camp who were trying to go on the offensive against the pipeline.

In Philly, activism takes the form of community organizing and public protests organized by well-established networks of formal organizations, which view themselves as having ownership over particular "issues" and the right to manage what activities happen under the banner of those issues. If you mention your interest in a particular kind of political project to an activist in Philly, they will usually respond by telling you which organization you should join in order to work on that issue.

The increasing domination of this style of nonviolent direct action and organizing has severely limited radical political activity. We live in a time of increasingly obvious ecological and socioeconomic crisis, which is resulting both in violent rebellions against the white supremacist order and heightened fascist violence in the US. But people's desire to act against capitalism, white supremacy, and ecological collapse keeps being quickly channeled into joining organizations and other activities that neither allow a serious offensive to the status quo to be mounted, nor develop our capacity to protect and defend ourselves and each other.

As we've seen in previous chapters, the colonial project that is the US nation-state has been at war with much of its populace since its inception. In recent decades, though, the state has fine-tuned its techniques of managing rebellion and is now at an unprecedented capacity to recuperate resistance for its own purposes. This is the result of decades of the state brutally repressing direct struggle while also nurturing alternative, non-threatening channels for dissent. We will call these recuperative channels that function (often unintentionally) to manage and redirect potentially uncontrollable struggles, "activism."

Although the state's capacity to repress insurgency and control its marginalized populations is generally well understood among radicals, what is often overlooked is that the state also created activism over the past few decades as a major part of its strategy to repress rebellion. Historically, the state has been able to cover up its repression of insurgent struggles by erasing them from public memory and promoting the successes of more palatable reformist tendencies. Today, activists support this state strategy by reinforcing the belief that activism is the only legitimate form of political resistance, while assisting in the criminalization and marginalization of rowdier styles of struggle. Activism offers an accessible way for dissatisfied people to get involved in radical politics, which means they are less likely to get involved in activities that actually attack the state and those who benefit from the status quo. Activism's often unspoken framework of management and control over "movements" or issues also reinforces our domestication instead of challenging it, failing to empower us to think for ourselves, to take initiative, or develop any other skills necessary for instigating the insurgencies that would actually effectively undermine the many layers of control and oppression we live under.

This chapter will illustrate the ways in which activism helps corrodes our potential for uncontrollable rebellion by describing several typical characteristics of activism (with a focus on the campaign form and movement-building strategy), outlining the recent history of state repression and the creation of activism, and exploring how activism has developed in the particular context of environmental and anti-policing movements.

Resistance is a broad term that can include insurgent praxis – from major uprisings to small-scale, everyday attacks by insurrectionary anarchists – as well as activism and what we are calling direct struggle, which, as we'll discuss in the next chapter, is one way of undertaking a coordinated project that does not compromise our goals or tactics in the way that we are arguing activism entails. Resistance parts ways with direct struggle and becomes activism as soon as it chooses a strategy of legitimacy and legibility to power – that is, as soon as it attempts to make itself understood and accepted by the forces to which it was originally in opposition. This strategy is exemplified by campaign-based organizing.

Developing a campaign involves choosing a particular problem to focus on, which the campaign assumes can be fixed by the same forces (capitalism, the state, white supremacy, and so on) that created the problem. From the entangled terrain of colonial capitalist civilization, campaigns invent a particular "issue" to concentrate on at the strategic expense of other issues. This issue is then itself distilled into focusing on a particular target and a goal that a campaign might be able to attain – for example, an organization that focuses on the issue of fracking might choose to target a specific company's facility and then choose to try to stop the facility's proposed conversion into a natural gas facility. So for anti-authoritarians who get involved in radical environmentalism, developing a campaign involves several different stages of diluting one's opposition to all of industrial civilization. But it is only indiscriminate attacks on targets that develop and maintain industrial civilization – fracking and pipeline construction sites, corporate facilities, energy circulation routes like railways and access roads, electrical transmission towers, fiber-optic cables – that might be able to actually stop resource extraction from happening.

Narrowing one's focus in order to develop a project does not necessarily mean that one's activities are not contributing to insurgent struggle against the whole social order, however. In *Nothing is Finished: Essays from Anti-Prison Struggles in Belgium*, in which Belgian insurrectionary anarchists chronicle the struggle against a new immigrant detention center from 2011–2012, we can see how a specific project of struggle can be chosen and pursued in ways that foment more general unrest and do not isolate the project from a broader anti-capitalist struggle. This approach, which the authors refer to as direct struggle, refuses to compromise itself to fit in with what already exists. Rather, it involves deepening the struggle to destroy the existent and spreading ideas about why this is a good idea, ideally among other people whose existence and survival is already antagonistic to capital and civil society.

The key problem with the activist campaign model is that its strategy is to build mass support, which means the organizers are always attempting to adapt their ideas and tactics to a public audience that they imagine to be less radical. Ultimately, we have little control over how an anti-authoritarian project is being represented by people and institutions with power, since most of those people that the campaign wants to appeal to, including much of the public, have interests that are ultimately antagonistic to ours. But for activists, caring about a campaign's image inevitably becomes a form of self-imposed control, constraining what activists are willing to do or talk about. Developing a mass social movement becomes the goal, rather than a strategy.

Despite this strategy's flaws, today when most people think of resistance, they think of a mass movement campaign that makes demands of our authoritarian overlords. The idea that other forms of resistance are possible – and are happening everywhere – is being erased from public memory. But the campaign is a phenomenon that only developed relatively recently – the term "campaign" only became popular in the late 1960s, with "grassroots" and "environmental" campaigns gaining traction closer to the mid-1990s and 2000s. What we now call social movements date back to the same time, the product of what sociologists call "the credibility crisis of the conventional channels for participation in Western democracies" (Hank Johnson et al, "Identities, Grievances, and New Social Movements," 8). Political organization was no longer viable through the workplace, and the demands around which struggles crystallized from the late 1960s onwards, for example liberation struggles around race and gender, had no spokesperson within the two-party system.

We mention this because it is important that social movements and their campaigns originated in response to a lack in governmental channels, ie that campaigns serve to *supplement* govern-

mental activity rather than challenging governance itself, although they often present themselves as doing the latter. Other forms of struggle that do not resemble these social movements – like riotous uprisings, indigenous struggles, resistance to industrialization and to domestication – have been around much longer, since the dawn of civilization and its logic of capture and domination.

In the long term, campaign and mass movement strategy serve to improve the current system – for example, campaigns that question the current state of policing in the US have certainly met with state resistance, but ultimately have had various demands adopted, like body cameras on cops, that actually improve the police's ability to surveil and control the population. Such campaigns are integral to maintaining the political order, especially since they make it look like there are channels through which the public can successfully register dissent and advocate for change. Without campaign-style activism, it would be obvious that the system of governance itself does not allow for any such channels for change and is in fact in an unacknowledged state of permanent war with most of its citizens.

The social movements that formed from the liberation struggles of the late 1960s and 1970s are still around and often understand themselves in terms of their continuity with these earlier struggles. But between the state's violent suppression and erasure of insurgent struggles, on the one hand, and the evolution of the tamer parts of those social movements into aboveground activist and non-profit organizations, on the other, the aspects of these movements that made them relatively effective – that is, that made them a threat to the state – are now mostly absent from today's resistance movements.

Throughout the 1960s and into the 1970s, the US government launched a secret counterintelligence program (COINTELPRO) to exhaustively terrorize and discredit the legal activities of all social movements at the time via all possible means. Its notorious program against "Black Nationalists" sought to "expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit or otherwise neutralize the activities of black nationalist, hate-type organizations and groups, their leadership, spokesmen, membership, and supporters, and to counter their propensity for violence and civil disorder" within both "responsible" black communities and among black radicals, as well as within the white population. Some of the state's known tactics during this time included infiltrating and disrupting movements, smearing actual activists as agents, bugging activists' homes, fabricating evidence, spreading misinformation, forging correspondence (some of which successfully broke up the marriages of New Left activists and curtailed their political activities), breaking into homes, assaulting activists, and killing revolutionary leaders such as Fred Hampton and other members of the Black Panther Party. These programs were carried out by liberal Democratic administrations as well as by the Nixon administration.

Meanwhile, local police forces became militarized in order to combat potentially uncontrollable rebellions in the streets. SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics) teams were created in the 1960s for "riot control" and really blossomed during the 1980s "War on Drugs" and after the events of September 11, 2001. In the 1970s, SWAT teams carried out around 300 raids per year; they are now used around 80,000 times each year. The 1981 Military Cooperation with Civilian Law Enforcement Agencies Act allowed local police to call in the US military for "counterterrorism" and "civil disturbances," and gave the cops access to military equipment. In 1997, the 1033 program authorized the routine transfer of excess military equipment to local police depart-

ments, which has given over five billion dollars worth of military gear so far to local cops. Over the past few decades of global capitalist crisis, diminishing employment and social safety nets and heightening economic misery, police and policing – created to control potentially resistant Black, Native, and poor white populations – has seen its capacity and importance in maintaining the socioeconomic order dramatically increase.

The state's response in the late 1990s and early 2000s to what is now called the anti-globalization movement has been an important recent influence on current anarchist and activist activity. This resurgence in mass street action and rowdier tactics was brutally crushed by the state, most notoriously through police brutality and torture during major street protests like those at the World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle in 1999 and the anti-Free Trade Area of the Americas demonstrations in Miami in 2003.

The policing tactics that were used to brutalize the demonstration in Miami are now referred to amongst police innovators as the Miami Model. This was developed by Miami Police Chief John Timoney, who had used similar strategies to violently disrupt radical organizing against the Republican National Convention in 2000 when he was Police Commissioner of Philadelphia. In addition to brutal crowd control tactics in the streets, the Miami Model involves getting multi-million dollar grants to get military gear for local police, pre-emptive raids and FBI visits to activists, collecting intelligence about protestors, paramilitary-style plainclothes extraction teams to arrest individuals during protests, undercover agents amongst protesters, and embedding corporate media with the police. These policing tactics have been the main model for dealing with demonstrations ever since.

The past two decades have also seen the growth of mass surveillance, new sentencing norms for politicized crimes, post-September 11 terrorism laws, and numerous other ways of silencing dissent, including most recently the J20 case that has put basic protest tactics on trial. Decades of combined state repression, infiltration and surveillance of social movements has meant that it is very difficult for aboveground political organizations to engage with those doing more illegal activities. This has contributed to producing a split, especially palpable in Philly, between activists seeking legitimacy and others engaging in more direct struggle, which involves potentially illegal activities. Most importantly, it has made any illicit activities that actually threaten the status quo terribly risky. This incentivizes more people to choose activism and makes those drawn to direct struggle few and far between.

For numerous reasons, then, including the heightened security measures taken within radical subcultures in order to withstand state surveillance and repression, direct struggle is relatively marginal and frequently erased from public memory. Activist campaigns, on the other hand, rely on strategies of visibility and public legitimacy, which are often gained by denouncing other struggles as less legitimate. The two strategies are highly incompatible.

State repression has produced a split between legitimate and illegitimate political actors, then, that greatly discourages possibilities for direct struggle against domination and control. Meanwhile, the state has also nurtured what it has deemed the "legitimate" channels for expressing resistance, which, as we've seen, also produce the appearance of change and progress. The institutionalized arm of these channels is non-profit organizations, which provide an official conduit for resistance movements that operates through collaboration with the government and industry.

But the state has also tried to ensure that even nonviolent mass movements will never gain traction again. From the anti-globalization movement in the late 1990s onward, mainstream media turned "the activist" into an easily recognizable, widely circulated stereotype. This helped

neutralize activism's credibility with the public and the effectiveness of its – already highly compromised – movement-building strategy. At the same time, the state and media continued to build up the dichotomy between "good" and "bad" protesters by increasingly criminalizing activities that go beyond the boundaries of recognizable "activism," taking advantage of the events of September 11, 2001, to create new laws against "terrorism" that can be applied to many protest situations. In the recent J20 case against over 230 people who were kettled during a demonstration against President Trump's inauguration in January 2017, the state has attempted to make even organizing a demonstration punishable with decades in prison. The "good" activist whose community organizing eventually transitions into a career with an NGO or as a politician is, then, set in public discourse against the increasingly criminalized efforts of people to agitate and organize for their survival and against the state.

The state has exercised a crucial, shaping power on what is known as "the environmental movement" – the longstanding struggle to stop industrial civilization's total extinction of life on this planet. Of course, the government has been attempting to extinguish Native land defense since its inception, and many of the most recent developments in the state's repression of ecodefense are with regard to indigenous-led projects like Standing Rock, which attempt to protect the ancestral homelands of a Native population from further devastation. What we will be discussing here is the mostly settler-dominated ecodefense movement that channels people interested in resistance into nonviolent direct action campaigns, and how this movement has developed in recent years.

It is difficult to overstate the impact that the widespread imprisonments, legal repression and rampant infiltration and surveillance that accompanied the Green Scare[1] in the 2000s has had on burgeoning rebellions in the past decade alone. The turnover and burnout rate for activists is so high, though, that most active resisters today have never known a time in which resistance wasn't so heavily disciplined and punished, which contributes to having a restricted sense of what struggle might potentially look like. State repression of illegal tactics and the rise of environmental NGOs have coincided with a turn to community organizing and grassroots groups that look to single-issue mass movement building as a goal, rather than furthering broader anti-social, anti-capitalist struggle that targets industrial civilization.

As a result, there has been a dramatic tactical shift away from large land occupations (like the Minnehaha Free State) and sabotage (tree spiking, dismantling machinery, burning down facilities) and towards a programmatic model of symbolic, nonviolent direct action. In Earth First! and other ecodefense networks, this often involves a blockade that temporarily shuts down resource extraction operations in a particular location. After setting up the blockade, everyone

[1] Reports in 2005 that the FBI had rated "ecoterrorism" the number one domestic terrorism threat in the United States were followed by "Operation Backfire," in which, over a few months in 2005–2006, the FBI indicted thirteen people on 65 Earth Liberation Front-related charges. Operation Backfire was followed in turn by a string of separate arrests, including the SHAC 7, Rod Coronado, and Eric McDavid (for an FBI set-up planned attack). The 2006 Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act allowed the state to imprison anyone interfering in any way with an animal enterprise's profit margins. Activists were given increasingly punitive sentences, often without having committed a crime (as in the case of the SHAC 7 and more recent cases like Kevin Olliff's sentencing to 2½ years for possession of "burglary tools"). Nine of the thirteen people charged in Operation Backfire ultimately cooperated with the government, and the operation itself would not have been possible without the cooperation of one individual.

waits – whether for a single day or a whole year – until the individuals maintaining the blockade are extracted and arrested, and then the corporation's original plans are eventually implemented. Unlike the tactics that have drawn many people to ecodefense struggles, which may have had some potential to generalize into broader uprisings or diffuse small-group actions, while taking back space from capitalist development, the new tactics tend to be part of a campaign strategy that aims to stop one particular thing.

Even in the rare cases in which these actions and campaigns do achieve their stated goals, they either end up with reform or capital flight, shifting around the exact places where environmental destruction takes place and who it affects, rather than attacking its existence. Efforts to shut down hydrofracking or mountaintop coal removal, for example, have resulted in moving around resources to the different resource extraction industries, and even in blatantly racist and colonial projects such as the Sierra Club's advocacy for the mining of rare earth metals for solar panel construction. Environmentalist groups that pressure the government to ban a specific form of dirty energy can actually function to help extend capitalism's life span as well as ongoing processes of colonization and domestication.[2]

Though ecodefense campaigns still use illegal tactics, their strategies are oriented towards pleasing a more liberal audience, which means they frame their messaging so as to make illegal tactics seem legitimate. Instead of letting the campaign's disruptive tactics actually get out of control, which could spread disorder and might threaten the state (and incentivize policymakers to compromise, if that's the ultimate goal), they scramble to reinscribe these tactics within a framework that they think the public and the state will find acceptable.

Such frameworks usually involve justifying actions with the story that locals are rising up against the incursion of industry on their community, land, and/or water. These stories tend to ignore settler colonial and other racialized dynamics – in the environmentalist campaigns we're discussing here, all this land defense is taking place on stolen land, with little or no acknowledgment of the settler colonial context or attempts to move towards decolonization.

And although these efforts to highlight and legitimate the input of local people are well intentioned, on a broader scale all this reinforces existent narratives in which certain populations of people are criminalized and illegal acts are only legitimated in certain highly crafted scenarios. This strategy divorces environmentalists from the criminalized struggles for survival of most people trying to live on a dying planet.

Following Standing Rock, some settler-led land defense projects have done better at avoiding this kind of messaging and exploring the settler colonial context of their campaigns. Yet many of the strategic problems with the current ecodefense model remain hard to avoid. State repression has indirectly encouraged ecodefenders to only adopt aboveground and popularity-oriented activist strategies, and these strategies have relegated them to the defensive approaches discussed above, like blocking something and waiting to be extracted and arrested.

While these defensive tactics can be effective in causing short-term financial loss to corporations and have in a very few cases succeeded in stopping new infrastructure, offensive approaches (like sabotage or arson) are just as or more effective, don't require arrests or as much resources, and can be imitated and generalized to move towards dismantling ecocidal infrastructure altogether.

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[2] See "The Issues Are Not the Issue: A Letter to Earth First! From a Too-Distant Friend."

Another crucial example of activist recuperation of insurgent struggle is the multi-stage process by which massive rebellions against the state's ongoing control of Black populations, like those in Ferguson and Baltimore, have been captured over the past few years into activism and reformism.

These open struggles against policing began with virtually no activist participation. In Baltimore, the second major round of rioting and attacks on police began at Mondawmin Mall, when hundreds of black teenagers were taken off their school buses, corralled by police and prevented from going home from school. But experienced activists and professional organizers quickly jumped in the day afterwards to promote nonviolence and unity, clean up debris, protect local businesses from looters, and organize peaceful marches through the city. These interventions replaced open struggle against the status quo with calmer, less threatening tactics and messaging that do not challenge anything.

The sustained rioting and open warfare between the state and Black people in Ferguson was eventually slowed down by an influx of activist leadership and nonviolent civil disobedience strategies. The United We Fight coalition in St. Louis called for supporters to organize (nonviolent) solidarity protests in other cities, opened dialogue with local police asking for reduction in chemical weapon usage, and brought in organizers from out of town to train Ferguson locals to be activists. Trainings in late August 2014, immediately after the initial rioting, included how to cop watch (as opposed to fighting cops), conduct legal observations, and do nonviolent direct action. While probably intended to keep people safer, these trainings encourage rioters to take on more observational roles and dial down their tactics, and put outsiders in authority positions in which they're teaching rebels how to be legitimate political actors. In October 2014, activist organizations in St. Louis invited activists from all over to another similar "Weekend of Resistance," which developed a list of demands and helped channel Ferguson's lawless rebels against policing into a nationwide activist movement against "police brutality." At the most crucial moment, then, activism was literally imported to Ferguson to reroute and contain what had been the beginnings of an insurrection.

Insurrectionary moments like Ferguson cannot be ignored by the state, but they have been gradually recuperated by adopting various reforms, which is made possible by activists who take it upon themselves to channel lawless destruction into things we can ask the state to change. Of these demands, the ones that have been accepted by the state are the ones that help it to maintain the socioeconomic order.[3]

The notoriously brutal Philadelphia Police Department has led the country's efforts to develop new policing models, with former Police Commissioner Ramsey co-chairing President Obama's "task force on 21st century policing." The task force's main recommendations were for developing a model of "community policing." This model is drawn from activist talk of cultural misunderstandings and other unfortunate barriers between cops and minorities, and also co-opts vague ideas about community self-determination and empowerment. Community policing has involved, in various cases, setting requirements that police must reside either in or closer to the communities they police, encouraging more "citizen engagement," working with citizen youth groups, developing social media tools that "gauge community sentiment and solve crimes," etc. Like body

[3] As the Endnotes group writes, "The softer reforms around which Black Lives Matter activists can unite with a bipartisan political elite – things like decarceration for low-level drug offenders and 'justice reinvestment' in community policing – only raise the prospect of a more surgically targeted version of the carceral state" (*Endnotes*, "Brown v. Ferguson").

cameras on cops (the Philadelphia police now have over eight hundred body cameras), these recommendations for reform all expand surveillance and encourage populations to police themselves. Even activist demands for disbanding the police altogether, when not discussed alongside dissolving all institutions and relationships of domination, may encourage a more streamlined mode of policing through automation and self-policing, which would help capitalist growth by saving on the labor costs of employing actual cops.[4] None of these recommendations will actually reduce or destroy the systematic exploitation and control that governs this country.

In Philadelphia, as elsewhere, many anarchists have chosen an activist strategy of community organizing and reform, usually following the self-appointed leaders of marginalized communities. Many bank on building a mass movement, which has involved them policing the initiatives of more conflictual anarchists, refusing to explain, engage with or otherwise support the insurrectionary activities that have become more prevalent in this city over the past few years. As we have discussed, even if some radicals did wish to support activities that the state deems illegal, their organizations are structurally positioned so that they genuinely cannot encourage such activities without losing the legitimacy on which their whole strategy is based.

But what is the ultimate vision of activist organizations and the populist approaches we've described, for which we are now seeing renewed calls in this era of widespread antifascist sentiment? What do they hope to do once they have built a broad base of support – for a selection of ideas and tactics that have already been highly compromised in order to build a "unified Left"? It is likely that anarchists who deliberately take on a populist approach and anarchists involved in direct struggle have completely different goals, as well as incompatible strategies for getting there. But the former's strategy also involves channeling people who are newly interested in politics into modes of action and organizing that are ineffective at threatening the state and other enemies, a strategy that aids the state by weakening struggle and ensuring that the possibility of insurrectionary activities is forgotten.

Like the civil anarchists in Philly who have mostly taken on advocacy and reformist projects, who have watered down their own desires in order to support and improve the lives of those around them, we too want a better life for ourselves and those around us. But we don't accept the options offered to us by the state and activists, who indicate that we can either do support work and be legitimated as community organizers, or go on the offensive against the things we don't like in the world and be marginalized as a danger to collective struggle. Developing a form of direct struggle against the state in which people take care of each other seems increasingly important today, as more and more people are disadvantaged by capitalism and yet find no resources to attract them to radical struggles. But there are ways to get resources and care for each other that don't involve the state, and that instead help reproduce a shared struggle against it.

Despite their best efforts, it seems like the future directions of resistance are beyond the control of activists. Given the ongoing economic and ecological crisis, struggles will likely be generated not as much through organization-building and well-intentioned arguments with liberals, but through peoples' attempts to survive and the clashes with power that these produce. These

[4] *Burning the Bridges They Are Building: Anarchist Strategies Against the Police* documents anti-police struggles in the Puget Sound in 2011 and devotes particular attention to how they avoided being co-opted into the activist strategies discussed here.

struggles are sustained and intertwined with one's everyday life, whereas activists tend to burn out quickly. Maybe this is in part because of the tension between outward reformist activities and inward radical ideals that haunts much of the activist terrain, reminding us that there must be something else, something less compromised and more fulfilling.

Further Reading

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7. What is Direct Struggle?

Direct struggle is not so much an ideology as a methodology, as a loose framework for resistance to social control and exclusion. Built on autonomous self-organization, an aversion to dialogue with enemies, a willingness to converse with comrades, and of course a practice that centers direct action and attack, direct struggle offers an approach to engaging problems of oppression that differs from the tired repetition of activism, often with a more defined scope than insurrectionary anarchism. This methodology felt important to explore in a US context, and this piece of writing is the result of conversations about local struggle and the ideas presented in the zine *Nothing is Finished: Essays From Anti-Prison Struggles in Belgium*. At the time of this writing I found myself in anarchist spaces that held an interest in insurrection, but I felt that interest lacking initiative, direction, and coordination. *Nothing is Finished* tackles these issues with a humble grace I appreciated. The text names the struggle it discusses "direct struggle" without specifically defining the term. I aim to distill the idea into a concrete set of methods.

Insurrectionary anarchism refers to a set of proposed methods and an orientation to struggle – permanent conflict with authority, self-organization along lines of affinity, and attack are the backbone of insurrectionary anarchism. Anarchists have taken this approach in a number of interesting directions. By this I mean that insurrectionary anarchism is not its own distinct style of anarchism, but rather that it can be incorporated into many different schools of anarchist thought without creating incoherent visions of struggle. For the primitivist anarchist, informal organization and attack are indistinct from re-wilding and the destruction of civilization; for the communist anarchist, insurrection is a means of sharing the struggle and its spoils in unmediated ways without a transitional state; for the egoist anarchist, insurrection is the self-directed creation of one's own without submitting to restrictive formal structures.

Borrowing heavily from insurrectionary anarchism, direct struggle brings in another element as well: a focus on a specific structure, network, or facet of domination. In this respect, direct struggle has some parallels with the way that activists organize campaigns against specific companies or social ills, but eschews many of the activist tendencies that allow centralization and recuperation to flourish. This distinction feels important to make in a US context in which insurrectionary anarchy seems to lash out at a multitude of symbols and structures of power without necessarily drawing a connection between them or linking them to a specific topic of struggle. To be clear, there is no line separating direct struggle from insurrectionary anarchism. Direct struggle is simply one way of putting insurrectionary ideas into practice, another moment in a permanent conflictuality. Direct struggle is always insurrectional struggle in that it rests on the same foundations as insurrectionary anarchism. The main difference between the two is the specificity that direct struggle proposes, for example targeting a specific condominium development or a resource extraction project. Insurrectionary anarchists have engaged in struggles against a particular system or aspect of authority before and will continue to, regardless of whether this term, "direct struggle," reaches their ears.

I also do not want to imply that direct struggle is better than any other form of insurrectional revolt. I don't know what it will take to open the floodgates of general anti-authoritarian unrest, or if that is even possible. Attacking authority is always an exploration, an adventure, an uncertain and sometimes fruitless path. The decision to adopt the methodology of direct struggle is no guarantee of the destruction of an institution, or the beginning of insurrection, simply another excursion toward the unknown.

Autonomy is the foundation of direct struggle. Individuals and groups involved are self-directed, leaving behind the comfort of falling into pre-existing plans and agendas. This means each person is responsible for deciding how they will contribute to the struggle. There is no prescribed or pre-existing correct way of engaging. This also means everyone is free to act in any way they see fit, given they have the means and willingness to make their desires reality.

Autonomous action necessarily shifts the focus from organizing other people towards self-organization. Anarchist autonomy is incompatible with hierarchical approaches of organizing others because its basis is self-determination and free association. Instead, self-organization means that groups form when people decide to come together, make decisions together, and transform those decisions into action. Autonomous organizing is daunting, and there is no one to turn to for the right answers; the actions one decides to take (and one must decide), are the responsibility of that person or group alone.

For insurrectionary anarchists, this organization often takes place along lines of affinity in an informal way. Informally, in that organizations exist without fixed membership or structure, forming, changing, and coming apart as is needed. This allows for flexibility and quick decision-making. Affinity is the mutual knowledge between comrades or friends; it can increase or decrease as people change and learn about one another. A high degree of affinity between any two people does not always mean they will work together on projects or be side by side in struggle; there are times when a deep mutual knowledge reveals why people would not want to cooperate. Affinity built up during discussion, shared experiences, and moments of action are a determining factor in who to struggle and organize with.

There is something daunting and mysterious about autonomy and affinity. It can seem like a mirror making it possible to face an uncomfortable reflection and to confront oneself. It is much easier to join a formal organization, to fall into a pre-defined role, to know what to do because the model already exists. Affinity and autonomy require one to take risks, to educate oneself, to be the sole bearer of responsibility for one's own decisions.

At the demonstration people seemed to be at a loss. The habits of obedience are hard to break, and no one had been told what to do by a protest leader. Some of us had arrived with our own intentions and plans, but most people did not. A few here and there made spur of the moment decisions, but for the most part people milled about, seemed bored, and generally lacked spontaneity and initiative. Autonomy needs to be practiced for it to stay strong; it seems that many of us have let this practice atrophy.

Direct struggle is not about talking to those in power. Representation and dialogue (with authority) are impediments to revolt. Dialogue with power takes for granted that it is not within our own capacity to change the world around us, takes for granted that there is something to be gained from negotiating with the powers that be. To be clear, there is nothing to say to power. Anything we say to power will be used against us, any deal power tries to make with us is a trap to fold us into their systems of domination. Additionally, power is not a friend to be convinced of his wrongdoing; it is a network of people, institutions, attitudes, and ways of interacting that

restricts life. It is still intact not because people haven't told it enough how bad it is, but rather because it has not been overthrown.

The powers that be are always attempting to corral uncontrollable elements into conversation, promising to hear them, to let them speak. This is what power wants, something that talks to it, not something that fights it. Meetings, community forums, reconciliation talks, and panels between would-be insurgents and the managers of this world are all more or less subtle methods of declawing a struggle. The meeting is where power takes away the oppressed's confidence and drive to take matters into their own hands in exchange for the fleeting assurance of top-down change to be implemented in a vague future.

Speaking to power forecloses the possibility that we can achieve our goals ourselves without relying on those who oppress us, and also dismisses the idea that our oppressors are enemies we want to combat and not make peace with. One cannot simultaneously destroy power and make demands or negotiate with it.

The rage is incoherent, snot bubbling, eyes shining, we're both sprinting. Neither of us have much to say to them. No one else has much of a message either. Once we close in it's chaos, we fight until they are running away, ducking into shattered cars, scurrying behind police lines. Calling it a protest or something is the kind of joke we'll tell the cops or the news to cover our asses. There wasn't a message, we went to fight.

None of the above is to imply that there is no communication in direct struggle, only that it takes place among comrades, and with potential comrades and sympathizers. There is certainly a need for sharing information, whether for the coordination of action or to offer explanations of why one engages the struggle. None of these, however, are dialogues with authority; they always take place between people who are fighting authority, or might be tempted to. Assemblies, meetings, posters, handbills, graffiti, phone calls; all are meant to communicate with others in the struggle who have sided against those in power.

Dialogue between comrades aims to invigorate and bolster the struggle. Sharing knowledge about a targeted institution, proposing directions to take the struggle, and inviting others to coordinate inform how one makes choices within the struggle. Propaganda, on the other hand, seeks to make the struggle known to people who aren't involved, garner support, and spread revolt.

None of the dialogue between comrades is meant to centralize or concentrate the struggle into a predetermined or prescriptive form. Individuals and groups certainly can come together to accomplish an action or work toward a common goal, but the dialogue between them should never erode anyone's autonomy and self-determination. The level of diversity and heterogeneity among the actors involved in a struggle will affect how vibrant and broad a discussion between them will be. Additionally, dialogue is always taking place on a small scale; while large assemblies and open conversations are interesting places to further dialogue on a bigger scale, there is no need to wait to discuss and develop perspectives on struggle.

Walking around at night, just a few of us. The cool night seems to stretch out forever in front of us, yet there's never enough time to discuss all the thoughts that move through us. Big room discussions are about as useful as they are frustrating, which is to say very. Still I prefer intimate talks, making schemes, imagining possibilities, sharing secrets. These are the conversations I know lead to crouching in alleyways and heavy breathing.

Direct action and attack are the offensive practice of direct struggle, the aspect that has the potential to actually make something stop. Without it, direct struggle is just informally orga-

nized campaign activism. A material component to struggle is what allows it to move from our imaginations into the world that surrounds us in a direct way. Having left negotiation behind, attack, sabotage, and other forms of direct action are how someone engaged in direct struggle takes matters into their own hands, takes steps to immediately impair and ultimately destroy the systems of control.

Acting with an eye to the material and the immediate does two things for us. It harms our enemies, taking a toll on their finances, interrupting or delaying their routines, lowering their morale, and – taken to its logical conclusion – destroys them and their projects. It also develops a feeling of self-knowledge and empowerment within the participants. This feeling of knowing that one does not need to wait, that anyone is capable of making a practical contribution by taking action against domination.

Attack and direct action in the context of direct struggle revolve around a theme or specific project, although they often connect to a larger struggle against all authority. This means that a series of actions might all target a certain industry, network, or area relevant to a specific struggle. What are the symbols of what is being fought? Who funds it? How does it function logistically? Who is complicit? These and other questions help us take better aim at the mechanisms and workings of a project.

As I looked around, people were transforming anything around us into weapons. A pop-up stand was broken down into a set of metal rods, each finding its way to a window; construction barriers and trash cans became barricades, a glass bottle became a missile, and a bike lock became a means to turn a storefront window into a spiderweb. Everywhere people used what they could find to add to the destruction.

There is so much to say about direct struggle, much of which has already been examined by others in larger discussions surrounding insurrectionary anarchy. Questions of intensity of attack, the spread of revolt, the choice to focus on certain aspects of domination, finding and making spaces for face-to-face conversations, and so much more are beyond the scope of this particular text. With that in mind, below is a selection of texts that can hopefully stimulate thought and conversation about insurrectionary paths specific or otherwise, toward freedom.

Recommended Reading

Nothing Is Finished: Essays from Anti-prison Struggles in Belgium. Belgium, 2012.

Burning the Bridges They Are Building: Anarchist Strategies Against the Police. Puget Sound, USA, 2011.

Another Critique of Insurrectionalism. Barcelona, Spain, 2014.

Anarchy Activism & Insurrection: A Conversation with A Murder of Crows. West Coast, USA, 2007.

Sasha K. *Some Notes on Insurrectionary Anarchism*. West Coast, USA, 2001.

8. D.I.Y.: Destroy It Yourself

> *Revolt is permanent, irreducible. It is a spring of perversity that does not run dry. If it has been duped today, it is renewed tomorrow. It has no memory, it has no history, no value, no allegiance, it goes uncalculated and is unpredictable. Revolt persists on the other side of every fence that could be built to include it.*
>
> FRÉRE DUPONT

There's been a recent upsurge in specifically anarchist activity here in Philadelphia. Previous activity by anarchists had largely consisted of joining others' protests and doing support work for their groups and causes. Now anarchists are making space for themselves, clearly communicating their desires and beliefs, while continuing solidarity work from a less compromised stance. Visible activities, such as handing out flyers, conversing, writing, wheatpasting posters, slapping stickers, writing graffiti, staging demonstrations, damaging property, holding all kinds of meet-ups, and expanding our media, have been significant in that they inspire further activity.

On a broader scale, we see people becoming increasingly polarized over various issues. Politicians are held in ever lower regard, revolts against police and white supremacy continue to jump off around the country, street confrontations with patriarchal socialized behavior seem more common, the environmental catastrophe is publicly acknowledged as increasingly dire, and many seem to have a critique of capitalism escaping their lips as often as breath. This is not to say that we are winning – quite the opposite, in fact.

Along with the state continuing to manage society with progressive rhetoric (by using activist language, recuperating struggle into legal channels, promoting social reform, and acknowledging their historical atrocities as though that atones for the slavery and genocide that continues on to this day), there has also been an uptick in activity from openly fascist elements. Recognizing this – and out of either some hope for a better future or, more often, out of utter hopelessness – some anarchists are deviating from tired ideas of resistance toward widening methods of conflict with various manifestations of oppression. Even so, and despite the ever-escalating stakes, many are still plugging into resistance through the tried and failed methods of activism that attempt to appeal to the broader Left.

You see, we live in a society suffering an increasing divorce from reality under the alienating advances of civilization. Today's globalized network of societies has amalgamated into one teeming, economic mass, waging almost constant wars with ever-increasing casualties over its foundations. A war on the poor, the environment, and all marginalized life.

The problem in our struggle has been less one of complacency with that daunting, bureaucratic, oppressive nightmare, and more one of building a new world that too closely resembles the old one. We reproduce the old world when we act in accordance with civilized society, maintaining highly structured divisions and focusing on a common goal, excluding the idea that we all want different things, and distancing ourselves from uncontrollable and authentic forms of revolt. Traditionally, this has looked like trying to unite the proletariat or some other grouping created

by the very power we oppose,[1] embracing the identities that have been forced on us so that we might self-manage our own oppressions under the logic of capital and civilization for the sake of a utopia that will never come. The price of freedom is not constant vigilance (ie surveillance, policing, military excursions, and governance), but constant and informally-organized revolt against those controls and monitors for as long as society looms large over us.

Revolution and the Masses

> *You wait for the revolution! Very well then! Mine began a long time ago! When you are ready – God, what a wait! – I will be glad to join you on the way! But when you will stop I will continue my mad and triumphal march towards the great and sublime conquest of Nothingness!*
>
> RENZO NOVATORE

There is an illogic in radical milieus known as "building the new world in the shell of the old." It is the belief that we will join together in one great revolution with the mass of society to overthrow it as we construct a utopia in its place. The new structures we build are supposed to serve as a rallying point and blueprint for our future world, and this despite the fact that our dreams have been limited by a lifelong conditioning that would have us reproduce the authorities' identitarian logic, and despite our utter inability to defend a static position against a much larger foe.

Among those anarchists who still have hope for the future (who seem fewer and fewer all the time) there are still these attempts at world-building and there is still talk of the possibility of revolution. Revolution, which has historically meant authoritarian and bourgeois rule, and today means new innovations in technological capitalism: that this is still discussed in seriousness among anti-authoritarians is astounding. That the masses might unite and overthrow the current paradigm is, of course, not an impossibility – however unlikely given the comfort of many in this society – but it would look less like an abolition of rule, and more like the replacement of one leader with another. Our city has had its share of recent police brutality and murder, yet revolt has not taken off even as much as in other US cities. Enraged community members have been talked down or talked out of meetings by the activists attempting to address the murders, quashing the very energy of the people they intend to organize. It would be pleasant to see this change and to be proven wrong on this point, but it won't change the fact that the public at large won't favor maintaining leaderless revolt. Most people are not anarchists, despite what Crimethinc's *To Change Everything* tries to tell them. Certainly anarchists can find affinity with most people if they (over)look hard enough, maybe even some non-anarchist allies, but accomplices are fewer and farther between.

Meanwhile utopia seems ever more absurd, like attempting to build a perpetual-motion machine. It is a moralistic position that degrades our senses by even suggesting that purity exists, built on some impossible premise of pure perfection that guarantees it will break down. It is one of those last bits of religion that so many seem unable to shake: the promise of an idyllic future.

[1] See *Endnotes* and other communization texts.

My Anti-Syndicalism

Join us, Romantic friends! Forget all others!
And we will never work, O tides of flame!

ARTHUR RIMBAUD

More astounding still, perhaps, is that many of the anarchists who believe in revolution find common cause in the "red" aspects of our common history. The grim reality posed by the ubiquitous "Build Union, Buy American" stickers on so many hard hats and gang boxes should dissuade us from any promise of the (ever-dwindling self-identified) working class uniting and rising up to overthrow anyone, let alone pursuing a non-hierarchal society – and even if they did so, unions and cooperatives would not be the means to bring about such a revolutionary process. Still, red anarchists purport to believe just that. They will suggest that they want to participate in a workers' revolution, but you are more likely to find them organizing with college kids and liberals at a raise-the-minimum-wage-and-build-a-union rally.

The unions have become bureaucratic nightmares reflecting the government that legalized them and are more concerned with maintaining their own necessity and existence than with actually challenging social classes or work itself. I've personally watched union construction workers struggling to make it to 55 years of age so they can live out their retirement on pensions with broken bodies and broken spirits, fed up with unions, and I've seen more than a few failing to drag out those last few years only to settle for disability and early deaths after giving their lives to the machine. Major gains in union reforms have decreased since the legalization of their organizations, with anarchist manifestations all but dying out after the WWI-era government repression, and eventual large-scale defection from the radical Industrial Workers of the World (some to the authoritarian Communist Party) in the 1920's. Still, the IWW's membership probably never exceeded 100,000, and, as important as it was for marginalized peoples and anarchists at the time, it had little lasting impact beyond the 8-hour work day and challenging the reformist unions to be less bigoted in who they accepted for membership.[2] These were large gains, but also obviously reformist, and ultimately served to reinforce faith in the structures that reproduced authority after many of the most incendiary participants were murdered or deported, or joined the reformist unions.

Whether through advocating legal means, or at best an increasingly pacified civil disobedience, union-based struggles increasingly proclaim the richness of a class struggle history while denying the strengths that lay in criminality and sabotage. Their own history owes much to jumping scabs, bombing job sites (in the case of many coal mines throughout the region), or day-to-day acts of sabotage that proliferated in war work factories.[3] But even the reforms that unions did attain – which were never the same as freedom – tapered off, along with the unions' power, after the government legalized the union form. The fixation on the past in union rhetoric, meanwhile, only cements the notion that their best days are behind them.

Many critiques of red and union-based struggle I have found affinity with do fall short, however, in failing to acknowledge the limited access others have to anti-capitalist thought, ignoring the effects of pervasive social conditioning, and embracing an elitist condemnation of those in

[2] See "Beautiful Losers: The Historiography of the IWW" by Bob Black, 1998.

[3] Eight thousand people "were suspected of complicity in plots to set fire to munition works." See chapter 2, "Dynamite Speaks."

the lower classes who are not actively fighting back. This is an unfortunate, wholesale betrayal of potential accomplices in that it forgets that we all find our way by different means, at different paces, and in the meantime have different obstacles to attaining mere survival.

Some clarity begins to rise like the sun: either you are attempting to live freely, struggling to survive, or you are trying to get ahead by casting heavy shadows on both the living and the surviving. After all, how are we to maintain a society of laborers without coercion? How are we to maintain industrial and digital technology without resource-seeking colonization and environmentally destructive extraction? How else did societies grow in complexity and standards of living? Outright slavery, or else the threat of imprisonment or murder if you will not participate in the wage-based economy. Meanwhile, the globalization necessary to maintain an increasingly advanced techno-society as we source parts, labor, and landfills the world over is a result of depleting those resources locally. It's the genocidal logic of colonization joined to the infinite growth of capitalism and civilization on a finite planet. More tasks are automated and performed for us, and we grow increasingly alienated from the means to live. As we lose practical skills, the potential for the large-scale disaster of massive infrastructural failure looms larger. But this threat only reinforces our reliance on the specialists who maintain and control the systems. Living beings the world over are threatened as human societies becomes more industrialized, and then technological, while depleting every natural resource on the planet. Yet the reds fantasize about self-managed industry. Need I reinvoke the cataclysmic concerns regarding a consensus-organized nuclear energy facility[4] when there are already daily oil spills, bees dying off, poisoned water and poisoned air, as we undergo the Sixth Great Extinction?

Syndicalist and red anarchists such as John Bekken, the editor of *Anarcho-Syndicalist Review*, have mainly ignored the question of converting to a minimalist interpretation of syndicalism that would be better suited to a world battling rising sea levels and energy crises. I mean by this something more minimal than "sustainable" energy infrastructure industrializing the landscape and the homogenization and sterilization of any remaining earth by the necessary industrial agriculture for human food and fuel. On the other hand, they have talked about setting up temporary police forces and other authoritarian infrastructure fashioned after the proletarian dictatorship that has so clearly failed before.[5] This leaves me to wonder why these self-identified red anarchists don't just identify as communists if they are to invoke authoritarian systems to transition toward their idea of utopia, doomed as it is to betray their supposed anarchist aspirations.

And what of those who don't want to conform to their method of life, imposed as it may be for some ill-perceived "greater good?" They would come under the grip of a new law and order modeled on the coercive society we are fighting against today – this red tendency is playing chess with the powers that be when it should have flipped the board asunder. The industrial workers of a hundred years ago may not have known the long-term effects of massive industrialization, and can be somewhat excused – and celebrated for trying something new – but by now it has long been clear that work itself is the problem, and that identifying with the proletariat serves to replicate the logic of capital. Today's "reds" are just repeating mistakes that we need not revisit, intent on subjugating all aspects of the earth to their formalized will, even as they greenwash their union campaigns.

[4] As David Harvey said, "I wouldn't want my anarchist friends to be in charge of a nuclear power station".

[5] Personal conversation with John Bekken.

Living Anarchy, Acting for Freedom

Il me faut vivre ma vie.

JULES BONNOT

The endeavor to build large-scale formal organizations that replicate those that attempt to govern us, a liberated mass society, a unified utopia, is probably worthless, though I do encourage those that truly believe in it to see it through–by which I mean more than organizing more of the poorly attended, docile demonstrations and failed movie screenings that I've encountered. But for those of us who desire an unrestrained liberty, there are other sources to draw inspiration from, ones that do not rely on the accumulation of superior numbers or firepower.

I do not intend to present a demand or a program, but to call for creativity and asymmetric strategies in spite of the old world's corruption of our dreams. We have found examples of such strategies achieving short- and long-term success, and some of these histories are presented in earlier chapters of this book. And while even a Temporary Autonomous Zone can become an end unto itself, where participants merely reproduce the zone for its own sake (as we see in the Burning Man festivals that were intially inspired by TAZ), an authentic autonomy demands that all strategies support an investment in attack on those who intend to impose hierarchy upon us – and the more informal and leaderless these strategies are, the harder they are to discover or disrupt.

We draw inspiration from histories of attack and from lives empowered by informality, vagabondage, and simple – so-called primitive – ways of living opposed to those formal organizations we've dealt with above. Though some have lacked longevity (or perhaps more importantly, continuity), insurrectionary upheavals, guerrilla tactics, vagabond refusals, and the Situationist concept of *derive* provide concepts to draw from, and not to replicate wholesale or without considering the historical and environmental factors that forecast their success or consequence.

We already bear the armor that Fredy Perlman notes tribal peoples bore the weight of, and eventual succumbed to, in fighting the civilized on their own terms, and this makes it hard to even imagine what freedom looks like. Dropping out is not an option, when recent failures from Ted Kaczynski to communized land projects illustrate the impossibility of the escape that was still possible when the Anasazi Indians walked away from their civilization into the wilderness centuries ago. We can begin to see why an increasing number of anarchists have come to favor a diverse and widespread assault on the governing paradigm without demanding any particular future, seeking only to satisfy the destructive urge – the same one that Bakunin noted was also creative, in one of the few classical anarchist sensibilities still common in today's milieu (even in the disintegration of other concepts like mutual aid).

Reactionary romantics though they may be, primitivists have some of the strongest assertions regarding the dissolution of our communities due to a pervasive alienation by technological society that culminates in isolated individuals with less personal connections than ever before, while simultaneously advocating for the dismantling of every infrastructure that maintains it. Advocacy for a simpler future makes sense in that it tends to cut down the barriers between us (allowing us to find each other, as some have suggested is the place to begin). That is not

to say that we can recreate egalitarian primitive societies,[6] that they were all as perfect as they are sometimes made out to be, or for that matter that we might find a desirable simplicity in a tech-infused, tiny-home-minimalism form of capitalism that boils down to landlords charging more rent per square foot. But with an anarchic simplicity comes more deliberate motions than a weekend warrior like Thoreau could surmise, allowing time and energy for projects that invest in attack while simultaneously decreasing or eliminating the imposed necessity of wage labor. This is what the rather extensive anarchist infrastructure in Philadelphia should have provided: the means to house ourselves, feed ourselves, socialize or even purchase tools for a projectuality fitting our stated intent. In reality, however, relatively little is done with it in pursuit of anarchy.

In the wake of Occupy's predicable collapse, I was inspired to publicly propose the creation of an autonomous neighborhood in West Philly, given that it already held three infoshops, multiple Food Not Bombs chapters, collective houses, anarchist- and collectively-owned property, and an (ever-dwindling) number of squats. I figured that a further liberation of space could free up people's time for living instead of working, create an interwoven network of mutual aid, and propel other projects further as people began to occupy spaces for dwelling and food sharing that were protected from law enforcement by concerted efforts – a kind of safety that would require and encourage more engagement with dangerous activities. I was more optimistic then, but even now I am surprised the proposal didn't get much uptake.

Since then I have realized that those collectively-owned properties still cost just as much to rent, that anarchists turning into landlords is a grim business, that these areas are gentrifying as the universities expand and more yuppies move into the city, that all this makes it harder to squat anywhere, and that many anarchists are more concerned with reform than autonomy. All this has pretty much shot that idea dead. It seems increasingly difficult to connect with anyone as even the most techno-critical among us (myself included) become addicted to devices and more distant from one another.

My daydreams revert, then, to the freest, most assertive and inherently conflictual vagabond, as described by Max Stirner.[7] This functional, free flowing, non-dogmatic, voluntarily-associating and -dissociating engagement with society has broader appeal than the self-sacrificial martyrdom advocated for by formal tendencies (eg activist organizations, unions, party affiliates) and tends toward a more playful, joyful anarchist projectuality as a result. We've seen it reflected in the early successes of guerrilla struggles[8] of the Black Liberation Army, the ability of bomb-setting Galleanists to maintain networks and evade law enforcement, the large scale evasion of work

[6] Nor would it be the place of non-natives to reclaim indigenous lifeways of the Lenape, who were forced off this land by colonial settlement (see chapter 1).

[7] Stirner wrote: "All who appear suspicious, hostile and dangerous to the good bourgeois can be brought together under the name of 'vagabond'; the entire vagabond way of life displeases the bourgeoisie. And there are intellectual vagabonds as well, those who find the hereditary, ancestral home cramped and oppressive. So they go out to find more space and light far away. Instead of curling up in the family cave stirring the ashes of moderate opinion, instead of accepting the things that gave comfort and relief to thousands of generations as irrefutable truths, they go beyond all boundaries of tradition and run wild with their impudent critique and untamed mania for doubt. These extravagant vagabonds form the class of the unstable, the restless, the volatile, that is born from the proletariat; and when they give voice to their unsettled natures, they are called unruly, hot heads, fanatics."

[8] In "The Mini-Manual of the Urban Guerrilla," Carlos Marighella speaks to the necessity of leaderless, autonomous cells that – rather than build a party or hold unproductive meetings perpetuating bureaucracy – carry out "even the smallest revolutionary activity." (p 48)

before penitentiaries were created to punish and condition the scofflaws,[9] and even to promote creative and critical thought.[10],[11] Vagabondage is, effectively, an highly autonomous, asymmetric engagement with life.

Such a living engagement is not appealing to everyone, of course, but its appeal lies in its insistence on non-permanence, an idea that subtly pervades so much of the anarchist project. Appeals to permanence exist as plastics, uranium-enriched weaponry and waste dumped unceremoniously into the ground and oceans. Appeals to permanence look like cold, crumbling concrete erected in self-important celebrations of man and poisons leeching into every membrane. Permanence is extinction.

Ephemerality, on the other hand, is in our history – it is our ancestry. We come from nomads who did not overburden the earth, and anarchist history abounds with immigrants, vagabond poets, roaming illegalists, and hoboes. Again, not engagements to photocopy, but a true-to-life mythology to draw inspiration and direction from. All societies have recognized the wanderer and the layabout as threats to social order, criminalizing them for not working toward the buoying of an effervescent civilization. Wandering does not have to mean leaving one's city, either – the wanderer can open their mind and discover vulnerable targets to be attacked or resources to be used, not far from home.

> *From the moment we appeal to legality we are denying Anarchism... For the same reason, Anarchists, from the moment we begin to assume ourselves as such, right in that initial moment, we are locating ourselves outside the law.*
>
> GUSTAVO RODRIGUEZ,
>
> *Illegal Anarchism: The False Dichotomy*

As the Conspiracy of Cells of Fire have lamented, traditional methods of bank robbery are becoming more difficult under increasing security measures, so we should keep in mind that there are more ways to loot a bank than with a gun and a mask. Hackers, in addition to destabilizing energy infrastructures and states, have been able to get a lot of funds. Criminality continues to be an ever-present aspect of anarchist thought, as we of course refuse to recognize any governance over us as legitimate. When people are criminalized for their appearance and identity, it is not a solution to legalize those attributes; we should instead destroy the powers that would have ever sought to criminalize them in the first place. Criminality is also a common ground (if you want one) among common people, and its normalization is a contribution toward an alegalist

[9] "The vagabonds of Europe were as much a threat to the powerful as the nomads and semi-nomads of Latin America, they were therefore also submitted to the regimes of domestication. While the residents of Missions were converted to Christianity while they were taught the discipline of daily labor, European vagabonds were forced out of idleness while enclosed within four walls... During the early 1600s the first 'houses of confinement' were built in Europe, to still the wandering and to put the idle to work... It is noteworthy that the first houses of confinement in England, France and Germany were built in the most industrialized cities of those countries." – Chellis Glendinning, *My Name is Chellis and I'm in Recovery from Western Civilization*

[10] "... anarchist theoretical endeavors go their farthest when they are taken lightly and playfully, as explorations, experiments and adventures, not tasks or duties." – Vagabond Theorist

[11] In *A Philosophy of Walking*, Frédéric Gros details the liberating tendencies of strolling about outside, as it served such notable authors as Rimbaud and Nietzsche in their creative and critical endeavors.

existence.[12] Even the most dogmatic of pacifists have recognized this through civil disobedience – if only to advocate for their own arrest later. The state-collaborators that popularized pacifism (ie Gandhi, MLK) also recognized violence against oppressors as an occasional necessity, perpetually illegal as it may be, and many of the more effective pacifist actions found some success because they did not define property destruction as violence. But that dichotomy of violence versus nonviolence seems to bog down so many demonstrations, when the vastly more enlightened would look beyond the expected, pre-ordained marching/chanting spectacle in the first place.

The distance, morality, and symmetry that keep us from really finding each other persist. In our circles there is a fear of experimentation, a dearth of imagination, and little room for mistakes. We are largely left to ostracism or lonely bouts of repression when we step out of bounds, including those set up by our own supposed community. And while some missteps merit nothing but violence visited upon the offender, there are many more nuanced offenses that so often only reach some kind of resolution when someone abandons the community entirely, often to create similar experiences elsewhere. There is no use in prescribing one method (such as the accountability process) for any particular offense, as this would be too much like the law, but we have basically no ideas for methods beyond that and the enforcement of "safer space" policies – when in fact we could benefit from creating more dangerous spaces and addressing each situation as its own unique opportunity. Instead, the scene favors having preconceived, formal responses always at the ready, further limiting our dreams with its silencing moralities.

Ours is a scene largely afraid to say what it wants. Afraid to invoke anarchy, except as a historical platitude in a philosophical rhetoric like a locked door in a dead end alley. It invokes, instead, the same tired critiques of the chaotic and liberating tendencies in anarchist thought and action, relying on infantile and assimilationist hostilities, appealing to the lowest common denominators, making the masses feel safe – making our enemies feel safe. This wouldn't be so bad if it was a ploy to catch the wealthy elites off guard, but alas, it is not.

Ultimately, if you want something destroyed, you are better off destroying it yourself.

> *We can call protest meetings against violations of freedom, we can support reform movements indirectly, but pretending this is anarchistic activity is senseless.*
>
> CHAIM WEINBERG, Philadelphia anarchist
>
> (c. 1930)

[12] Alegality being our goal, as Émile Armand pointed out while asking "Is the Illegalist Anarchist our Comrade?" Though Gustavo Rodriguez has more recently pointed out that term "illegalist," in its "false dichotomy," has been an underhanded attempt to dismiss the insurrectionary tendency.

9. Let's Talk About Attack

Translation of "Parlons d'attaque,"
found in Salto: subversion & anarchie #4.

Anarchists sometimes talk about attack; some of them do so a lot. The media, on the other hand, don't feel as tempted to do so. The news of successful attacks, robberies, escapes, revolts, etc, aren't always broadcast in the news, and it makes sense. The police are the main scavengers of such news, and as the defenders of order have no interest in displaying these hostilities and broadcasting them through their channels.

Why then, is their censorship so often considered a problem? It seems to us that the problem isn't so much that what we don't talk about remains hidden (in terms of mass diffusion, since there are always witnesses who will speak to others, etc; in extreme cases, there remains those who repair the attacked target), but rather that what we don't talk about (again through the channels of power) cannot even exist in the spirit of many people. Because if it did, the loyal spokespeople (which is to say, loyal to power) of the truth and the news would engage with a word. And so, if we don't say anything, it's that it doesn't exist.

And so it remains up to the Spectacle to decide what exists and what does not. The relationships between people and the relationships between people and the world have been so mutilated by power that we always need a proxy, a product of power, to make our desired connections: the media, internet, phones. That the news of hostilities are only heard through these channels (or isn't) is a sad reality. If it's not on facebook, it doesn't exist, and if we're not on facebook, how will we talk about it?

That said, the solution to the problem certainly isn't to participate in the Spectacle. What would we gain from being represented via the channels of power? Where does this hunger/greed for *representation* in the Spectacle come from, a hunger/greed that always resurfaces; the media serves as a vanity mirror (recognition by the enemy, what a treat!), some proof that says we exist? All this spectacular culture reproduces the world of power and the mechanisms it needs to continue. So, for example, we wait with impatience for riots in the neighborhoods, while remaining blind to the lower-intensity destruction of the structures small or large of power around us – this game between rebels who have an eye for it, and for which no one determines the rules.

Beyond all that, the channels of power deprive hostilities of their content and replace it with a message that will instead affirm power. When the media frogs croak about an arson, a bomb, an assault against an oppressor … it always serves a counter-insurrectional goal. It's everything but an invitation to everyone to take up hostilities. The newspapers speak of something we were not able to conceal, and always find a way to say it was a marginal act, an absurdity: out of place and incomprehensible to "normal people," to whom no one can relate since the act comes from a well defined "category" of person (the residents of a certain neighborhood, people who share a certain anomaly, the youth of a certain ethnicity). Thus the hostilities are reduced to one of many diverse phenomena.

In the end, it's not the *fact* and the fetish that hand-in-hand can convince whomever (one can find something cool to "like" – but only as a spectator who immediately sets it aside, a mechanism stimulated by the media and all aspects of this existence that push people into a passive role); rather, it is *the idea*. The idea of breaking in the first person with this world that imprisons us in a thousand ways and has nothing to offer us, the idea to personally go on the offensive. If we think that there are too few attacks in this incredibly rotten world, it's also because the idea of attack is not present enough. We can find quite a few people who are *against* something, but this doesn't necessarily mean that they are very ready to do something. As long as the conflict with this miserable existence isn't engaged, the faith in the oracle of power will not disappear; the dependence on the mediated/virtual will remain, as will the thoughts that other worlds aren't possible or imaginable. A vicious cycle?

Well, since we're talking about attack here, some things should be clarified beforehand, like *what is an attack?*

To start, let go of the testosterone, the dress codes, the boastfulness. None of this has to do with attack. A child can be courageous enough to attack, and some children do. To attack you don't need to be a virile Hercules, trained and belligerent, nor have a loud mouth.

The attack breaks with mediation (that which causes one to let go of one's own life), with the patronage system (the bootlicking of people in power in order to obtain better survival conditions; for example, to obtain public housing or a residency visa), and with waiting. To attack is to stop letting things depend on people with power, and to act with one's self. It is to break the ongoing chain of the management of your own shit. To put it into words, we're talking about *self-organization* (down with official organizations, with politicians, with unions, and other leaders) and taking *direct action here and now.*

The attack is the refusal of dialogue with the enemy, the refusal of democracy. The attack is irreconcilable. We can't measure the attack by the number of burned targets. These are without a doubt attacks, but the attack is also more than this. The attack does not come without the strength of will to break with what power offers us. In the same way that it begins with taking a decision and the courage to put it into practice.

When we talk about attack, we give courage to the idea of "to be done with it." And it's not just in the *desire* of wanting to "be done with" a miserable life and those who make this miserable life possible that gives us life, but above all it is *detonation* of no longer passively submitting and swallowing the shit they push down our throats, that mutilates, kills, and eats from within generations of humans. The attack is thus not only what is destroyed, but is also a horizon of inspiration: the end of oppression; freedom. By not only what is destroyed, but also equally the realization of a mental rupture – the end of resignation, the end of negotiations, the end of bootlicking.

To go on the offensive, you need not only the decision or the will, but also *the means*. That's another problem. In the past, a portion of anarchist propaganda concerned itself with this. Sabotage manuals were distributed on worksites, for example against war efforts and mobilization. This

requires direct contact with rebels, insurgents, or revolutionaries, in the same way it demands the courage to defend one's own ideas and not to water them down in the hopes that they will be more navigable. In this case, we once again hurl ourselves against the walls of the open-air prison. For as long as someone has not decided to destroy their cage and begin to struggle against power, it remains a challenge to talk about the subject and to make it understood.

It's a lengthy task, because obviously someone who feels a deep hatred for the singular party of oppression doesn't automatically become a potential accomplice. In the same way that someone has perfect anarchist theories, but doesn't know how to throw a rock. Or how defending a certain means of survival doesn't necessarily mean the development of a completely other ethics on which we could build a new world.

The work of defending our ideas is long and not always easy or *pleasant*, because many of our convictions shock and repel many people, or are welcomed with a smile without it meaning that the mechanisms of delegation are broken and that the person will go on to attack. On the other hand, if we do not defend our ideas ourselves, no one else will, that much is certain.

Evidently, when you place your hopes on the revolt of the oppressed, you risk disappointment. Cause the oppressed don't rebel because anarchists tell them they should, even when they perceive themselves as oppressed and share the idea that those responsible for the oppression deserve to be attacked. There are numerous factors in the game: depression, fear, calculation, communitarianism, worry and daily survival, mechanisms of delegation, not being able to take one's life into hand, the desire for concrete solutions to concrete problems. We could go on and on, but no thanks, rather not. Especially since we are not addressing "the masses," but rather those who still feel revolt coursing through their veins, those who cannot stand to passively watch so much misery, or to those who don't content themselves with giving out bandaids for injuries or living a tranquil life, whether in the middle of or in the margins of this crazy existence.

If we talk about attack, it's not because we want to prove something to whoever. Someone who rebels does not need proof to give others to take action. And it isn't by giving it to others that they will follow the example. This reproduces roles familiar to the system, spectators and actors; this reinforces the mechanisms of *delegation* – "Good job, bravo!" – and this itself changes nothing about the feeling of powerlessness that an individual can feel. The proposition of diffuse attacks requires the exact opposite, the end of delegation and of command, self-confidence; the destruction of all moralism.

But where to begin?

We can try by forcing, through struggle, spaces to exist that did not before. Spaces where we encounter each other on another level, where recognition is not based on esteem or popularity, but on a shared revolt. These spaces open up and shrink down depending on the intensity of the struggle and other conditions we cannot influence. Within these spaces we've opened up, it becomes easier to be understood. A perspective on struggle that proposes to everyone to stop waiting, to stop being a spectator to the misery we live in, a perspective on struggle based on self-organization and attack can thus take on life.

If we defend attacking in this space, opened up by struggle, we can be more precise, more concrete, identifying the enemy. Who is our enemy and where we can hit them? Identifying the enemy is like giving out keys to anyone who wants to attack, but doesn't know where to start.

Let's take, for example, the construction of a new prison, very original. She who wants to struggle against this construction must know against whom she is fighting, researching whose idea it was, who wants to realize it and the means they plan on using to do so (from the media that promotes the new project, to the access roads to bring trucks to the construction site and carry primary materials, to parts of cells, technological infrastructure…). She who wants the fight to open up into a true struggle must spread this information as widely as possible. To stimulate the diffusion of attacks, it is important that the names of the architecture firms, the responsible politicians, the enterprises … are available to everyone, for everyone has their own reasons to sabotage the project.

But, please, without the campaign logic…Because it's not about bringing a mean enterprise to better intentions, of forcing it to change its bad habits via punitive measures, nor of pressuring an institution to change its mind. Certainly, sometimes it is necessary in a concrete case for comrades to act this way (for example, to stop the execution of comrades or to make the state back off a specific point because the consequences would be too much). But when we're talking about, for example, companies that build prisons, TGV lines,[1] airports, let's refuse all forms of communication (even the radical ones) with the enemy; let's refuse all forms of reformism. Better still: we don't want to spread the logic of reformism, we want to destroy it. The goal is, then, not to convince (by way of damage, material or monetary); the goal is to sabotage and attack the entirety of the project on all terrains. Attack – not to convince, but because we are convinced we don't want this project. Attacking, not to punish, but to make life harder for the enemy. From the construction companies to the security coordinators and engineers; from the civilian participants to the banks who finance the project.

And yes, we want to really and effectively stop the construction of this prison, but that's not the only thing that counts. Again, it's about creating spaces of struggle where everything that came before can be experimented with and understood. It is not always easy to explain in a world where everything is pointed toward obtaining concrete results; where all action, before being taken, is evaluated for its significance, its feasibility, its effectiveness.

Finally, add that the fact that building a prison, for example, is not just physical walls, but also an arsenal of state propaganda calling for more Justice and the raving security that casts its shadow on everyone's freedom (or the possibility of freedom). A company that will no longer take part in the construction doesn't change the state's vast repressive project. That's why it's important to not talk only about a single target, a single place, but also to critique with words and actions the context in which the project is built. Why it is built, what is linked to the project. If we don't do it, no one will become smarter.

It isn't in the name of a dreamy anarchist movement with the muscle capable of bringing the enemy to its knees that information is distributed. It is an invitation to self-organize and to attack, an attempt to stimulate a reciprocal exchange of knowledge, understanding the world in which we live, knowing *where* to hit the enemy.

[1] Translator's note: TGV stands for Train a Grande Vitesse, a high speed train.

So that finally the feeling of facing an invincible reptile can disappear, this feeling of powerlessness when facing a machine that crushes everything. The machine can be sabotaged. It is made up of numerous pieces and gears that are not invulnerable.

"*But what can we do?*"

"*Talk with people you trust. Attack, damage the machine, put it out of order. Break resignation, hit the arrogance of power in the face. Cause the jail builders nightmares. Everywhere. On the worksites, in the neighborhoods, in the places they want to build the monster. To all the places where a piece of the monster comes from: from ministries to workshops, from university study groups to community boards, from foremen to prison administrators. Take small steps, take big steps, but take steps. Because if we don't take steps we are always pushed further back.*"

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