

The USA, Greece, and Italy: An Anti-Fascist History

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The following text was composed by anarchists and anti-fascists from the US, Greece, and Italy. It's an attempt to situate the past decade of struggle in the proper historical context.

First Coordinate (Abscissa)

Para burlar la ley, correr es mi destino, perdido en el corazón de la grande Babylon

-Manu Chao, *Clandestino*, 1998

Like most North Americans, the anarchists of the US can be quite clueless. Living in the center of an empire has long been known to produce delusional thinking, entitlement, myopia, selfishness, and above all, ignorance. In this regard, North Americans are anything but exceptional. The crimes of the US empire are well cataloged, their details readily available online, and the atrocities archived in a thousand different libraries. Despite these facts, even the most radical US anarchists remain oblivious to the lasting impact of their country's imperialism across the globe. To highlight this unfortunate pattern, and also reveal a way to reverse its effects, this essay will focus on the country that has influenced contemporary US anarchism more than any other: Greece.

The fact that a nation-state of less than 11 million people came to shape US anarchism is certainly mind-boggling, especially if one tries to find direct links, but the explanation is very simple. On December 6, 2008, the Greek police executed a 16 year-old anarchist named Alexis Grigoropoulos in cold-blood, triggering a month-long insurrection that left the country scorched and smoldering. Unlike other global uprisings tied to the economy, this insurrection was fueled by a simple truth: the police think they can kill whoever they want and now we'll punish them for it. There was no other reason for this revolt. Compared to the US, the Greek police kill relatively few people, making the ferocity of this insurrection nearly holy in its righteousness and justification. At the time, many US anarchists asked themselves, *if our Greek comrades will do this over one murder, why can't we do this for the hundreds murdered by police in the US every year.*

Between 2008 and 2013, many domestic anarchists attempted to answer this question through words, actions, and deeds, eventually building an anti-police movement that exploded in the Ferguson Uprising of 2014-2016. For the first time since the 1960s and 1970s, the US saw a national uprising against the police that left multiple cities touched by flame (Ferguson, Oakland, Baltimore, Saint Paul, Milwaukee, etc.). While this energy was eventually captured and contained in 2016 by the Democratic Party and other reformists, the revolts of 2014-2016 were unprecedented in the United States. In no uncertain terms, the Greek insurrection of 2008 enabled this uprising in the US, just as a half century of US imperialism enabled the 2008 insurrection in Greece. Here's how it happened.

Second Coordinate (Ordinate)

Then it turned the corner and there it was. At that moment, I melted my body into it and it embraced me. Rosy fingered dusk and all that. Come here, it sang, listen.

-Juliana Spahr, *Turnt*, 2015

After the death of Alexander the Great of Macedonia in 323 BC, the once mighty Greek Empire began to collapse. In 146 BC, both Macedonia and Greece came under Roman rule, ushering in an uninterrupted series of conquests and re-conquests that lasted two thousand years, a truly Sisyphean fate for the birthplace of Prometheus. This seemingly infinite subjugation eventually came to an end (of sorts) only after the defeat of the Nazis at the end of WWII, an event that forever changed our world.

Once this apocalypse had ended, the Communist guerrillas controlled most of Greece, although they'd already been sold out by Stalin to the Western powers. Rather than accept their subjugation to the victorious Allies, these rebels fought a bloody civil war that lasted from 1944 to 1949, only to meet the same fate as Prometheus. Betrayed by the very people they'd liberated from bondage, these guerrillas disappeared into a re-unified Kingdom of Greece now controlled by NATO and the US empire. Despite the past two thousand years of subjugation, the Greek language remained remarkably resilient to any Latin influence, a rebellious trait that continues today.

Before the end of WWII, the population of Greece hovered below a million people, with the bulk residing in the city of Athens. After centuries of warfare, hundreds of thousands of Greek villagers had been forced from the rural countryside into the protection of either Athens or Thessaloniki, a pattern that continued during the Greek Civil War. Once that destructive conflict was over, these million weary internal refugees were swept up into the post-war construction *blitzkrieg* that radically altered the landscape. Obeying orders from NATO and the US, local Athenian capitalists and mafia began to cover the Cephisian Plane with a vast grid of cement apartment buildings, charging rent and pocketing small fortunes.

With help from the CIA and NATO, the Greek military overthrew the government in a 1967 *coup d'etat* and instituted a fascist *junta* that lasted until 1974, proving again what *US democracy* truly meant. When confronted by the media about the CIA's role in the *coup*, the local station chief replied, *how can you rape a whore?* During this nightmare, thousands of rebels were raped, tortured, exiled, or killed by the fascist *junta*, a regime that didn't end until the Athens Polytechnic Uprising of 1973. It was here in the Exarchia neighborhood that the anarchists and communists regained their strength after nearly three decades of US/NATO repression, offering up their lives outside the Polytechnic University in order to bring down the fascists and abolish the monarchy.

As the international anarchist movement gathered strength in Athens through the 1980s and 1990s, the Exarchia neighborhood remained a hotbed of rebellion and lawlessness. By the 2000s, it was one of the strongest hubs of international anarchism and the Polytechnic University continued to attract the brightest minds from across Greece. Hosting squats, book stores, printing presses, anarchist social centers, tolerable small merchants, and rebel apartment blocks, Exarchia was where every youth went to experience their first rebellion and learn how to resist the constant encroachments of fascism. One of these youths was 16 year-old Alexis Grigoropoulos, and when the fascist police shot him in cold-blood, the history just described hovered directly in the background. After the neighborhood rose up in a fearsome riot, their flames soon spread across the entire country. Just as the Greeks never changed their language to suit the Romans, its rebels never forgot what the US and NATO had done to their parents. Without mincing any words, the Greek Insurrection of 2008 was nothing short of blowback against the twisted capitalist visions of the US empire, and it was only appropriate that those Greek fires be kindled in the belly of the beast. But before that story can be told, this essay has to take dark and disturbing turn, one that leads us all the way back to Rome.

Third Coordinate (Trenary)

*'Tis something in the dearth of fame,
Though link'd among a fetter'd race,
To feel at least a patriot's shame,
Even as I sing, suffuse my face.*

-Lord Byron, *The Isles of Greece*, 1819

While they sometimes try to imitate their fascist US overlords, most Greek people are surprisingly kind to outsiders. Beneath the violent proclamations, performative hostility, and tightly folded arms, Greek society is not only secretly kind to outsiders, it also protects stray cats and dogs. It's hard to find a neighborhood in Athens without a water and food dish set out for the feral urban animals, just as bird feeding is a widely practiced habit. After all, it was the Greeks who allowed Lord Byron (the equivalent of today's scum-fuck art-hipster) to rally an army against the Ottoman Empire, a crusade that led to the poet's timely death. It's when this seemingly natural openness to strangers is taken advantage of that Greek people tend to react, either in a liberatory fashion, or a fascist one. In this regard, the Greeks prove that literally everyone is human.

According to one anarchist historian, the Greek *coup d'etat* of 1967 was a "major boost" for the forces of reaction where, "following a period of political instability and acts of terrorism as prescribed by the Strategy of Tension, three hundred senior members of the elite US-trained and NATO controlled "Mountain Assault Brigade" put into effect the NATO contingency "Plan Prometheus" and toppled the democratically elected government." Once their opponents had been silenced, the military junta invited several dozen Greek and Italian fascists to study their methods and learn how to infiltrate radical groups in order to create chaos. After this bout of training, the Italian fascists returned to the Roman peninsula and began to implement an identical strategy. In the words of the same historian, "the effect of these trips on those who took part would appear to verge on the miraculous. Died-in-the-wool Italian Nazis returned from the Colonels' Greece "convinced" socialists, communists, Maoists and anarchists."

With their CIA funding funneled through a US bank (the Continental Illinois National Bank and Trust Company), these neo-fascists began to cover Italy in far-right propaganda and engaged in seemingly random acts of domestic terrorism. This strategy eventually led to the deadly Piazza Fontana Bombing of 1969 that left 17 random people dead on the streets of Milano, a horrific act of terrorism accompanied by other bombs in Rome. The bombing in the Piazza Fontana was immediately blamed on anarchists, publicly justifying the subsequent arrests of nearly ninety radicals, one of whom was thrown to his death out of a window. The murder of Giuseppe Pinelli, an Anarchist Black Cross organizer from Milano, was the event that truly ignited what became known as the *Anni di piombo*, or the *Years of Lead*. In response to this blatant murder, the first anarchist and communist guerrilla groups formed to combat the fascist state. Defying the CIA and NATO's terror-campaign, three thousand anarchists escorted Pinelli's coffin to the cemetery within a sea of black flags.

The Italian neo-fascists trained in Greece were followers of Jules Evola, a Nazi who disagreed with the populist aspects of traditional fascism, and the tactics they developed during the *Years of Lead* continued to be practiced over the following decades, although it was constantly met with resistance from anarchists and communists guerrillas. Over the years, a counter-strategy to this fascist ambiguity was developed in anarchist circles, with one author dubbing it *the anarchist*

tenion. In his words, *this is the secret of life: never ever separate thought from action, the things we know, the things we understand, from the things we do, the things with which we carry out our actions.* The author of these words was given an eighteen month jail sentence in 1977 for writing *Armed Joy*, a book that was quickly banned with every existing copy burned by the Italian state. In those illegal pages, the author famously wrote, *hurry up and refuse work, before a new sophist tells you: work makes you free.* In case the point is lost, this quote refers to the famous proclamation above the gates of the Auschwitz concentration camp: *arbeit macht frei*, or *work will set you free.*

Between the 1980s and the 2000s, the international anarchist movement fought the neo-fascist infiltrators in numerous cultural arenas, from the punk scene all the way up to the art world. Over these decades, the fascists were consistently beaten on the streets only to end up running for government offices and parliamentary positions. This consistent pattern played out widely in Europe, with numerous social-democracies hosting sizable neo-fascist parties inside their government temples, a contagion the US was miraculously spared from, at least for a while. Greece was not so lucky.

In 2011, the fascist party Golden Dawn began to rise to power in the Greek Parliament and on the streets of Athens and Thessaloniki, accompanied by a wave of state repression. As these black-metal-listening-neo-fascists terrorized immigrants and radicals on the streets, the fascist state raided anarchists squats, jailed dozens of anarchists, and enabled the 2013 assassination of Pavlos Fyssas, a beloved anti-fascist rap-artist. After this state-sponsored murder, a militant communist group assassinated two Golden Dawn fascists in front of their suburban-Athens headquarters, an action that forced elements of the state to finally crack down and arrest the leaders of Golden Dawn rather than allow an armed conflict to emerge. But luckily, our story doesn't end there.

Fourth Coordinate (Quaternion)

Συν Αθηνά και χεῖρα κίνει///Move your hand along with Athena
-ancient Greek proverb

In early 2019, a passerby can glimpse the phrase DEATH TO NATO spraypainted on the walls of the Polytechnic University in Athens, a common Greek sentiment which shows no sign of dissipating. While the anti-fascist movement in the US has finally grown to meet the anti-fascists of Latin America and Europe, the Greek anarchist movement has already survived the rise of Golden Dawn and moved into another period of expansion. As their comrades in the US organized against Donald Trump's state-sponsored fascism from late-2016 to the present, the Greek anarchists opened squats for refugees, fought off police sponsored gangsters, and attacked symbols of state power across Athens, Thessaloniki, and other cities. Today, one of the most famous (and popular) anarchist groups in Greece is called *Rouvikonas*, or *Rubicon*.

Unlike the Greek anarcho-nihilist guerrillas of 2009-2012, *Rouvikonas* maintains a close connection with the population and choose their targets based on common sentiments. If the government is evicting people, the group will trash eviction offices. If the cost of electricity is too high, the group will destroy all the electrical company's computers so no one can pay their bills. If a Canadian mining company is destroying the land, the group will attack the Canadian embassy. In January 2019, ten members of the group approached the US Embassy in Athens on motorbikes, covered the guardhouse in red paint, and then sped off into the congested streets. In their claim

of responsibility, the group stated, “*even the enemy’s best-guarded fortresses can fall, provided all of us come together and decide that we do not want them to exist.*” It should be noted that the CIA operated out of the US Embassy during the fascist *junta*, just as thousands still march to this despicable building every November 17 to commemorate the Polytechnic Uprising of 1973. With their tactics, *Rouvikonas* perfectly embodies the *anarchist tension* where one *never ever separates thought from action, the things we know, the things we understand, from the things we do, the things with which we carry out our actions.*

In February 2018, the group entered the headlines when a conservative New Democracy politician accused *Rouvikonas* of threatening violence towards an upcoming protest against the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) retaining the word Macedonia in its name. As a requirement for joining the EU and NATO, the Balkan nation-state was forced to agree to a series of conditions, including changing its name to the Republic of Northern Macedonia. In a bizarre twist of fate, the conservative right-wing of Greece now tacitly opposes their northern neighbor joining NATO, while the SYRIZA-led left-wing advocates this name change and Macedonia’s inclusion in NATO. The protests in February 2018 against the name change took place without any *Rouvikonas* violence, although several-hundred anarchists did hold a banner which read ‘*Macedonia belongs to its bears.*’

At heart, the right-wing’s justifications for opposing the name change have to do with one man: Alexander the Great of Macedonia. Because he was the most powerful of symbol Greek imperial power, the fascist and traditional right-wing insist his kingdom’s namesake cannot be given away to what they call “*a bunch of Slavs.*” While they might believe they’re fighting the fascists by advocating the name change, the political left-wing of Greece is in fact aiding the cause of world fascism by facilitating Macedonia’s inclusion in NATO, the same organization that terrorized their country. After a year of protests that culminated in fiery right-wing riots, FYROM officially became the Republic of Northern Macedonia in January 2019 and began the NATO ‘ascension’ process on February 6, 2019. A bitter debate is occurring in the Greek Parliament as this article is being written, pitting the pro-NATO leftists against the far-right parties over whether to formally approve Macedonia’s inclusion in NATO. Because of its championing of the name-change and defense of NATO, SYRIZA now stands to lose its place as the ruling party, an ironic outcome for the institutional left.

While it might seem odd that the parliamentary left and right have swapped their attitudes to NATO, the explanation is simple: Russia. Unable to decide where they stand between Russia and the US, the Greek state has embraced its membership in the EU and NATO, although cracks are already starting to emerge. Unlike several other European nation-states, Greece and Italy have refused to join a resolution calling for the overthrow of the socialist Venezuelan government, a defiance that’s already eliciting howls from other NATO members. While the leftist SYRIZA party is supporting Macedonia’s inclusion in NATO, its right-wing rival, New Democracy, is calling for Greek support of a *coup d’etat* in Venezuela. These contradictions couldn’t be heavier, especially with Russia supporting the Venezuelan government and denouncing the expansion of NATO, an organization originally formed to fight the USSR.

Anyone with an internet connection can confirm that Hans Speidel, a former Nazi general, was the Supreme Commander of NATO in the 1950s, just as Adolf Heusinger, another Nazi general, was a NATO chairman in the 1960s. It would take too long to list all of the German Nazis who aided the CIA after WWII, but make no mistake, the US has always been a promoter of world fascism and one need only look to US sponsored neo-fascists in contemporary Ukraine to

determine that nothing has changed since the 1940s. Unsurprisingly, Donald Trump came out loudly against NATO in 2018, calling for the US to withdraw from the organization and rousing the fury of the CIA. In response to Trump's call to leave NATO, the US media began a campaign of rehabilitation of this organization with the *New York Times* recently calling NATO "*the military alliance among the United States, Europe and Canada that has deterred Soviet and Russian aggression for 70 years.*" As this essay should have revealed by now, if one is looking for the main promoter of neo-fascism in our world, the US and NATO are the prime suspects, terrorizing not just other countries, but even its domestic population. Russia knows this full well, having studied the US for the past century, and its destabilization strategy has a crude poetry that's hard to ignore: do to the US what the US has done to others and trap the beast inside its own belly.

Just as the CIA undermined elections and sponsored fascists across the globe, Russia has been using these same tactics to break apart the crumbling US empire. Knowing that US society is the birthplace of 20th century fascism, Russia simply activated its existing neo-fascists and let them run rampant under Donald Trump's encouragement. Faced with their own repulsive tactics, the US had done nothing but unravel since 2016, unable to stare at its reflection in the mirror. Trapped in the nightmare of its own history, the US is now a melting glacier of ignorance, with its recently thawed citizens generally too stupid to understand what's happening, nor do they possess the intelligence to respond. Each day reveals the gray-haired political establishment walking further into Vladimir Putin's trap, with the Democratic Party and the CIA now falling behind Donald Trump in his children's crusade against socialist Venezuela (a country backed by none other than Russia). Not only are the clueless Americans walking happily into this tinderbox, the bulk of the EU is skipping and laughing at the prospect of a *coup d'etat*. The fact that Trump is leading this charge undoubtedly only makes Putin laugh harder when he's scratching his balls in Moscow, especially given the entire conflict is designed to break apart the US, the EU, and NATO. At the height of its power, the US empire failed in its 2002 *coup d'etat* against the Venezuelan government. There's no reason to believe its next attempt will be successful.

As this article is being written, the president of Romania just signed onto the Western crusade against Venezuela, despite the fact that peaceful 2017-2018 protests were brutally repressed by the notoriously corrupt ruling party, or that this same party is now trying to push a gas-pipeline through some of the last remaining old-growth forests in Romania (and all of Europe). By ignoring the corruption of its member states, the EU and NATO believe they can press onward with their neo-liberal agenda, although this hastiness will surely be the cause of their demise. With the phantom menace of Russia nipping at their heels, the last of the US empire is crumbling along with the former power of NATO and the EU. As was mentioned earlier, Putin is surely laughing his ass off, given he's done practically nothing to cause these irrational decisions and hypocritical positions. The Kingdom of Spain, famous for overturning a recent democratic election in Catalonia and repressing its Basque population, is now lecturing Venezuela on democracy. The French Republic, now famous for disfiguring "yellow vest" protesters with police weapons, feels confident in telling Maduro to practice proper democratic procedures while the streets of Paris fill with tear-gas. And to cap it all off, Donald Trump, idiot-puppet-doll of Russian interests, is now leading the zombie US empire into this final confrontation.

All of this brings us back to Macedonia, a country whose government has now sunk into the quagmire of pro-EU/US/NATO corruption. In order to provide a "democratic" cover for its name change, the government called for a referendum where the public would vote on the issue. When this referendum failed to bring in the necessary votes (less than 35% showed up), the Macedonian

government pressed onward with their program and forced the name change through Parliament in what the US-media described as a “*victory for democracy*.” Meanwhile, in the capital city of Skopje, practically nobody gives a shit about the name-change and view this pro-NATO charade as the same political corruption they’ve grown used to. While the US/EU/NATO and the Russian Federation duel over Greece and the Balkans, the infamous statue of Alexander the Great stands in the center of Skopje, just above the flowing waters of the Vardar River. Installed by the previous, pro-Russian government in 2011, this eighty-foot statue depicts the famed Emperor raising a sword to the sky. Intentionally or not, this sword is pointed directly towards glowing Coca-Cola and Huawei marquees. If one stretches the imagination, this figure of Alexander can be seen challenging both the East and the West, although not for much longer. Under the terms of its new NATO membership, the government must tear down this statue within five years. Across the whole of Macedonia, the official image of Alexander the Great is now forbidden.

Fifth Coordinate (Polytope)

The fire is a fire.

-Yórgos Bátis, *The Heater*, 1934

Skopje is a woodstove metropolis with its red-tiled houses spewing dark tendrils of smoke up the sides of Soviet-era apartment buildings. This smoke joins the car exhaust and helps to create a blanket of toxic air that hovers close to the ground beneath snow covered mountains. Residents of Skopje are similar to residents of Beijing in that both wear stylized breathing-masks with fashionable designs meant to make the air bearable. Over a quarter of the Macedonian population resides in Skopje (nearly 600,000 people) and more arrive each day, lured by the *economic miracle* swirling within the bright lights. A sizeable anarchist movement also resides into this woodsmoke metropolis with its walls hosting a constant graffiti-battle between fascists and libertarians. Unfortunately for the region, there’s little connection between anarchists in Skopje and Athens, a mistake that will hopefully correct itself over time.

Like the city of Skopje, ancient Athens acts like a magnet for the rural countryside, helping to lure out the youth from village after village. For the past two thousand years, brutal warfare was the dominant force that drove people from the village into the metropolis. Today, outright warfare has been replaced with economic warfare, and the villages of Greece and Macedonia are being steadily emptied out of their children, a pattern which is also visible in the US. In the late 1930s, just before WWII, the number of US farms began to rapidly decline amid the Great Depression. As more of its own villages were being liquidated to fuel the capitalist *economic miracle* in the 1940s and 1950s, the US was simultaneously exporting this same de-ruralization on other countries. As was mentioned earlier, Greece suffered greatly under this rapid urbanization, a process still occurring today. Month after month, the brightest minds of rural Greece still flock to the metropolis, leaving their villages to crumble.

Now that the nightmare of 20th century geo-politics has been thoroughly exposed in this essay, it’s only appropriate to offer a way out. With the grand forces of the US, the EU, China, and Russia all pushing one form of capitalist globalization or another, its best to leave them in the cold and abandon their cities for the desolated villages. At best, cities offer concentrations of rebellion, given that everyone’s crammed next to each other, and urban residents are often

forced to create beauty in an otherwise inhospitable environment. The best parts of any city are built by us anyway, so why create our utopias in grids built by the enemy? Why not leave for the village in large groups? Without a pool of urban slaves easily within reach, these empires will inevitably crumble into ruin. True enough, urban capitalist modernity offers an exciting alternative to rural religious conservatism, and the repressiveness of the Orthodox, Catholic, or Evangelical churches often fuel the urbanization process. To undo this horrible flow of life into the capitalist meat-grinder, we need to make the village more exciting than the city, and more liberating.

The effects of geo-politics grow lighter outside of the metropolis and a life outside capitalism starts becoming possible. While certain rural areas do in fact host conservative populations, the majority of the countryside is filled with good people unified by a simple truth: life in the neo-liberal global empire is nothing short of slavery. Faced with the collapse of their rural economies, these conservative residents are often tricked by fascists into supporting racist causes or blaming immigrants for their problems, although this is easy enough to remedy. The only advantage some fascists have in rural areas is that they're willing to live there, while the majority of anarchists and communists aren't. While this is less true in Europe, radicals in the US are still too proud of their country's pathetic techno-modernism.

To conclude with one real example, we'll offer up the tiny village of Tarnac, France. After decades of depopulation, a group of anarcho-communists moved into an old stone house in a forsaken part of France. Over the next years, they opened up a bar, made friends with the owner of the general store (who was also elected mayor), built a library, sent their kids to the empty school, erected a mill, built new wooden houses, created a grocery delivery service for elderly shut-ins, and filled the sleepy stone village with a lost vibrancy. As the fates would have it, this region once hosted communist guerrillas during WWII and carried the memory of partisan warfare waged against the fascists. According to local legend, after the Nazis invaded France, two Tarnac natives were deputized by their fascist masters and began to terrorize the very people they'd grown up with. Once the village was liberated by the communist guerrillas, these two fascists were marched up the hill, told to dig their graves, and then shot in the back of the head.

To this day, the small village of three hundred people remembers that legend very well, although a small minority of Tarnac fascists use this story as a justification for their hatred of radicals. These two dozen gray-haired National Front supporters sit in their hotel during lunch (the only other restaurant in town) and grumble about how one day these metropolitan communists are going to slit their throats while they sleep. As the years pass, these paranoid fascists find themselves still breathing each morning with an increasingly youthful village sprouting around them. Soon enough, the last of these conservatives will pass into the dustbin of history, leaving their mortal enemy to enjoy this reinvigorated village. Where there was once a rural locale desolated by the *economic miracle*, there's now a chance to live a better life, to create a world where children can grow up free from the normal miseries, and where food comes from the ground, not some invisible capitalist overlord.

Fighting fascism is a constant battle, requiring massive sacrifices from those who wish to expose and destroy them, but this battle becomes increasingly easier outside the cities. Rather than drown in urban rivers of blood, it's time we leave these nightmarish cities and build a world of our own choosing. As the global empires continue their sharp decline, this appears to be our only option. The metropolitan vision of US imperialism is now dead, so let's kick its corpse into

the water and let it float away until it sinks. Our enemies have tormented us long enough. Now is the time for our revenge.

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