

ANTI-AUTHORITY

DAILY REVOLT

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# RETURN FIRE

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INDIVIDUAL WILL DE-CIVILISATION

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...and more!

**VOLUME 3, CHAPTER I**

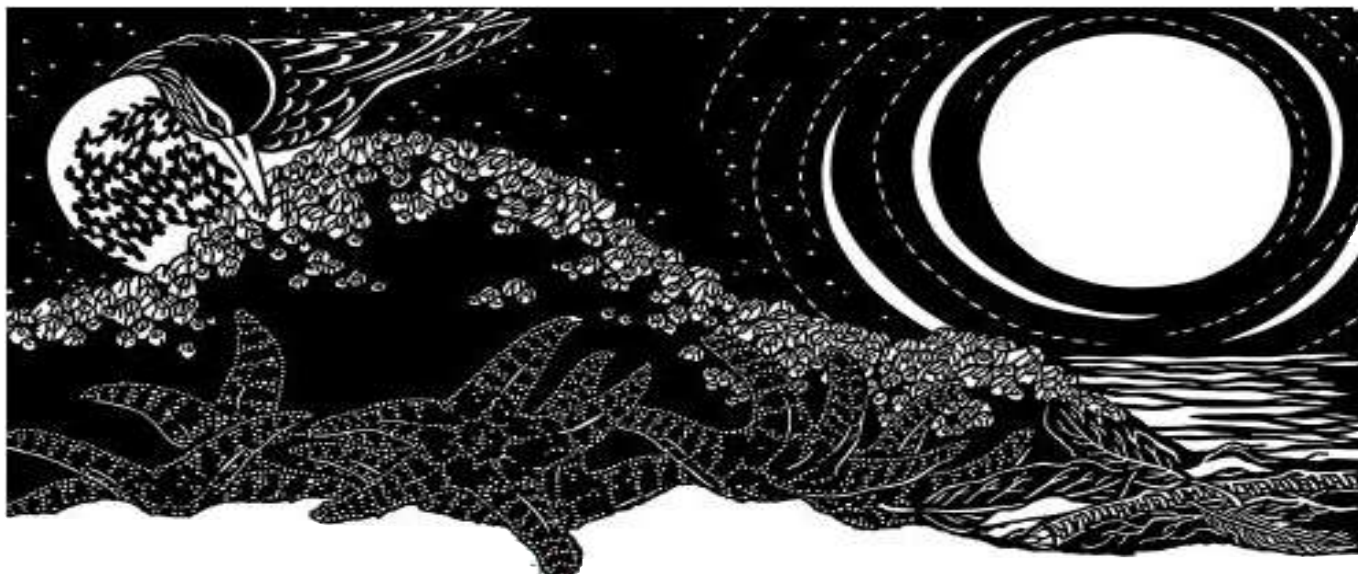
**WINTER 2015-2016**

**We few began as wanderers in this wasteland, this wasted land, this land laid waste. Going through the motions every day, our hands passing over the assembly line, the steering wheel or the keyboard almost without our conscious awareness, as if ghost limbs. We tell - or are told - the same story again and again of how we come to be here, of how we have 'progressed' into this age that clings to us like cellophane. Yet what is it, this thought which flashes unbidden across our minds while we submit to the bosses orders, or when we pass the clearcut forest? Where does it lead, this chain of feelings we could allow ourselves to follow, hooked on the tailwings of the swooping swallow, or that draws us to a mountain or seashore? Why is it that our fingers twitch, curl into fists, *become ours once more*, when the newscasts and adverts blare, when the landlord knocks, when police approach? Who are they, those friends whose company seems incommensurable with the hollow commodities, the acquisition of which keeps us apart; those voices who dare to challenge these values and way of life; those who tear away at this suffocating skin which has been grafted onto ours, bringing their heretical dreams to life again and again as feral beauty, bombs and beating hearts? How could it be, that those moments could stretch on and on, while restrictions and categories peel away to fall as so much compost for the conspiracy of dandelions blooming atwixt the cracks, from an Earth we have learned to embrace once more? *Gather your strength*, the reply from our bones counsels. Your fight seems to have begun**

**for anarchy, for wildness.**



# OPENING SALVO [Editorial]



Here we are again, with one more collection to throw into the mix for your consideration. We've taken on a task of documenting these current times of struggle (as well as their heritage to be kept alive), but at a different rhythm than the hyper-immediacy which is often forced upon us by the online culture.

**Hence, along with the newer articles and translations, we have presented a range of pieces in the following pages which have appeared at different times in the last while, but which may have previously washed over us in the data-stream with little impact.** We believe that our format is better suited to reflective reading, so we're now committing them to paper; many good websites and online publications exist where you can get up-to-the-moment information, our purposes here are otherwise.

We strongly want to reject reductionism, whether that of exclusively attending to the class struggle, to prisons or prisoners, to the technological-industrial system, to 'nature', social identities and their oppressions, etc. **We think that the divergent but informative experiences which are shared through this compilation can pass through all these and more, without affixing too much of a set character to our project beyond our obvious aspirations for the end of all hierarchy and civilisation.**

The text boxes we have laid out with the articles often refer to related materials for further reading, should anyone find it of interest, but we will be clear that we only agree for sure with what was used, not necessarily the whole texts in their entirety. Where we have accompanied some articles with a chronology of actions for inspiration, it's to emphasise a stated (or perceived) aspect which we found to be in common with the subject matter; but all of these deeds doubtless held a broader resonance in the moment and significance to the authors, so we hope it won't seem too much like a misappropriation, and that the links seem obvious enough.

**As a change from our previous volumes, this time our glossary entry – on colonisation – is available as a separate companion piece** (aimed to be distributed alongside this and also available with the online version through [325.nostate.net/?tag=return-fire](http://325.nostate.net/?tag=return-fire)). This way we felt able to give it the space we felt it needed for a more thorough investigation; we haven't decided whether to continue this way in the future for glossary entries, but hopefully it can give some deeper thoughts to the topic as it comes up throughout this edition.

Touched on this time around are subjects such as reproductive technologies; eco-defence and its

sometimes-curious allies; militarism as something it's not possible to separate from wider domination; gender subversion; indigenous resistance, the complexity of solidarity and delving back into the colonisation of our own ancestors; trajectories of struggle being forged in different corners of the planet; and Smart Cities (indeed as well as the consequences of urbanisation in general). On this last note, we are also releasing a formatted version of an essay we received during December concerning the 'Internet of Things' and the converging sciences, '*Smarter Prison?*', as a supplement to this volume to distribute alongside, and which should also be accessible via the above link.

Without further ado, we send a sign of our collaboration with close and also distant bands of eco-saboteurs, street-fighters, wild Luddites and insurgent land cultures, and to the indomitable prisoners of our tendency as well as many more rising with the determination to assail this deadening order. While we can only extend so much to those we don't personally know, or know only minimally through their ideas and practices, we recognise a burning powder-trail connects us and the power which that contains, as a compliment to our lived relationships in the times it makes sense to us.

*Return Fire* is dedicated this time to our many collaborators far and wide (you know who you are), outcasts among the compliant, of whom we're fiercely proud.

*In the spirit of total liberation,*

R.F.



# THE VEIL DROPS

– anti-extremism or counter-insurgency?



*“The planning of psychological operations has to understand:*

- a) *That successful counter-insurgency operations are based on the involvement and identification of the population with the plans and operations of the government.*
- b) *That the population acts on the basis of what they believe – without consideration of the facts.*
- c) *That the action of the population in support of the government will only emerge, if the people believe that they can reach their individual and collective objectives best through this government.”*  
– Counter-Insurgency Planning Guide, U.S. Army Special Warfare School

*“To link the exploitability of the Third World with the stability of the western industrial nations – this is the ideal picture of a successful counter-insurgency campaign.”*  
– Jochen Hippler, *Krieg im Frieden*

## Foreword: Terror as Governance

A nightmare stalks the streets of Old Europe, an apparition spitting death and terror into the icons of the metropolis. France, gripped in a state of emergency without end in sight, after the extension of a fundamentalist campaign which has already claimed many more lives in places like Suruç [ed. – see *Why We Are With the Fighters*], Anakara and Beirut (whose populations simply don't tally against the blessed children of the West who fill the media's quota for the rituals of televised, real-time mourning). The jingoistic chorus peaks in a crescendo, war-drums are beaten, a surge of applications for the French military, racist pogroms and one-dimensional denunciations, and an intense and hostile atmosphere on doubly-policed streets (visibly or not) weighs down on

those of us sickened by the slaughters. We are summoned to a so-called 'war between civilisations', and certainly there is a power-play going on for the dominance of a God or the Nation. But it doesn't take much to see that these competitors form two sides of the same coin, and try to subjugate by the same indiscriminate means.

The public administrators of the European order are counting on the tide of fear and indignation to wash away the blood visible on their own hands from the various fascisms they have incubated, from inflamed nationalism to religious fundamentalism. And we are told, again and again, by politicians and media pundits, while the roll-out of more background surveillance, militarisation and homogenisation of opinion already becomes banal (after all, we've been here before), that 'our' victory over this threat lies in continuing everyday life; keep shopping, keep working (or looking for work), keep partying, keep voting. It is to this daily life that the European victims of

Islamist massacres are portrayed as having been martyred; appropriated even in death for the needs of capitalist modernity. This same daily life is meanwhile further invaded and colonised by the same security state which claims to defend it.

*“No barbarians will stop us from living how we decide to live,”* declares the French President, but who could be said to have decided what, and for who? The irony of this statement, additionally with such a loaded term used in the pejorative<sup>[2]</sup>, isn't lost when deployed against the children of North African migrants in a country whose so-called 'standard of living' is and has been raised from the enlistment of those who never chose. Evidently, the “we” in the President's speech reflects the accelerating polarisation they would like to impose on our times: with “us”, or with the terrorists. We might remember that killing isn't the only way either of the camps seek to attain or maintain control – most important to these authoritarians is the enforcement of a *certain way of life* while repressing others. The creation of a herd, which – aside from the black sheep and sacrificial lambs – the shepherd must preserve from those who would destroy what they cannot themselves manage to possess.

Lawyers of the prevailing order call for responses comparable with the internment of Algerian decolonisation militants in the mid-twentieth century and the suppression of Irish nationalists by the British State. Indeed the state of emergency legislation in force in France, with all its prohibitions and restrictions, was created and used first during the war against Algeria (which saw the other significant massacre in Paris since World War II<sup>[1]</sup>), then again during nation-wide 2005 rioting emanating from the suburb housing estates which constitute some of the nation's ongoing (and in this case internal) colonies. But if in these prior (and, clearly, not quite extinguished) rebellions we caught many glimpses of our own desires reflected, today we must admit that the forces taking

*“Those predators who exhort us to cry in unison with them today, to declare ‘Je suis Charlie’, are the same predators in suits responsible for the emergence of terrible groups and movements such as al-Qaeda or Daesh, former allies of western democracies against the previous perils before they took a central place on the podium of the geo-strategic perils of today. In their courts, their police stations, their prisons, these same scumbags kill, incarcerate, mutilate and sequester all those that don't follow the path imposed upon them with truncheon blows and education. The same civilized beings that let people croak every day at their borders for trying to escape the misery and wars that they themselves and their enemies of the day created. We have absolutely no desire to let these same exact scumbags civilize and eradicate us any further, still less to stand shoulder to shoulder with them. Because it is against them that we want to stand shoulder to shoulder, against all those that regard us under different religious, political, communitarian, interclassist, civilizing and nationalist pretexts as pawns to be placed for sacrifice on an absurd and squalid chessboard.”* – *Je ne suis pas Charlie*

centre-stage show no such liberatory potential (whatever clumsy 'anti-imperialist' lens you look through), but rather a contemptible practice which perfectly mirrors the dissociated society which produces it even in an attempt to wield religion as a weapon against that order. In the face of war that aims at the oppressed or indiscriminately, we concur with some comrades within nearby Belgium who called to 'break ranks' in the midst of the nationalist frenzy: *"The days when European States could go to war anywhere in the world, striking blows, occupying, opening up new markets, wildly exploiting and plundering resources while preserving their own territories from acts of war (if perhaps not exactly the same, at least in the same logic) seem to be over. The war has struck right in the heart of the French capital, and will not go quietly. And the logic of war advocates striking into the crowd. As all States have done since the beginning of their existence, against their own subjects and those of other States. As all those aspiring to conquer power and impose their domination have done and continue to do. Be they Islamic or Republican, democratic or dictatorial.*

*[...] Need we remember where the phosphorus bombs that burned Fallujah were produced, who delivered computer technologies to the secret services of the regimes of Assad, of Sisi<sup>[3]</sup>, who trained the pilots that bombed Gaza? Need we remember how cobalt and silicon are extracted from the depths of Africa for technological gadgets, how all the consumer goods found on the shelves of supermarkets and shops are produced? Need we remember how civilized capitalism manages its hundreds of labour camps, from Bangladesh to Mexico? Where the sinister shadows of the drones that strike around the world come from? How and in the name of what thousands of people have been drowning in the Mediterranean for years now? So, say it, who is responsible?*

*But if our rebel eyes rightly look up to find the answer, they should also look within ourselves. For in the time to come, and already in the times that are and were, by our passivity we are complicit in our own*



*oppression. And this passivity is not merely the inaction of the body, it is also the brutalization project programmed for decades by the power that deprived us of the tools to understand reality, to understand our rage. That deprived us of any sensitivity other than that required for the needs of the moment, of any capacity to dream. It was from there, this program of human reduction, that today those who decide to commit massacres come from, to participate in the power game, to kill themselves too. It would be foolish to have believed that their slaughter would target the powerful and their structures. Modern warfare in a world bloated with technology and remote massacres no longer allows such subtleties, if such subtleties could ever have existed in the minds of men [sic] at war."*

Let's not be redundant: it seems like we need to equip ourselves with better analyses than those which only respond to events such as the Paris massacre with a mechanical script that refuses to take the religious character of such events seriously. Modern capitalism, statescraft and their geopolitical strategies co-exist with plenty of older, more millenarian alienations (although updated for the modern era), which, though sometimes wielded by the former, are not reducible to them. To shy from a critique that includes, in this case, Islam, makes us politicians (even if sometimes only of identity), complacent in the suppression of those who – to use the words of a Kyokai in Paris – adopt *"attitudes of individual revolt against the family, the traditions and pressures of all sorts (direct and indirect) suffered by individuals from a Muslim culture within their homes and their "community" (as in all homes inspired by religion, in most other homes in different ways, and within what is generally called "communities")."*

Yet our focus for this text will be something different; it will be on the misconception we perceive that frames these spectacular outbreaks of repression which follow from such atrocities as merely reactive (rather than an intensification of a project already afoot in 'peacetime'). It will attempt to decode the many battlefields which play out daily over resources, obedience and legitimacy. In this world founded on tortures religious, colonial<sup>[4]</sup> and psychological<sup>[5]</sup>, it will examine the more pervasive terrorisation currently underlying them: and, because it isn't our business to play the victim, some prospects of rebellion also (even if they have yet to prove their efficacy).

## The Terror of Borders

*"[M]igration is contained, managed and restricted by a top-down process of transnationalization. And with an increase in mobility and migration, irregular migration is being perceived as a threat to the world-order and to the integrity of the nation state. [N]ew borders are erected where one is "processed," "profiled," "sorted," "filtered," "contained," or "rejected". The border is a site of unequal power relations where a selection is made between the useful and unwanted in relation to market demands."* – Migration, Borders & Climate Change

There are currently more people on the move around the world than ever before, both across borders and within them. Forced off their lands and into burgeoning cities (a song as old as civilisation), rounded up and herded into the zones for the maximum economic exploitation on which the world market rests, or fleeing from the global elite's 'structural adjustment' programs, when not from outright slaughters; the occupied and contested territories of Afghanistan and Palestine account for the largest migrant populations.

The European Union's thirty-year project of Shengen<sup>[6]</sup> is rescinded in some parts as the specific mode for managing and regulating via transmigration shifts, walls go up and guards flood areas.



Resistance fighter in Kurdistan smashes ISIS-Daesh billboard

Borders alleged to have disappeared materialise once more overnight. The proxy wars that Western nations spent billions creating and equipping arrives on 'our' shores; not just as marauding reprisals, but as a hunted humanity trapped between

fundamentalisms to the East and nationalists to the West, and/or chasing economic crumbs of the looted 'resources' from their country of origin. And they are confronted with barbed wire and steel, internment camps and troops of the very countries which have exploited, destabilised and bombarded theirs.

Institutional powers know that leaning on the 'immigration paranoia' they have inculcated in European societies is a key division between the exploited, leading to a strengthening of the perceived need for the State (even when its 'failure' is scandalised). They terrify the populace with the spectre of 'migrant crime', while Britain has pledged £25 million to its former island slave colony of Jamaica from its



international aid budget for the construction of a new modern prison that they can deport inmates to; forming another part of the (rebranded) global trade in human beings. Neatly, this would ease pressure on the U.K. prison system and make space for more bodies in cells, more fodder for the prison-industrial complex and its profiteers, State or private. Meanwhile the check-points and searches, the latest monitoring satellites and scanners, the warships and drones patrolling the Mediterranean, all portend a rising capacity for generalised social control, for which the migrants are a convenient trial population (while themselves innovating and pioneering all kinds of evasion strategies in tandem, which we would do well to study).

Tensions have run high, with a series of hunger-strikes and/or yard occupation at the majority of the U.K. migration prisons in our corner of the world alone within the last year, from Dover to Dungavel. Sporadic street fights continue near the border-point in Calais, like elsewhere, as many attempt to breach police cordons to reach British soil, while fire generated by other enemies of the border regime and its world spreads south to light up the property of its collaborators such as GDF Suez in Marseille for their hand in the detention centres, or of the police stationed at the tri-point of the Swiss-German-French frontiers in Basel. Fences are cut or torn down along the re-fortified 'Balkan Route'. Small but steady glimpses, as yet, of a flipside to the transnational system at war to impose a nationalist and neo-colonial ordering on life, that prefers a migrant drowned than non-registered or imprisoned rather than 'smuggled', that seeks to create a terrified and controllable underclass workforce disciplined by fear, racism, precarity and the whims of immigration bureaucrats and police.



### The Terror of Climate Security

*"Political systems, willing to place one group of people above another, are already responding to the potential impact of climate change. With the "war on terror," security politics and nationalism flourished globally; climate change is being used to give further legitimacy to the concepts of "national preservation" and "homeland security." So the Indian state is currently building a perimeter fence around its entire border with Bangladesh, a country more at risk than almost any other from the devastating consequences of rising sea levels. The fence has been explicitly talked about as a barrier to migration. If sea levels rise and Bangladeshi people are driven from their homes, they will now find themselves trapped inside this ring."*  
 – *Climate Change is not an Environmental Issue*

A little-emphasised component of the desperate scenes at the borders and internment camps is the impact of ongoing resource colonialism, such as Eritreans – supposedly the third most common nationality to be crossing the Mediterranean – whose lands are devastated by firms like Canada's Nevsun Resources (operating one of the largest open-pit copper mines in the world, constructed by enslaved army conscripts) and Sunridge Gold Corp., to supply the technological-industrial behemoth. Soon this may pale in comparison to what the unfolding impacts of industrially-generated climate change could bring – indeed, from the South Pacific to Alaska, climate refugees are already on the move. The insanity created by globalised agribusiness has led to situations such as a large part of the world's rice coming from the one Mekong basin in Vietnam – now at risk from inundation, risking a knock-on tide of forced migration that would dwarf the

Syrian exodus through people fleeing shortages from Dhaka, Jakarta and beyond. With climatic shifts emerging convulsively (discernible to the 'scientifically'-untrained of us through a myriad of little signals, as we see an annual plant

appear early here, migratory birds appear later – or not at all – there, etc.), and with 2015 the hottest year in recorded history, by some estimates nearly ten percent of the Earth's human population are at direct risk of consequent displacement.

In an increasingly unstable world, discourse is regulated as well as movement. Even before the sensationalised Islamist attacks there, France contradicted Shengen practice by enforcing border controls before the December circus of the COP21 (the United Nation's twenty-first annual climate summit), denying entry for some and also refusing to grant visas for known dissidents from outside the European Union. It was clear there was to be a hard-line approach to anything which might sully the summit which some of those who were then preparing for in opposition characterised as follows. *"There will be the chance to dream up new pollution quotas which the lesser polluters can sell to the biggest polluters (we all know that the atmosphere balances itself out in the end...), to develop the "green" industry, to introduce crazy scientific plans for geo-engineering (modification of the climate by chemical and/or physical processes), and even to produce new labels of green-pollution. [...] Opposing this incredible democratic parody of a world driving on four wheels but constantly checking its exhaust, is "civil society", the heterogeneous mass of associations and political organisations who participate in the end of the year media-political social gathering.*

*[...] As December draws near, as before any big international political or sporting event, they are socially cleansing the areas around the summit venue, chasing away the poor so that they don't offend the eyes of the rich and transforming the urban space into a private high-security zone. The Seine-Saint-Denis département is one of the poorest and most heavily polluted in France and it is there that COP21 will be staged, next to Le Bourget private-jet airport. Attendees will be able to fly right in to the conference site and won't have to encounter either the endless traffic jams which clog up the motorways north of Paris or the high-rise estates and factories which stretch as far as the eye can see. For miles around there will be no more squats, gypsies, immigrants or anything else typical of an area which is normally is a byword for Parisian precarity. Unfortunately there will be police violence, home evictions and raids" (What's the COP21). In the end, all demonstrations during the summit were banned.*

The world of 'sustainability' as (hypothetically) touted by such summits becomes a kind of entertainment, a comic tragedy, bringing together the scientists



who warn with the air of raving prophets that *“the ‘vast majority’ of known fuel reserves must be left in the ground to avert intolerable risks to future generations”* with the major energy corporations who make no secret of their intent to exhaust them and find more (and subsidised by their sideline in so-called 'green' technologies'). With its schemes such as REDD+ (the UN's Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation plus *“conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks”*), the whole debacle is already well-known as a joke<sup>[7]</sup>.

It's the same quantitative and alienated logic which led the U.K. Secretary of State for the Environment to give developers the all-clear to destroy remaining ancient British woodland – just so long as they plant a hundred trees somewhere for each felled. Globally, only two really substantial tracts of forest remain intact (the Amazon and the Congo). Fragmentation (when a forest is shot through and diced up by roads, suburban settlements, agriculture, etc.), by a study's average, is thought to cause more than half of the resident species to die out in just twenty years. Seventy percent of forest lands around the world are already currently within half a mile of the forest's edges. Since the 1970s alone, half of all known ocean life has been wiped out; by mid-century we are on course for more plastic waste in the sea than fish. The advanced stage of the biodiversity crisis may be obvious to those whose lives are filled with conscious intimacy as people of the land, but it is dangerously less so in the gray cocoon-like metropolis. Millions of humans are spending our lives in industrialised



Described as a *“bold blend of science and style”*, the £160 Freka mask is ergonomically designed to fit the wearer's face and uses an infusion of Japanese Hiroki wood to calm the senses while a filter blocks out harmful pollutants

environments and cityscapes, evermore logistically and sensorily entwined with this civilisation. More than five thousand years since Enlil in 'the Epic of Gilgamesh' already bemoaned *“the uproar of mankind”*, one more sensual mode for engagement with a more-than-human world is gravely diminished. A decade-long effort to collect audio data in one of the quietest places left on Earth (by the



Alaskan mountain the Athabaskans call Denali, *“the great one”*) found some daily averages of motorised land- or sky-traffic sound every seventeen minutes. The creeping din is becoming more recognised as imperiling wild habitats *“as surely as a bulldozer or oil spill”*<sup>[8]</sup>. Yet we are the generations who have grown up accustomed to constant auditory intrusions, numbed by the hum of the urban environment.

While we can list these horrors and more, with the hope to argue that what we seek isn't this life just 'more sustainable', but a life that feels worth living, the spectre of the Ecological State of Emergency is also deployed by our enemies. After so many crises, scandals, disturbances, etc., the advent of catastrophic climate change offers the State and Capital a chance to consolidate power, by claiming to be the only ones capable of addressing it. Jaime Semprun and René Riesel have commented that *“the current mobilisation to ‘save the planet’[...] has allowed the manufacture of consensus to concede the title of ‘ecological consciousness raising’ resulting from its own operations, to the docile readiness to repeat its slogans and submit to its requirements and prescriptions. It celebrates the birth of the re-educated consumer, the eco-citizen, etc. [...] After all, mass society (that is, those who have been integrally formed by it, whatever their illusions in this respect may be) never talks about the problems it claims to ‘manage’ except in terms that make its perpetuation a sine qua non. Thus, while the collapse is underway, it can only try to postpone for as long as possible the dislocation of the ensemble of desperation and madness that this society has become; it can conceive of no other way to do this, whatever anyone may say, than by reinforcing all means of coercion and making individuals submit more completely to the collectivity [while] repressing the intuition of the serious conflict that will inevitably be entailed by an attempt to destroy or even to seriously consider destroying the totalitarian society, that is, the technological macrosystem to which human society has been reduced.”*

Hence, the powers that be can terrify the more attentive members of the public with images of the winter wildfires in the Arctic and so on, to blackmail us into accepting

the (rebranded) advances of the industrial system, from 'green technologies' to genetic engineering<sup>[8]</sup>. As for geo-engineering (a showpiece topic at COP21), one of the most seriously discussed proposals at the moment is to spray sulfuric acid into the upper atmosphere, forming tiny particles in clouds to block incoming solar radiation, therefore supposedly cooling the planet. (In effect, the scientists would be installing a radiative shield between Earth and the sun, one which could be adjusted by those who control it to regulate the temperate of the planet.) While doing nothing to help acidification of the oceans or risings carbon concentrations in the atmosphere (and actually expected to slow recovery of the hole in the ozone layer), 'sulphate aerosol spraying' is very popular with the same fossil fuel corporations who have for years been the most strenuous deniers of climate change; having done an about-face, they now say that emission-reduction is unrealistic or politically-impossible, so geo-engineering is that remains (now they are in the big business of its research and future deployment). In this way, instead of climate change jeopardising the system, climate engineering represents its triumph. The military would play a dominant role in geo-engineering due to the high chance of conflict stemming from its uneven results; some studies suggest sulphate aerosol spraying would disrupt the Indian monsoon and hence food supplies for a billion humans. Simultaneously, in summer 2015, the U.S. military conducted massive 'Northern Edge' war-games in the Gulf of Alaska, following on from a Navy symposium called 'Naval Operations in an Ice-Free Arctic': implicitly anticipating climate wars in the melting wars of the north, already contributing to the death-knell ecologically and culturally in the area<sup>[10]</sup>.

Also in the name of 'climate security', land and food can be appropriated from the Global South to become biofuel for cars and planes in the North, while when required for those eco-gadgets, even notorious mining projects can get rebranded as 'green' by the conceptual acrobatics of a world trying to outrun its own deserts of concrete (guided by a culture which churns out 7.5 billion cubic metres of the above every year). Even more naked in its imperial ambition, global capital runs rampant in the so-called 'developing' countries, bringing death, dispossession and disease<sup>[11]</sup>. Securing agricultural production zones, or those for 'conservation' (even when merely a means to fill a 'carbon sequestration' quota), drives international phases of 'green-grabbing' as peoples such as forest-dwellers, their livelihood-dependent necessity to exist in those specific bioregions recognised either weakly or not at all by the governing legal institutions, are

policed, evicted, displaced. Here is when, even where dramatic effects of climatic shifts are not yet present, the terrorism of climate security is on a less existential level. James Fairhead and Alexander Dunlap explicitly linked schemes including REDD+ with new high- or low-intensity warzones, in their study debunking the portrayal of climate conflict as inevitable and ecologically-driven alone, rather than as intensified or even created by the failings of an imperiled industrial capitalist order which has never baulked at the vilest means to secure a profit margin. They emphasise that *“enclosure, territorialisation, and market strategies of accumulation by dispossession are principal drivers of climate related conflict. [T]his continuum has largely been influenced by political and economic conflict for the control of natural resources – land and people – that has necessitated the creation of centralised political structures, the modernisation and disciplining of people into dependence on an industrial economy that strips, poisons, and degrades the natural environment to the point of climate, soil (desertification), and biodiversity crises.”*<sup>112]</sup>

The authors labelled this as the militarisation and marketisation of 'nature', whereby supposedly-'environmental' goals such as preserving a certain area's 'biodiversity' (at its most static notion) are deployed primarily as a way of stabilising global powers and financial systems, often meaning *“initial aspirations of ‘selling nature to save it’ cede to the ‘saving of nature to trade it’”*. They show this to be *“inherently antagonistic to the natural environment and land-based people – making conflict and pacification in some form almost inevitable”* in military or neo-colonial forms. All armies (and hence, all governments) understand the State's need to control 'resources' better than most environmentalists understand the above,



Gold mine in Skouries, Greece (see Return Fire vol.2 pg40)

and the focus on these newly-enclosed ones doesn't come at the expense of neglecting the more traditional supply-based interventions – often couched in 'anti-terror' rhetoric. See the renewed fighting for U.S. control over the Iraqi oil fields against the Islamist insurgents, French deployments to secure the uranium mines of Mali, Italian preparations to defend its energy infrastructure in its old colony Libya, or the Israeli Defence Minister's admission that the push to 'uproot Hamas' (via destroying that Palestinian administration's support base through *“dahiya doctrine”* targeting of civilian infrastructure) is also closely tied in with dominating Gaza's gas reserves. We are reminded that, as this one aspect among others shows, the 'war between civilisations' is nothing but the war of civilisation, its rapacious appetites and armed divisions.



Gaza after the Israeli military incursion of summer 2014

### The Terror of 'Crisis'

*“[I]t is undeniable that the strong convulsions to which the whole social order is prey at the start of this third millennium have extinguished the smug smile of many subversives in front of those who dare to call for insurrection here and now. Yesterday's skeptics are transformed into today's enthusiasts to the point of making it become a downright international best-seller on the editorial, media, and militant marketplace [ed. – see **Radical Scavengers Come Out of the Woodwork**]. The reason is easy to understand: the social peace that accompanied the 1980s and 1990s, in its most inflated and*

*complacent aspects, is terminated. The virtual wealth is not able to compensate for the real poverty: the supermarket shelves may even gleam with goods, but their consumption is no longer accessible to those who find themselves forced to tighten their belts; or, almost everyone. Today voluntary servitude is still certainly majoritarian, solidly majoritarian,*

*but it has lost its air of stupid innocence. Discontent, malaise, and indignation spread everywhere in an unstoppable way, causing worry, panic, but also some hope for a counter-charge. These feelings of frustration will get pacified in a new institutional social cohesion; or, in the face of the relentless succession of “political scandals”, “financial crises”, “ecological catastrophes”, “religious wars”... will they finally provoke a generalised hostility?”* – afterword to *At Daggers Drawn*

Once, the children of the 20th century West were assured that a life spent on their knees (before teachers, bosses, lecturers, experts, union officials, politicians) would at least guarantee a more-or-less quiet, more-or-less 'peaceful' survival. To be sure, this was the oft-false promise of a society structured to the most basic level on exploitation, but for at least many of the baby-boomers it made good on the once-utopian offer of one's own car, suburban home, computer. However, despite the escalating claims of technological-industrial culture (for an immanent life of endless peace, replete with one's own household artificial intelligence, pollution-free air and food, or should that fail even a new home on another planet; offers which have hung empty since

at least the '80s), today there is little comfort in such an illusion. The technological trinkets that the capitalists dangle before the masses may play their role in distraction and pacification (arguably more so than the racket of expressedly-political ideologies which they seem to be replacing as the frontier of 'progress'), but it's not enough to entirely dull the pain from a profound and all-encompassing restructuring of consumer democracy – the oft-lamented 'crisis'.

In Europe, the social democratic model of calculated concessions to placate the populace is whisked away piecemeal, replaced with even more debt-slavery and anti-depressants. If in the past the governing systems saw fit to afford welfare its place to serve as an example of a modern civil society, perhaps a fitting image to discipline the collective psyche of the renewedly-austere classes would be the 2015 coordinated dawn raids in Croydon, London, against suspected 'benefit cheats' – featuring police in riot gear and balaclavas. Lay-offs, pension scandals, service cuts become the daily fare. Commerical centres and banks get super-secured against theft. Energy corporations in the U.K. now send revenue-protection lackeys in stab-proof vests to force the installation of pre-payment meters in some homes, as the line between cops of the State and those



who police our daily lives in other ways further blurs. The security and defence markets are in boom, with huge investments in public and private research into methods of control and imprisonment.

Meanwhile we are told by economists and politicians that we're 'all in this together', and even if very few people might actually take them for their word, it still seems that 'crisis' (or recovery from it) is the dominant way of understanding these conditions; albeit increasingly popular to blame a cartel of 'corrupt' bankers, still essentially framed as a case of foolish speculation and mismanagement. Yet when training the notorious 'Chicago Boys' elite of neo-liberal economics, Milton Friedman declared that "[i]f you want to force a change, set off a crisis." And in the sphere of governance, the crowd of daily global alarms, scandals and precarity which accompany this round of capitalist restructuring (again, to call it what it is) serves to render an image of a world unintelligible to the majority, and hence in need of the guiding hand of the authorities. Rage and hostility is vented into bigoted avenues (with the notion of a reduction in prosperity handily linked to hatred for those who are deemed less worthy, and the reinforcement of ideologies of nation, race, gender roles, 'deserving/undeserving poor', etc.), through the many competitions and divisions this order subjects us to.

With citizens of the Global North increasingly atomised, the state of crisis is often also played out on the 'internal' or affective field of people more-or-less unable to name the source of their malaise. Some aspects of this rife condition are commented on in the text 'We Are All Very Anxious'. "Each phase [of capitalism] blames the system's victims for the suffering that the system causes. And it portrays a fundamental part of its functional logic as a contingent and localised problem. [...] All forms of intensity, self-expression, emotional connection, immediacy, and enjoyment are now laced with anxiety. It has become the linchpin of subordination.

One major part of the social underpinning of anxiety is the multi-faceted omnipresent web of surveillance. The NSA, CCTV, performance management reviews, the Job Centre, the privileges system in the prisons, the constant examination and classification of the youngest schoolchildren. But this obvious web is only the outer carapace. We need to think about the ways in which a neoliberal idea of success inculcates these surveillance mechanisms inside the subjectivities and life-stories of most of the population.

We need to think about how people's deliberate and ostensibly voluntary self-exposure, through social media, visible

consumption and choice of positions within the field of opinions, also assumes a performance in the field of the perpetual gaze of virtual others. We need to think about the ways in which this gaze inflects how we find, measure and know one another, as co-actors in an infinitely watched perpetual performance. Our success in this performance in turn affects everything from our ability to access human warmth to our ability to access means of subsistence, not just in the form of the wage but also in the form of credit. Outsides to the field of mediatised surveillance are increasingly closed off, as public space is bureaucratised and privatised, and a widening range of human activity is criminalised on the grounds of risk, security, nuisance, quality of life, or anti-social behaviour.

In this increasingly securitised and visible field, we are commanded to communicate. The incommunicable is excluded. Since everyone is disposable, the system holds the threat of forcibly delinking anyone at any time, in a context where alternatives are foreclosed in advance, so that forcible delinking entails desocialisation – leading to an absurd non-choice between desocialised inclusion and desocialised exclusion. This threat is manifested in small ways in today's disciplinary practices – from "time-outs" and Internet bans, to firings and benefit sanctions – culminating in the draconian forms of solitary confinement found in prisons.

[...] Anxiety is personalised in a number of ways – from New Right discourses blaming the poor for poverty, to contemporary therapies which treat anxiety as a neurological imbalance or a dysfunctional thinking style. A hundred varieties of "management" discourse – time management, anger management, parental management, self-branding, gamification – offer anxious subjects an illusion of control in return for ever-greater conformity to the capitalist model of subjectivity. And many more discourses of scapegoating and criminalisation treat precarity as a matter of personal deviance, irresponsibility, or pathological self-exclusion."

While those on the lower social rungs grasp for the means of survival and grapple with such affective tortures, those on the top (or who guard them, want to be them, etc.) prepare for the feared social explosion. At the 2015 convention of the World Economic Forum [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.1 pg75**] in Davos, Switzerland, Robert Johnson admitted that he knew "[other] hedge fund managers all over the world who are

buying airstrips and farms in places like New Zealand because they think they need a getaway," with spiraling global disparity as 62 individuals are said to hold means equivalent to that of three-and-a-half billion others. In that same country this September, the Swiss military trained (although not without hindrance<sup>[13]</sup>) for a 'threat scenario' as follows: "In a fictional Europe of the future, with new countries and borders, there is an economic crisis. The following consequences also have an impact on Switzerland: supply shortages, a black market, and criminal organizations. Big oil, gas and grain stocks are the target of sabotage and looting. Moreover, ethnic tensions lead to larger refugee flows to Switzerland."

In 2011, the entrance exam for the world-renowned ruling class Eton school in England required 13-year-old boys to write a Prime Ministers speech set in 2040 to justify martial law and a massacre of combative demonstrators during an oil crisis that brings rioting to the streets of London after petrol runs out. To be sure, the like is a much older necessity of the State, but it held a certain poignancy in the year of the widest actual insurrection the country had seen for decades [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.1 pg61**], with international resonances echoing back from the ashes of police, corporate and luxury vehicles in Fresno, Madrid and Morlanwelz; and just three years after the Prime Minister allegedly considered deploying the army and enforcing a curfew just as he was to announce the government's bail-out of the banks. Indeed, as well as riotous moments in the territories which have taken the greatest of the Eurozone's economic blows (Greece, Spain, etc.), the 2015 opening of the European Central Bank headquarters in Frankfurt was scene to extensive rioting reminiscent of the 'anti-globalisation' disorders of the later '90s and early '00s world economic summits. Six weeks later, fiery clashes also inaugurated the EXPO2015 convergence of green-washed scientific, political, techno-industrial and media interests in Milan, at the more prosperous end of Italy (where in preparation the president of the Lombardy region announced the eviction of over 200 occupied houses, as the city prepared to show off its luxury shop windows during



the event; although these moves too met with confrontational resistance). Time will tell whether the so-called 'crisis' will draw out these kind of battles on a wider and more generalised level, and for what stakes.

### The Terror of Terror

*"In his Technological Society, ex-French Resistance fighter Jacques Ellul pointed out that for a security state to work effectively, everyone must be treated as a potential threat, the better to identify and neutralise actual threats. [A]ny resistance to this, stemming from a desire for autonomy, even privacy, moves citizens into the 'threat' category and tightens the security state's intolerant definitions of 'terrorism' still further."*

– The Perennial Wild Men



In June 2015 the counter-terrorist operation code-named Strong Tower was unleashed on London. Armed gangs of police, intelligence officials and soldiers swept through the streets and evacuated locations at gunpoint. Six months in the planning, a thousand cops engaged across the capital over 48 hours. The operation, a training exercise – a *"noisy and visible"* one meant to test the decision-making and crisis-management skills of these agencies in conjunction with the fire brigade, ambulance service, various government departments, the transport and health services – was not announced as being based on any specific intelligence; but in a very real sense, the target was the whole populace. Carried out only days after an Islamist massacre aimed at Western holidaymakers in Tunisia, we could understand it as a similar strike on the battlefield of the public imaginary – simultaneously as pacification and mobilisation, as putting the nervous masses back to bed while filling their dreams with terrorist nightmares. Anti-terrorism uses the intimidation of such shows of force with the blackmail of 'national unity' to silence any challenge to their methods, their interests and their power, with the target far broader than the demographic nominally cited.

This way of understanding the instrumentalisation of anti-terrorism, as a

technique of governance, shows us the crucial role the mass media play as the vehicle for bringing this terror into our homes and lives by the screen, spreading fear as surely (more widely if more thinly) as a car-bomb, cowing people into subscribing to an airbrushed 'public opinion' which only really exists through that same spectacular medium that channels it. As the authors of 'We Are All Very Anxious' commented, *"each new crackdown or new round of repressive laws, adds to the cumulative weight of anxiety and stress arising from general over-regulation. Real, human insecurity is channelled into fuelling securitisation. This is a vicious circle, because securitisation increases the very conditions (disposability, surveillance, intensive regulation) which cause the initial anxiety."*

*In effect, the security of the Homeland is used as a vicarious substitute for security of the Self."*

Across the world we are also seeing a rise in nationalist vigilantism as a measure of disciplining, from fascist paramilitaries who track anarchists and their associates in Chile<sup>[4]</sup> to white supremacists wounding demonstrators in Minneapolis with gunfire at a gathering after the fatal

shooting of yet another black man by U.S. police. The State has seen no reason to forfeit occasional use of extra-judicial gangs (whether Loyalists in Ulster or the Saudi-backed jihadis), and sometimes feels it can afford to openly supplement their force with its own. Hence in Calais the riot police stand shoulder-to-shoulder with French fascists in combat gear as they gas and stone migrants. Having reoccupied their ancestral lands in Cauca (once leafy savannah, converted to intensive sugar monocrops since their eviction from the plains by the Colombian police in 1915), the Nasa tribal resistors have engaged in fierce battles with cops and army reinforcements. By night, the local land-owners, narco-traffickers and police form a paramilitary group that ordered its own regional curfew, promising the *"social cleansing"* of the area and eradication of the Nasa *"bandits"*, under the slogan *"United for a northern Cauca without Indians"*.

The various nationalist, terrorist, and neo-colonial fervours have brought us to the point where war, instead of each time being declared by the politicians and generals, quite simply exists as a constant (see Libya, Syria, etc.). The latest round of Western interventions have commenced with scarcely a breath of the public dissent which blew hot air against the warmongering of the '00s. An editorial from

the anarchist correspondence periodical *Avalanche* noted that, in years gone by, *"a war was supported by a war mobilization and also a war economy, it required a different effort than during a period of peace. But today, the war economy is permanently running, oriented towards international trade – to supply conflicts around the world – and domestic repression. That makes it paradoxically always present but also less visible."*

Judging by the preparations of the largest terrorist alliance in the world – NATO – this is only set to expand. The 'Trident Juncture' exercise<sup>[10]</sup> held on the land, seas and skies around southern Europe in autumn of 2015 finds its place within a strategy articulated at NATO's 2014 summit in Wales, of general rearmament and weaponry development.

It's terror of a qualitative difference to that of villagers in Pakistan, Yemen, Afghanistan etc. who must live in fear of death raining from the sky or abuse, kidnap or execution by one armed patrol or another, but again, we can trace the contours of terrorisation as they are grafted onto our own bodies in the capitalist core countries made witness to a display of State potential. Now like always, war, coercion and terror are the bread and butter of the State; and yet to develop our understanding of the social order which confronts us, we also look to the spaces inbetween and beneath these moments of spectacularised force.

### Peace: the War of Progress

*"Politics, as a technique of internal peace and order, sought to implement the mechanism of the perfect army, of the disciplined mass, of the docile, useful troop, of the regiment in camp and in the field, on manoeuvres and on exercises."*

– Discipline & Punish

The fact of the matter is, we have lived within this war for a long time. The civilised social relationships we now inhabit as if they were timeless and unassailable were established through domestication, patriarchal conquest, colonisation (internal/external), market economics and the ascendancy of the nation-state, which has always used each element of national power (whether military strength, diplomacy, economics, ideology, technology or 'culture') to bring a real-or-latent conflict to its advantage. Exploring the origins of resulting institutions (and reversing the proposition of 19th century strategist Carl Von Clausewitz, inspired by the military campaigns of French ruler Napoleon, that war is *"the continuation of politics by other means"*), Michel Foucault asserted that *"law is born of real battles, victories, massacres, and conquests which can be dated and which have their horrific heroes; the law was born in burning towns and ravaged fields. It was born together"*

with the famous innocents who died at break of day. [...] We could, and must, also ask ourselves if military institutions, and the practices that surround them – and in more general terms all the techniques that are used to fight a war — are, whichever way we look at them, directly or indirectly, the nucleus of political institutions.

[T]he role of political power is perpetually to use a sort of silent war to reinscribe [that relationship of force] in institutions, economic inequalities, language, and even the bodies of individuals. This is the initial meaning of our inversion of Clausewitz's aphorism – politics is the continuation of war by other means. Politics, in other words, sanctions and reproduces the disequilibrium of forces manifested in war. Inverting the proposition also means something else, namely that within this "civil peace," these political struggles, these clashes over or with power, these modifications of relations of force – the shifting balance, the reversals – in a political system, all these things must be interpreted as a continuation of war. And they are interpreted as so many episodes, fragmentations, and displacements of the war itself. We are always writing the history of the same war, even when we are writing the history of peace and its institutions."

**By this definition we could see how, once the norms and values of a civil society are inscribed, every government must remain engaged in a continuous battle to maintain that legitimacy and control over its subjects. Politics and all the other tools of statescraft must standardise and codify everyday life. It is on top of this continual and sometimes masked struggle, that we encounter the concept of peace as it currently stands in this society.**

In Europe, since the Middle Ages, peace was not understood as contradictory to war; but rather as when war was happening, but elsewhere (possibly with the spoils of that war trickling into the coffers and slave-pens 'at home'). Very quickly we can see how tied up the benefits of such a 'peace' were with what became valued as economic prosperity and 'development', maximising productivity under favourable conditions, leading into waves of European empire-building and the industrial era. Industrialism, of course, meant a major ramping up in the one-way consumption and destruction emanating from civilisations in general, and so any 'peace' within either consists of the piled

corpses of untold animal, sylvan and mineral life, with evermore regimented and prescriptive roles within its human practitioners and genocide for those standing in the way.

Foucault also characterised the period through the middle ages up to the threshold of modernity as that within which the State "acquired a monopoly on war. [...] Increasingly, wars, the practices of war, and the institutions of war tended to exist, so to speak, only on the frontiers, on the outer limits of the great State units[...] it tended to become the technical and professional prerogative of a carefully defined and controlled military apparatus. This led, broadly speaking, to the emergence of something that did not exist as such in the Middle Ages: the army as institution." Hence, this armed peace of the European order, which we are now told is jeopardised by barbarians at the gates, relies conceptually on the erasure of whole categories of violence – removal or domestication of species (including humans), the dictates of work to earn enough to survive, enforcing codes of law or gender roles for the reproduction of the civilised order, quashing internal rebels, etc. – as well as outright military conflict. The peace of 'progress' [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.1 pg11*] is a continual war against the Earth and humans as part of it. Today, those in power must find innovative and adaptive techniques to keep us confined within this paradigm, and often prefers to utilise the lie of 'peace' to do so. It's this managing of bodies, opinions and 'resources' which we want to study and subvert.

### **The Battle for Legitimacy**

"Thanks to capitalist globalization, all that was previously separated now interpermeates: populations, economies, conflicts. Today's world is not so much divided into rival nations as into concentrically circled gated communities; the increasingly precarious and volatile job market in the United States and France mirrors more dramatic instability in North Africa and the Middle East, which can no longer be quarantined outside the gates. For a population to be militarized in this context, it is not a question of pressing a gun into every pair of palms and setting a helmet on every head. Rather, it is a matter of inducing the population to identify with a certain kind of order, the imposition of which takes place within the national borders as much as outside them. From the speech that Bush made on September 11, it was already clear that the same National Guardsmen that were to be sent to Iraq would sooner or later be deployed in the United States as well. Bush's task, on that day, was not to persuade his countrymen [sic] to enlist to fight overseas so much as it was to maximize the number

of people who would acquiesce to the militarization of their daily lives. This declaration of war served to obscure the possibility of any other war, any other stakes for which we might fight outside the framework of defending the state against its rivals." – *CrimethInc.*

It's almost a decade since NATO strategists published a paper in April 2007 stressing the need for the alliance to adopt a more 'proactive' approach to diverse 'threats', from migration to unrest following food crises. What it suggested was preemption, blurring the distinctions of 'internal' and 'external' security, and the general need for a 'comprehensive approach' linking the militaries and police with researchers, academics, politicians and civil society institutions. In this, we simply see a conformation of a much older doctrine now in the process of being transnationalised (and, as ever, corporatised) – counter-insurgency.

If 'conventional' military conflict aims at winning the war, counter-insurgency aims at *winning the peace*. Hence, the image of counter-insurgency as consisting only (or even mainly) of armed patrols, open suppression and death-squads in the night is an unsophisticated view of the battle which envelops us. Those moments when the veil, so well-crafted to sit over the face of capitalist democracy, slips and drops, are not the extent of what constitutes repression in these societies. A more recent paper, from a French security think-tank, reiterated the need to continue the shift of war from the open battlefield to the *field of perception*. This way, a successful campaign in waged by ways of integration; as well as publicity and propaganda, social 'advantages' offered by one part or another of the dominant order to sections of the population, based on their acceptance of (and, ideally, identification with) that order. From its beginnings as a means to drain away the specific social support which anti-imperialist guerrillas, rebellious slaves and tribal warriors enjoyed in their many countries, in the modern era it has become a cornerstone of governance, engaging or preempting threats while grooming the opinions, values and loyalties of the population.

Counter-insurgency is not simply synonymous with repression, but draws from a pool of military, paramilitary, political economic, psychological and civic actions. It does not necessarily prioritise monopolising force, but rather legitimacy. Ideological or material incentives are as likely to be deployed as armed strength is. Kristian Williams characterised it as "involving both coercion and concessions, employing violence and building support, weeding opposition and seeding legitimacy. That is the basis of the counterinsurgency approach.



**[...] This style of warfare is characterized by an emphasis on intelligence, security and peace-keeping operations, population control, propaganda, and efforts to gain the trust of the people. This last point is the crucial one."**

In essence it is a technique to head off or co-opt (even nascent) social tensions – understanding co-optation as when people are convinced to adjust their goals to ones which the system can accommodate – by convincing people that there are avenues to address their grievances; if they were only to put their energy into trusting or adjusting the system as it exists, that would be the entity which can best care for their needs. To this end, social institutions are turned into instruments of war (that is, when they weren't actually founded as such) to pacify populations, spread capitalist economic relations and seize 'resources', with people specifically sorted and targeted according to the needs of statescraft, corporate profit, industrial expansion, etc. By the same token they seek to gather intelligence and influence so as to undermine and make predictable the actions of (suspected) dissidents, and ultimately, as a counter-insurgency theorist put it, "to restructure the environment to displace the enemy from it."

In terms of statescraft this has meant that, as mentioned above, repression in its many forms is not something which raises its head as an exception, but it a continual means to maintain the normality favourable to the dominant order (at least in terms of keeping potentially-subversive antagonisms at their lowest manageable level). As an example of the dual-approach of counter-insurgency in this regard, we can see how following the debacle of the war in Vietnam a large amount of military hardware was given over to police departments within the U.S. (to the point where currently even small town forces generally have at least one tank), but simultaneous a huge push to introduce 'community policing' was launched. Cops were made out to be problem-solvers for the hypothetical 'person on the street', and portrayed as newly-accountable (via citizen input on advisory boards) and concerned (via public neighbourhood meetings etc.). (A commentator in France linked police image more specifically with the spectre of terrorism, regarding wide-spread unrest after police killed a young person fighting a dam construction [ed. – see **Radical Scavengers Come Out of the Woodwork**], "which was also the moment that rioting broke out in Ferguson, the separation between the police and the population reached its widest point. You can't understand the way in which the government led the response to the

attacks of January [2015] if you don't understand it strategically, as a calculated reaction to this extreme dissensus. Ever since then, it seems that the police are here to protect us.") These were – and are – techniques to both streamline and mystify the power of the State, now in use in much of the Western world, and simply the other side of the coin to the massive armament of the repressive forces; should the facade not suffice, a single radio call transforms the jolly, shirt-wearing, bike-riding community cop into the airborne armed response team.

As well as reassuring or co-opting the populace, these measures and many more help the State to 'read' its subjects so as to devise the most effective governance. This can still take the more traditional routes too – for example, the 'anti-extremist' Prevent program which legally requires U.K. teachers to report school-children over views they express in the classroom, alongside a more general 'mapping of Muslims' – but these can prove clumsy and bad for publicity (some teachers have complained at being turned into spies), and besides, in this era the target of intelligence operations is the whole populace. "To meet the challenges of counterinsurgency, the security forces have had to shift their understanding of intelligence. Since the cause of the conflict is not just a subversive conspiracy, but necessarily connects to the broader features of society, the state's agents cannot simply ferret out the active conspirators, but need to aim at a broad understanding of the social system. The U.S. Army Field Manual on Counterinsurgency, FM 3-24, incorporates this perspective arguing that strategists "require insight into cultures, perceptions, values, beliefs, interests and decision-making processes of individuals and groups."

This sort of intelligence work is concerned with questions that are primarily sociological. And so, a great deal of FM 3-24 is concerned with explicating basic social-science terms like "group," "coercive force," and "social capital." In fact, the entirety of Appendix B is devoted to explaining "Social Network Analysis and Other Analytic Tools." It offers this picture of how such analysis is practiced: "[A] social network is not just a description of who is in the insurgent organization; it is a picture of the population, how it is put together and how members interact with one another. [...] To draw an accurate picture of a network, units need to identify ties among its members. Strong bonds formed over time by family, friendship, or organizational association characterize these ties. Units gather information on these ties by analyzing historical documents and records, interviewing

individuals, and studying photos and books."

The security forces can no longer focus narrowly on the hunt for subversives or terrorists, but must also collect information on the population as a whole. This changes, not only the type of information they're seeking, but also the means they use to collect it. A Rand [ed. – security corporation] report on information warfare in counterinsurgency emphasizes: "Even during a security operation, the information needed for counterinsurgency is as much or more about context, population, and perceptions as it is about the hostile force. [O]nly a small fraction of the information needed would likely be secret information gathered by secret means from secret sources." The report suggests a few specific mechanisms for collecting broad-based information: tracking cell phone use, conducting a national registry-census, installing vehicle- and weapon-mounted video cameras, and analyzing internet sites (in particular, creating a "national Wiki (where citizens describe their community)") (Kristian Williams). Of course, in the age of so-called social media, people largely present much of this information freely online.



If some radicals may be slow to associate so-called quality-of-life-assurance and service-provisioning by the State with pacification, with the defeat of social struggles which may have had more ambitious elements [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.1 pg48**], the powers that be with their police and military certainly are not, and see the above as a vital tool in their 'weeding and seeding' approach. To this end they find a ready partner in the non-governmental organisation (NGO) sphere, as some of the many institutions which can be weaponised. "The Rand study Networks and Netwars outlines "a range of possibilities" for the military's use of international nonprofits: "from encouraging the early involvement of appropriate NGO networks in helping to detect and head off

a looming crisis, to working closely with them in the aftermath of conflicts to improve the effectiveness of U.S. forces still deployed, to reduce the residual hazards they face, and to strengthen the often fragile peace." One result of this perspective is that aid money, and thus NGO attention, increasingly follows the state's priorities – and its military's priorities in particular. For instance, in 2010 the U.S. awarded \$114 million to aid groups working in Yemen, with the stated goal of "improving the livelihood of citizens in targeted communities and improving governance capabilities". This supposedly humanitarian assistance came alongside \$1.2 billion in military aid, clandestine military and intelligence activity, and a CIA assessment that the Al Qaeda affiliate in Yemen represents the largest threat to United States' global security. Meanwhile, the Defense Department now controls 20% of the U.S. government's budget for Official Development Assistance. "[D]evelopment priorities follow the battle space," David Rieff writes in *The New Republic*. "[D]evelopment is a continuation of war by other means" (Kristian Williams).

However, we need not look so far afield to see the nefarious ends that humanitarian missions can serve (regardless of the intentions of each participant individually). The migrant situation in and around Calais (as well as being symptomatic of an unregulated movement of bodies which the State would definitely like to see controlled, regulated and ordered for maximum exploitation or exclusion) looks bad for both the British and French governments; it's worth asking to what degree the horde of associations and 'concerned individuals', while certainly not confronting the root causes of many migrants' plight, serve to an extent to boost the image of a civilised Europe and prevent the situation from exploding. Meanwhile the State (together with a multitude of private contractors<sup>[16]</sup>) have their hands free to continue harassing, beating, detaining and deporting. At the more extreme end, the veil drops when the charities Salaam Association and La Vie Actif are the ones clearing migrants out during eviction of the sprawling 'Jungle' encampment side-by-side with riot police. In fact La Vie Actif were the ones to run the internment camp offered as a replacement, where fingerprints were required on the door for the privilege for families to live in a shipping container. (Before it was to open, unknown persons torched two pieces of machinery used for the construction and also for the evictions, leaving 'no border' and 'this is a prison' sprayed on the containers.)

This charitable 'human face' to the policing it its own counter-insurgency, the 'soft' approach waiting by the side of the metal barriers (recycled from the NATO summit

in Wales) to repel migrants often willing to risk their lives to reach the U.K. Elsewhere in the world it is corporations themselves whose 'charitable', 'participatory', 'community' schemes cultivate a favourable environment for their plunder – this was also emphasised in Fairhead's and Dunlap's study cited above. "*Working under the assumption of the order-for-stability argument, The RAND Corporation's National Security Research Division studied the use of 'corporate counterinsurgency' as a means to mitigate violence and promote market stability in areas where resource extraction corporations operate. This report highlights the importance of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and social-development initiatives as a means of reducing conflict for continuing business practices – noting that social-development eases violent conflict, even when violent actions appear unabated by CSR programmes as in the case of Royal Dutch Shell in the Niger Delta. It draws the parallel between CSR and 'soft' corporate counterinsurgency that is now being adapted and geared towards the 'green' economy with carbon, biodiversity offsets, and most importantly with the REDD+ package. This tactic obscures corporate-led environmental degradation, attempts to render resistance illegitimate, and strategically divides communities, a capability previously observed in REDD+ project in the Lacandon Community Zone in Chiapas Mexico. In the Niger Delta [ed. – area of prolonged and often violent struggle against the likes of Royal Dutch Shell], REDD+ clearly demonstrates itself as a device of social pacification designed to prolong the damaging ecological practices of oil extraction corporations and the industrial economy on the whole.*"

Once again, social scientists themselves also become another part of the ruling order's armoury, even in 'conventional' warzones themselves. See the Human Terrain Systems (H.T.S.) initiative of the U.S. military, who utilise cultural anthropologists in the theatres of Afghanistan and Iraq (funding for the initiative increased substantially in recent years, anticipating the expansion of its counter-insurgency to Indonesia, Malaysia and other places in the Islamic world, with an emphasis on sub-Saharan Africa). The project mixes ethnographic fieldwork with 'troop education', aiming to reduce violence between the population and the occupying forces, using social scientists to present themselves as the 'patient listening face' of a harsh military occupation, while generating huge profits for the military contractors running the program. Inevitably, as well as encouraging compliant behaviour from a more-easily-'read' people, the targeting of other sectors is facilitated; such as that of

Nuristan, a region of diverse habitats and peoples, which the H.T.S. administrators suggested attacking on the basis of their resistance to every face of the invasion, as they previously had against Islam, the British and then Russian forces.

While there has been minor outcry in some corners of academia about the likes of the H.T.S. program, which David Price described as "*farming out the piece-work of empire in ways that can allow individuals to disassociate their individual contributions from the larger project*", the military effectively marginalised the consequences by announcing they would be issuing their own PhDs at military academies and cooperating institutions. (Moveover these criticisms paper over the fact that, whether in the direct pay of the military or not, the scientific-academic division of labour [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.2 pg6**] itself is part of what insulates researchers from the knock-on effects of their discoveries, whoever applies them<sup>[17]</sup>.)

Just as a H.T.S. scientist linked these practices to those deployed several generations ago (and since) against the indigenous of North America, these preventative techniques of governance tested in the neo-colonial laboratories of today hold a symbiotic relationship to domestic repression. It was Alexander Dunlap who noted that "*following the siege of Fallujah, the city's entire population was fingerprinted, retina-scanned, and issued identity cards required for travel or to receive government services. And since 2007, biometric readers have been used at military checkpoints in Baghdad to control movement between ethnic enclaves. Of course, the military has been preparing for this sort of operation for a long time: 1999's "Urban Warrior" training exercises included the biometric scanning of "resistance fighters" - in Oakland, California. [...] Iraq, Afghanistan, and most importantly Gaza are acting as new laboratories for repressive technologies such as drone strikes, targeted assassination, new urban warfare techniques, biometric data collection, 'predictive analytics', and infrastructural controls. This exposes the increasing commonalities between occupied territories, gated communities, and prisons overseas and at home. This point is made clear as the New York Police Department (NYPD) with assistance from the CIA with advice, training, and embedded staff has modelled their department on Israeli intelligence operations in the West Bank.*" If contemporary policing of American inner-cities is directly employing counter-insurgency, we could also list in this role the efforts of the welfare departments and NGOs, who today fulfill the services that combative entities such as the Black Panthers briefly pioneered before they

were smashed by the State (featuring the U.S. deputy of the SWAT team, for example).

H.T.S. itself conducts training exercises within the U.S. in indigenous territories and sites of controversial development projects. A H.T.S. trainee described a hypothetical scenario that, it came out, was tasked to them in which the army moves into an area on the Missouri river which is attempting secession during turmoil over the pollution from a coal-fired power station, including activity in the area by the Earth Liberation Front. "Staff Assignment to the several Human Terrain Teams that make up the class of the November Cycle were issued as follows: 1. 'Find out more details on the criminal activity.' 2. Find out the best conduits to pass 'information' (PsyOps and InfoOps) to the local population. 3. HTT is assigned to produce a 'Research Plan' to understand the situation at the IATAN power plant – people's concerns, desires, etc., and identify those who were 'problem-solvers' and those who were 'problem-causers,' and the rest of the population whom would be the target of the information operations to move their Center of Gravity toward that set of viewpoints and values which was the 'desired end-state' of the military's strategy."



As David Price continues, "Human Terrain Teams practicing training scenarios set in regions actually within the United States bring the very notion of "human terrain" back home to its domestic counterinsurgent roots. As anthropologist Roberto Gonzalez documents in his book, *American Counterinsurgency: Human Science and the Human Terrain*, the very phrase "human terrain" grew out of domestic counterinsurgency initiatives. Gonzalez describes how in 1968 the US House Un-American Activities Committee released a report entitled "Guerrilla Warfare Advocates in the United States" which warned that the Black Panthers and other militant groups threatened the country's political stability. HUAC warned that "[irregular forces] possess the ability to seize and retain the initiative through a superior control of the human terrain." The clear implication was that the control of civilians in America's cities was vital to

winning the counterinsurgency struggle at home."

### Anti-Extremism or Counter-Insurgency?

*"As counter insurgency is derived from the creativity of insurrections and is in essence always slightly behind, it tries to make up for its deficits by meticulous studies, violence, gigantic apparatus and prevention. Restructuring districts, intimidating anyone sympathizing, isolating the enemy, creating figures of enemies from which the population will dissociate, therefore disarming itself. COIN (Counter-insurgency, in NATO slang) wants to coin a passive depoliticized public, and in that sense it is constructive. As a strategy of pure power preservation, it remains at once as deadly and reactionary as colonial wars, for which it was developed."*  
– invitation to an international anti-militarist action camp against the G.Ü.Z.<sup>[18]</sup>

The wake of events like the Paris massacre has often been a convenient time for the State to 'neutralise' old enemies under the terrorism talisman; in recent history, the aforementioned Earth (and also Animal) Liberation Fronts were the earlier victims of the notorious U.S.

Patriot Act after 9/11 (although hysteria over 'eco-terror' in the '90s, and the dubbing of the E.L.F./A.L.F. as the number-one domestic terrorist threat by the government, preceded those famous Islamist attacks), in a 'Green Scare' which is far from over, as dignified fighters still sit in prison [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.1 pg70**] and the momentum of an eco-liberation offensive in those lands has yet to recover. Similarly in France, where anarchists had already been imprisoned and convicted in recent years under terror legislation<sup>[19]</sup>, we can easily imagine who Nicolas Sarkozy (the former President) also has in mind when he wants to force everyone suspected of 'radicalism' to wear an electronic tag. By implication, anyone resisting the clampdown can handily be portrayed as a violent extremist, or at least sympathiser.

Specifically relating to the many self-professed – and sometimes mutually-antagonistic – anarchist currents within the wider radical circles, if we can agree that none of us/them alone seem poised for the total overthrow of ruling elites, then why (aside from mutual incompatibility and hostility) need the State dedicate such

energy to attacking us/them? Perhaps an answer lies in the needs of counter-insurgency that, again, does not look at subversives in isolation from the wider public. The RAND Corporation text 'War by Other Means' divides uprisings into three phases: insurgency, small-scale insurgency, and major insurgency. During the first, subversives' capacity is "small, narrowly based, vulnerable, and incapable of widespread or large-scale violence. Proto-insurgents may be barely noticeable, not seen as having the potential to inspire insurgency, or dismissed as criminals or inconsequential crack-pots. Therefore, during proto-insurgency, the most important aspect of COIN is to understand the group, its goals, its ability to tap popular grievances, and its potential. In turn, shaping the proto-insurgency's environment, especially by improving governance in the eyes of the population, may deny it wider support." (This need to 'read' social feeling could also go towards explaining, for example, the penetration of police undercovers into the most innocuous 'peace' or 'justice' groups, as well as those with more potential for militancy, which has been disclosed in the U.S., U.K., etc.)

In several countries on different continents, this target group has clearly been marked as having higher potential for disruption: again, not because we/they pose the biggest threat in and of itself, but because we/they have tendencies to push the more unmanageable elements further during peaks of social tension (as historically did anarchist migrants serving as detonators in 19th century labour struggles from the U.S. to Argentina), or merely serve as a sufficient visible scapegoat for those elements, to be made an example of. Large contributions to counter-insurgency theory were made from the lessons of British colonial campaigns in places like Kenya, Cypress and Northern Ireland, and clearly the define the need for State intervention to restrict the spread of ideas, prevent radicals from achieving influence, and disrupt their efforts to establish oppositional organisations. In this way, "techniques of counterinsurgency warfare, made explicit for Iraq and Afghanistan, have been actively deployed domestically in the United States, UK, and Europe since the 1980s, if not earlier, further complicating the notion and substance behind western democracies.

[...] Ken Lawrence identifies a strategic shift in the security apparatus in the late 1960s, which could be characterised as a shift from strategic repression to 'permanent repression'. Resulting from the social upheavals in the United States around issues of civil rights and the Vietnam War, permanent repression was articulated at a conference held by the RAND Corporation on counterinsurgency



in 1969, the concepts of which formally appear in the 1971 book, *Low Intensity Operations: Subversion, Insurgency, and Peace Keeping* by British Brigadier General Frank Kitson. His book divides the social process of insurgency into three phases: the preparatory period, the non-violent phase, and insurgency. This notion of permanent repression appears most clearly in the chapter titled, 'The Preparatory Period'. In the tradition of *raison d'Etat*, Kitson outlines two necessary procedures of the legal system to maintain state legitimacy over the population. First, 'law should be used as just another weapon in the government's arsenal, and in this case it becomes little more than a propaganda cover for the disposal of unwanted members of the public'. Second, the use of the law is strictly objective, but framed by the need to construct legislation in detail to support and accommodate military and police operations. Recent examples that come to mind in the United States are the 2001 US Patriot Act, the Homeland Security Act and the 2006 Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act (AETA). Preparation advances the state apparatus as a weapon to maintain order, irrespective of the formal characteristics of the political system" (Alexander Dunlap).

The spectre of terrorism is without a doubt a popular means to such ends today. In Spain, rowdy posts online can earn you terror charges. In Britain, so can attempting to travel to defend Rojava [ed. – see *Why We Are With the Fighters*] from Islamist obliteration. In Italy, it can be hindering infrastructure construction and 'national image' (using legislation pushed through after the Islamist 7/7 bombings in London etc.) or publicly refusing to dissociate from armed action; in France, it can be insurrectional graffiti during the so-called Arab Spring [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.2 pg87*]. In the U.S., photographing industrial factory farms; in Belgium, discussions or publications about rising social control either side of a prison wall; in Brazil, vandalism or blockades – we don't list these expansions of what constitutes 'terrorism' (a term evermore elastic since at least the '70s) to decry such legislation from the logic of (self-)victimisation, despite the almost surreal absurdity of a world where even the number of deaths from those acts of 'classic' terrorism is at best 1.5% of those killed by traffic. Rather, we understand these attempts at social neutralisation as coterminous with a wider strategy by the ruling order which aims at all who they want to believe have no option for themselves but to vouch in their governance and 'protection'; because (so they say) to desire other ways of life is deluded, to organise against this one is madness, and to attack its structures and values is suicide. Before this blackmail, we can only echo the sentiment which drove

saboteurs in Viña del Mar onto the streets to torch luxury trucks, rather than waste breath either defending against or 'claiming' terms which are alien to us. "[I]f negating legality and civic life, sad and predetermined, is terrorism, then that's what we are... but we know and you know *compañerxs* [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.2 pg34*] that we only desperately seek a world that is not covered by so many atrocities, by so many displays of insensibility, by the desire for power, by the desire to step on others human or not. We know that the convinced and courageous search for a new reality that is not rotten with bad desires, ambitions, and authority [is a] valid and a long battle without truce. Against all authority, against society, against civilisation and the machines, international solidarity, down with the borders and every state in the universe."

The evolving field of counter-insurgency regarding active dissent also takes the form of State or media PR campaigns before protests or mobilisations which they feel they can't simply ignore, using their ability to frame particular events or actions in certain ways to increase discourses they favour and demobilise from those they don't. Increasingly, the policing of the disruptive fringes of the social consensus involves reliance on early intervention or the grueling bureaucratic legal process as the punishment in itself<sup>20</sup>, before any convictions are gained or not (the latter leaving to the expression "you can beat the rap but you can't beat the ride").

The advantages of the intelligence-gathering at the heart of counter-insurgency operations in an increasingly transparent cybernetic society allow for more precise blows to be landed by those in power when needed. Highlighting the diffuse applications of 'permanent repression' as a tool of social order, it was not 'political activists' but U.S. street gangs whose targeting Kristian Williams also studied. "Once the data was assembled, the researchers, following Boston's example, used it to map gang territory and perform a social network analysis, illustrating rivalries and alliances, and identifying likely sites for conflict. They then took the analysis to the individual level charting the connections between gang members and others who associate with them. By diagramming these relationships, researchers were able to distinguish between core members and those only marginally involved.

Such information was crucial for making both tactical and strategic decisions. Police could approach individual members differently, based on their role in the gang and their level of commitment. They could also identify the pressure points and know where to strike for maximum effect. "Network analysis also allows one to

identify people who hold structurally important positions within the gang networks. Cut points, people who are the only connection among people or groups of people, may be ideal selections for spreading a deterrence message or for affecting the structure and organization of the street gangs" (McGloin). Unlike Boston, where the focus was strictly on stopping gang violence, in New Jersey the aim was to disrupt the gangs themselves." The same techniques are used when the Spanish State strategically arrests the lawyer who defends radicals from terror charges (recent events in those lands [ed. – see *Rebels Behind Bars; Operations Pandora-Piñata & Zaragoza Bombing Trial*]) are a good illustration of many of the dynamics we've mentioned), or when the Greek police accuse an individual whose only known activity to this day in the timeframe was visiting anarchist guerrillas in prison [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.2 pg64*].

Lastly (and, to be clear, aside from what it itself is actively responsible for in each case by at large – threats to any alternative and aforementioned police infiltrator influence notwithstanding), in the anti-extremist theatre the State can well rely on a key ally within dissenting demographics themselves: the whole raft of unions, official organisations, pacifists, and other civilisation-reformists hovering to disarm social struggles from within, by denouncing those whose passions lead them to a more direct confrontation with what exists. Whether the advocates of such positions can recognise it or not, the discourses they adopt and jealously defend from perceived infringement upon are often the offspring of co-opted aspirations from another generation's defeat and subsequent revision. (See, among others, the diminution of radical ecology struggles in their at least slightly more holistic sense into a more mainstream, populist and monothematic goal of 'saving civilisation from climate change', and how easily it dovetails into the alienated and quantitative logic of carbon particles and emission quotas espoused by the scientific specialists or politicians, who can even be found at the forefront of these movements today.)

Quite an illustrative instance of the degree to which 'environmentalism', for example, has become integrated into the industrial society in crisis as a kind of sedative mechanism (once the sensibilities of an ecological perspective have been taken and debased into tokenistic clichés, devoid of the interconnections that would lead to any de-civilising and rebellious direction) was telling in the mobilisation around the COP15 climate summit in Copenhagen during 2009. By way of comparison, some comrades agitated for attack on the delegates and their defenders as a

continuation of insurrectionary tensions and for Earth liberation, announcing their intentions of “*ridding ourselves of those who claim to be representing us and by defeating the ideology of endless economic growth, industrial production and consumption. [...] It is time to state: we are going to consciously attack the structures supporting the COP15: we will break through the lines of their police; we will refuse to negotiate with warmongering governments and the embedded media; we will refuse to side with sell-out NGOs and all the would-be managers of protest; we will refuse all governments and governance and not just de-legitimise the present ones. [...] At Copenhagen, they will argue over how to properly create a market to commodify and so pollute the biosphere, dispossessing millions of people from their land to profit from destroying what remains of our earth. Governments and corporations will not sacrifice their growth to reduce carbon emissions, or only do so in order to create a new authoritarian regime for themselves. The entire rhetoric of the climate crisis and the financial crisis is a cynical manoeuvre by the state spin-doctors to deny the all-encompassing crisis of self-declared civilisation. The COP15 will only attempt to hide the war that capitalism is waging against all life on the planet, a war that has spread across the entire globe for the last five hundred years, a war that encompasses the totality of even the oceans and atmosphere. In the midst of war, one does not talk of management and technical solutions. You cannot fight a war by pretending the war does not exist, by blinding yourself to repression and becoming complicit in accepting the false-promise of a petite bourgeois tranquillity. Instead, one recognises the enemy. One chooses a position. One fights.*”

The call was heeded by some from around the world who came to the summit explicitly to fight the dominant order. Perhaps aware of the dead-end that the ‘summit-hopping’ mania of the ‘90s and early ‘00s had eventually presented for radical ruptures, others supported the fighters going to the Danish streets by continuing their own momentum of destruction where they were; like in the U.K. when a busy shopping centre in Nottingham got a window-smashing afternoon visit from the E.L.F./A.L.F. as hundreds of Christmas shoppers passed by, or as a petrol station was burned to the ground just over the bridge from Copenhagen in the Swedish city of Lund by some anonymous individuals who were “*not going to let the charades of the political elite distract us from what we know needs doing*”. However, while the anarchists who attacked even the sponsors of the pre-summit in Barcelona

stated they “*know their intentions very well: improving capitalism to perpetuate its existence*”, many of the COP15 attendees had other ideas; some seriously suggesting their preference to block the world leaders *into* the summit to formulate a ‘rescue plan’ for the planet, braying for deliverance to the very same who are systematically strip-mining the biosphere. Others contented themselves with hosting an “*alternative*” summit, hosting the usual specialists and demagogues in an institutional complex, and we see the full circle: protest, mediation, integration, a democratic ceremony with a seat at the table for every kind of bureaucratic or scientific department to “*crowdsource*” the continuation of their hegemony.

Out on the streets, during one of the larger protests black-clad individuals passed out a communiqué critical of the reigning atmosphere before proceeding to trash the window-fronts of the Danish Foreign Ministry and finance institutions like the Stock Exchange: “*The slogans just seem too familiar. “Traditional wisdom and new technology must go hand in hand.” Haven’t we been reading them on the ads [ed. – for the official summit] all over town? Everyone is playing their role in the summit, just like in a movie. And there are even different versions of the same stage, distinguished mostly by their budgets. [...] What if the mobilization of the entire city and even the protests were nothing but an immense peacekeeping operation? In times of war, there is a call for submission behind every call for unity. Everyone agrees that capitalism is in crisis, that the previous forms of management will not suffice. This summit may be the most obvious sign yet of the shape of the management to come, where everyone’s contribution is obligatory. This step could be described as social engineering. A utopian attempt to produce an entirely controlled life, a totally calculable existence by making us forget that some struggles cannot be reduced to power games, that sometimes friendships are more than just economics. This living excess cannot be described but can only be experienced. What can be described though is how this operation functions: our living is first fragmented into several quantifiable bits and pieces and then resold to us as the real thing. “Hope in a bottle”. The enthusiasm with which all political stripes have been converted to ecology teaches us about the true nature of this new green universal religion.*” As if to prove the point of the communiqué,

when the combatants then attempted to re-enter the main body of the demo after the smash-and-dash foray and with riot police in full pursuit, some members of Climate Justice Action physically blocked them.

By the time the COP21 came around, not much had changed in that regard. In an atmosphere of heavy securitisation after the Paris massacre, with many environmentalists under house arrest and convergence centres of associated squats raided and put under 24-7 armed surveillance, activist organisers cooperated heavily with the police to the point where the groups Solidaire and ATTAC informed the authorities of anarchists planning an autonomous demonstration against the state of emergency, while activist ‘peace police’ advised protesters to facilitate the arrest of disruptive elements. It’s a classic example of a tendency whose aspirations have been domesticated into making placid appeals on prescribed occasions, and one which the authors of ‘What’s the COP21’ recognised beforehand. “*On the one hand we need to exert pressure on decision makers through constant lobbying and on the other, to prick the public conscience, they say. And all this needs to be achieved through benevolent non-violence, an assault on neither goods nor people.*”



*Petitions, flash mobs, blockades, demonstrations, alternative villages and acts of civil disobedience are some of the tools that we are told can be used. [...] The ZAD of Notre-Dame-des-Landes [ed. – see Return Fire vol.1 pg81] and other struggles against controversial imposed development projects have called for convoys to converge on Paris during the COP 21. These comrades, still too few in number, did not wait for counter summits or fixed dates in their diaries before they took up their fight and their struggle will continue afterwards. In this sense, they show us the way forward.”*

When it came to it, a number of people same to the streets on the Sunday of the summit and clashed with the police – and over 200 were arrested. One of the major official organisations which had cancelled its own protests to comply with the State,



350.org, condemned those who had instead defied martial law as “unaffiliated with the climate movement” (and if they’re the self-proclaimed climate movement, who could disagree?). We could only imagine their displeasure with those who chose to manifest their rage in accordance with their own timing and terrain – like those who beforehand had claimed the burning of five EDF vehicles north of Toulouse. “EDF is one of the COP21 partners. It’s also a state company seeking to introduce nuclear as a solution to the problem of climate change. Nuclear is death, let’s destroy it’s sponsors! We believe it’s important to attack the cop21 where it is: that is to say wherever there is profit and power. We prefer the qualitative, complicity and surprise to the media and spectacle appointments with the state and its police riots. With some fire lighters, a petrol canister and satisfied smiles, we humbly respond to the surveillance, fear and resignation that alienates us daily.”



Agit-prop against the COP15 in Copenhagen; actually, we get both

We hope not to show a one-dimensional moral image of these situations, with “the brave and right ones who fight” over here and “the cowardly ones who do not” over there. While we make no secret of our enmity for the organisers who point fingers for the police, legitimate the repression through the media, etc., we can’t see every participant or affiliate of their wider movements as equivalent (though certainly still no accomplices of ours), nor discount individuals from breaking out of reformist straitjackets. Still, these movements, and the rest like them, are one more terrain on which counter-insurgency plays out, and where it crosses our own path we won’t shy from conflict. We don’t see ourselves

as having any perfect analysis or conspiratorial knowledge which would render us immune to recuperation and control, beyond an awareness of these factors we have brought up – the many ways in which the State inscribes the ‘need’ for its existence, and a few of the barriers we must climb on a path to liberation.

### Find Each Other

*“If politics is a process of social control and colonisation, how do people genuinely undermine their control, make space for their conception of peace, and avoid becoming the metaphorical resistor necessary for the function and continuation of the social machine? These are the timeless questions of how to change our social relationships in the face of a Leviathan that went from mechanical to cybernetic within the past century. But this also draws attention to the need to realise the depth of these social impositions, while also discovering as individuals or as collectives who each other are and what will fulfil genuine individual and collective needs. Otherwise action may not even be self-serving in any substantial form, going in circles, playing the game prescribed and possibly falling into traps put in place to capture and recuperate people and ideas – a problem as old as history and as ancient as the war that many have and are still experimenting to overcome.” – Alexander Dunlap*

So if we want to break out of this so-called peace of progress, what can we address that hinders the kind of insurgency which might be of help? Obviously in different places the clash takes different forms, but where we are we could identify a lack of the continuity of an antagonistic presence which could span generations, identity groups and geographies, as one factor among many; doubtless some of the contributors to this are the difficulty of subverting the dominant family structures, and, today, the proliferation of virtual (i.e. not lived) experiences of radical milieus as just another item on the digital shelf. (We are not so arrogant or stupid to believe that self-professed ‘radical ideas’ are the spark or fuel for many of the insurrections which we’d still welcome; but they almost always exist within them, and we make no secret of the invitation we offer to co-create the character we desire them to hold for us.)

Faced with this, how do we situate our struggles not as ‘politics’ in a separable, classifiable and ultimately avoidable sphere, but in that of our daily lives; both with the institutional forces which attempt to govern our horizons, and within our relationships, filled as they are with the shared defeatism Ron Sakolsky termed “mutual acquiescence” and with the

smaller or bigger prospects for rebellion and complicity? Our thought here go to the post-script we read from a discussion between anti-militarists in Germany. “To come to a realistic evaluation of our possibilities to act, we think it is necessary to acknowledge that which we have not chosen: that we are in a state of war everywhere in the world, even if the international division of labor distributes suffering unequally. The acknowledgement of this point should not to be mistaken for a self-righteous “Yes to war!” combative bathos, which despite feeling less helpless nevertheless gets stuck in a twisted understanding of our situation, swapping the places where power and powerlessness are to be found in our lives in a confused manner. Put rudely: those ruling us don’t give a shit which fantasies of omnipotence we devote ourselves to, regardless of whichever fantasy we like better, be it the pose of the wise prophet of peace or that of the apocalyptic nihilist warrior. Both serve the function to shift our desire for self-determination to spheres far out of our reach, while we can barely face up to even the most tiny changes in our everyday life.

[...] Admittedly, it is not too easy to sort out the subtle threads of being set up for war that move right through ourselves. This is exactly why we find it interesting to have a close look at counterinsurgency, as it theorises and practically links together from the start repression and the shaping of public opinion. **This is not to talk about some great world-spanning conspiracy, but a systemic functioning where the question of conscious decisions and manipulation in favor of war alone is not sufficient to understand. This is about techniques of militarized thinking spreading throughout life, the transformation of our lives in direction of the preservation of the system at any cost: social engineering.** In which way can we understand and dismantle the conscious and unconscious processes of this reorganization, how it becomes possible to leave this cybernetic model of society – so often portrayed as control circuit including feedback loops – might become clearer, if we remind ourselves of an old finding of feminism.

It contributed quite a lot to the recognition of our own strength to think directly through the concept that the structural violence of patriarchy is closely tied to personal experiences in relationships, friendship circles, job, and so on. A woman, who above all always doubts herself in the first instance and who asks herself whether or not her husband deceives her, because she is too old, too ugly, or too stupid; this woman is posing the wrong question. Wrong, because it is exactly the question that patriarchy is



suggesting that she pose, namely that everything remains just the way it is. This answer protects the operational principles of patriarchy when the woman is quarreling with herself instead of seeing that already her personal perception is already tinged with patriarchal presumptions. To take one's own feelings not as protective shelter, opposed to a cold and calculating outside world, but as a collaborator of patriarchy, of one's own submission, is not an easy step. On the other hand, once the feelings are stripped of their hypocritical immediacy, it is much more easy to welcome them in the struggle for liberation, which promises to overcome a certain old division so we can finally fight with heart and mind.

Maybe this example can help to free ourselves from theorising militarization either as a personally staged intrigue of generals and bosses – which would not work out if they could not in some way count on our cooperation or at least make sure we keep quiet – or as an abstract mechanism, where there is no protagonists anymore, which is so absurd that we won't go into it. [...] **The constructive moment of counter-insurgency consists today – at the end of the history of progress (and its false promises) – in making us believe that we do not have any influence on reality, that we cannot change our perspective, even if the system does not have to offer one anymore.** If we simply believe this or deduce it in a highly academic way, if it is indifference, the fear of being recuperated, or military superiority that leads us to not finding other ways, this doesn't matter from the viewpoint of counter-insurgency. What counts is the effect.”

By the same token, how can we turn the crises in our own lives into a crisis for the system? Can we compose a struggle, the trajectory of which is resistant to being co-opted by the State or engineers of Capital (and let's not pretend it's only pacifist struggles which hold that vulnerability), or programatised by the purveyors of 'alternatives'? How can the conflict reach over a certain limit after which events can go out of control?

### The Martial Against the Militarist

“Those skilled at uncommon maneuvers are as endless as the heavens and earth, and as inexhaustible as the rivers and seas. [...] Subtle! Subtle! They become formless.” – Sun Tzu

It will probably be clear from our tone so far that we favour the advancement of martial capacity; our own and that of others with similar feelings to ours. This is something which has been steadily stripped away from us over the generations; the ability to fight on our own

terms, as much as the awareness of the war we inhabit. However, no matter how banal it may seem to keep repeating, this is not the only sensibility we lack; from herbal knowledge as an attunement to our bioregion, to higher emotional literacy with our friends, to sharper analyses of the changing field of domination, there are many fields of great importance for the direction we want to head. We are duly aware of the dangers of militarism (of beginning to see all problems in military terms, reducing all struggle and subversion to the moment of the armed clash), just as we are aware it's possible that the notion of a 'permanent war' we inhabit can be used for purposes which run counter to our own<sup>[21]</sup>. To us it seems clear that it is up to each and every rebel to work out where such lines in their own life-struggles can be drawn, and to act accordingly.

With that said, let's hear some thoughts from Sea Weed on the matter. “In military theory, it is said that for the conqueror to really succeed the losing population must accept defeat, otherwise the conquerors only win after every single person has been killed, which isn't normally in the conquerors interest, because they need slaves and soldiers, etc. [...] The vast majority of the world's population consists of defeated peoples in this war. And in fact, we are more than just defeated. We are kept. Kept in fear, kept in awe, kept out of touch with each other and the earth that gives us life. It has been said that our chains are long and our cages big, yet this still implies that we are prisoners. [...] Part of breaking out involves shedding all those ideological skins grafted onto us through schooling, the mass media, living in nuclear families, etc. But my involvement with rebels over the past 20 years tells me that we already know that this is important. What we don't seem to inventory is the means available to us to counter our physical occupation. [I]t is only by ridding ourselves of organized coercive authority that we will truly begin to have real opportunities to profoundly transform ourselves.

[...] Part of being an insurgent today could involve acquiring martial skills. Martial traditions include everything from fighting techniques, military theory, group cohesion and earth knowledge to skill with a weapon. Weapons include rifles, shotguns, handguns, sling shots, knives and various bows and arrows, among others. These could be used for acquiring food as well as for self-defense or to chase away adversaries. This isn't a call to “armed struggle” but for inclusion of a neglected aspect of a holistic approach to rebellion.

[...] The following are just a few examples of using martial tactics to succeed in present day struggles. Opening new fronts



as solidarity with other rebels engaged in a confrontation or action. Encouraging defection within enemy ranks. Avoiding capture. Blockades. Unarresting a comrade. The ambush. Spying. Interrupting the enemies' means of communication. The surprise. Raids on enemy stores of food and weapons. The siege. Physical battles that expand territory. Freeing captives from enemy prisons. Destruction of enemy arsenals. Destruction of enemy wealth. Regrouping. Hiding. Secret codes and other means of communication. Bolder actions. Creating clandestine camps in which to hide friendly fugitives. Insurgencies. Fleeing to areas outside the enemies' control. Increased ability to fight as groups.

[...] I want to repeat that sharing our unique world-views and critiques and creating community are as essential as acquiring martial skills. A martial component is simply one part of a holistic approach. But we also must remember that a small band of rebels can accomplish a lot[...] And a clandestine group of friends that creates beauty by destructive means or that spreads subversion using playful methods, can also benefit from and help inform the martial approaches I am advocating.” Not coincidentally, when adopted by dissidents many of these tactics imply a mental break from the internalised legitimacy of the State (the current one as it exists at least, although of course they have been used both by the State and to institute new ones), as well as some steps towards its removal from one's life on a practical level. We don't doubt that such skills would advance struggles in our own lives, alongside the other vital elements: envisaged not as the science of war, but the art of rebellion.

### Social Sabotage

“[S]peaking of anti-social war is not a denial of the social ways of spreading the anarchist idea; rather we insist that it is solely a demarcation from the groups which, through violent or non-violent means, neither claim nor carry in their ideas the search for the total destruction of the existent society. We support all of the

*ways of intensifying anti-systemic, anti-capitalist, anti-civilisation ideas; through texts, zines, activities, squats, words of love and rage, reflections and communiqués (like this one). But always keeping in mind that mere understanding (if we want to call it that) is not enough...” – anonymous claim for incendiary disruption of the public transit system of Santiago*

The admission of counter-insurgency as an approach is that the State recognises that, when a population puts greater hope in the insurgency to meet their needs than in the government, even an overwhelmingly larger military is insufficient to win the peace. Once again, legitimacy is key. Losing that legitimacy is what the States of today fear, and what they defend against. And yet where does this analysis leave us, when we ourselves certainly don't intend to embark on a campaign to win 'society' over to 'us' as a unified opposition; when we ourselves understand 'society' as an anthropocentric mass imposition, the opposite of freely-chosen and maintained unions or communities (inter-species as well and intra-species), and so something we want to see dissolved into the latter? In other words, what if we don't want to play the State's game (even as a competitor) – wouldn't the means contradict the ends?

Even from an anti-society position, we recognise that the State's power (and indeed, the disciplinary power of mass society itself) rests on social consensus as much as military force. In other words, a compliant society, hence our repression, rests on the degree of legitimacy certain institutions are granted. Truly, at least in the crowded lands we inhabit, there is not option yet of living 'outside' society. Like it or not, it is our environment; our anti-social position is from within that it opposes, not without. While this certainly makes the worlds we inhabit confusing and messy places to try to live out our ideas, the one sure thing to us is that our liberation is inherently tied up with the subversion of social relations on a scale larger than we have interest in forging actual connections (i.e. as opposed to the syndicalist dystopia of “one big anarchist union”).

We found ourselves in agreement with some unknown anarchists in Barcelona, when they wrote that *“[o]ne cannot propose the creation of a new world without the destruction of the current one. And we cannot plan the form of the new world because currently we cannot imagine future conditions. Moreso, planning the form of the world – or planning the form of any collectivity greater than our circle of acquaintances – is an authoritarian exercise. But the State does not only exist in its material forces, rather also in the social relations it reproduces, and a relation cannot be destroyed without*

*simultaneously creating a new relation. A building can be destroyed without constructing a new one, but a relationship of alienation cannot be ended without the creation of another type of relationship. There is always a relation between the beings and bodies in the same space. Without speaking of the creation of new social relations, we cannot speak honestly about the destruction of the State. To put it another way, we have come upon a bifurcation between the proposal to attack the State and the proposal to destroy the State. The proposal that speaks most of destruction, the nihilist one, may be unable to realize it because it dedicates itself only to the attack. It would be a very sad vision of “permanent revolt”: forever attacking the symbols of the State without ever being able to touch the base of its power.”*

Hence, without wild lands we could meld with undisturbed by an ongoing civilisation (which itself would at best be a temporary fix so long as that neighbouring civilisation still existed, given spreading pollution, colonial expansion, climate change...), our struggle where we stand is not that of violently defeating every believer in the legitimacy of the State – or civilisation, or society – but rather undermining that belief.

How to not drive people back into the arms of the State with our attacks? (Clearly this is always a risk, and one which we don't feel a particular responsibility to avoid causing in each individual – more important seems the potential opening up of space when a windowfront of order and stability is cracked, where people's own doubts, dreams or designs could sprout along a trajectory less inhibitory to ours; or not, who knows.) We see value in anarchic publishing, graffiti, posters, open discussions, solidarity where felt and subversion where possible, and their potential to inflame hearts we would personally like to know (or at least make an environment more amendable to how we ourselves want to live), if nothing else because they've touched our own lives when we were ready for something of the sort to sit with our own experiences in the world. The disadvantage of this visibility is increased scope for State 'reading', surveying, infiltrating, co-opting etc., but as even the most secretive spread of anarchic practices would earn the State's attention sooner or later this is simply a problem we see must be contended with. There seems to be a fair amount of hostility around towards at least a few of the institutions we ourselves despise (although surely not enough of them); what we don't see so often is attempts to assert other ways of living and relating which could be specific to each community, while linking these aspirations to the ways in which the structures and officials which block those

paths so far are vulnerable – every day and every second.

**Chipping away at authority's monopoly on legitimate force need not be a simple appropriation of the rhetoric of 'winning hearts and minds', with all its manipulative and homogenising implications. We don't need to solicit agreement or approval as we experiment to free ourselves specifically; just to discredit and undermine the impervious facade of the current structures, to create the indisputable fact of physical opposition to the 'peace' of progress, and accentuate the social war it would like to conceal with notes of our own composition.**

One side of (proto-)insurgency could be looking at what things the State needs which it can only get from the population it governs – whether obedience, civility, resources, the ability to intervene in daily life, etc. – and attempt to deny it those things. There are a great many forms this could potentially take or has taken (and obviously not all of them martial). One avenue for throwing a spanner into the works of social reproduction is the many technical infrastructures of (post-)industrial capitalist life, which, by ensuring the mobility of goods and services, the function of the social factory and the 'quiet day at the office' at the root of exploitation, war and ecocide, gives the system its air of irreproachable durability.

We could look in this light at the deeds of some anonymous saboteurs in Belgium; whose acts were committed one night during the lockdown after the Paris massacre and into the COP21 summit, and reported on in the Ricochets bulletin #10. *“The first one was a sabotage, in four different spots, of an international high speed train network (TGV, Thalys, Eurostar). By setting fire to the fibre optic cables along the rail tracks close to Ath in the province of Hainaut, the complete train circulation has been paralysed for more than a day long. A day on which the international delegates and the ministers needing to speed to Paris for a summit were blocked, a day on which the executives of companies, the Eurocrats, the directors have been cornered in the station watching the screens announcing the cancelling of their trains. This act of sabotage shows us that by using simple means it is always possible to cut into the veins of power and its men [sic], of its networks of transportation and data. And in the disorder thereby created, spaces are opened up which are not saturated by the speech of power, spaces where freedom can take a jump.*

*The second act of sabotage was aimed at no less than a military base, one of the most important ones of Belgium, where the Special Forces of the Belgian army and the military secret service are stationed, in Heverlee in the province of Flemish Brabant. Covered by the night, the saboteur(s) penetrated the base, avoiding systems of control and patrols, to trap five army vehicles with home-made fire bombs. [...] A single act has managed to ridicule the aura of the army and its grand master, the state, and this in the middle of a state of emergency. An act which somehow proposes to all who are sick of their wars to attack directly on the spot where they are produced: in the military bases, in the arms and security companies, in the technological research centres.”* (This shows a stronger challenge to State legitimacy to us than was visible after, for example, the 7/7 bombings by Islamists in London; following which a step-down from militancy became the watchword for many at the protests against the G8 summit of world leaders in Scotland, where you could find police and activists lighting candles for the victims side by side.)

The entities at the 'softer' end of counter-insurgency can also be located, exposed and attacked, showing the lie of their innocuous position. Take the example of the attack during late 2015, in Besançon, on the Red Cross (simultaneous with the defacing of a ruling Socialist Party office): *“this humanitarian organization – which has a long history of collaboration with the powers that be (from the Second World War and its collaboration with the Nazis up until today) – organizes raids, manages migrant flows alongside the police forces and murderous guards of the FRONTX Agency, administers the detention centres... It is entirely responsible for the miserable plight of the undocumented. Right now, this humanitarian organization – perfectly in gear with this world of borders and poverty – is currently distinguishing itself at the Franco-Italian border between Menton and Ventimiglia, by chartering its lorries to transfer migrants to detention centres. The structures of the enemy can be found at every street corner. Let's not bow down to the state of emergency!”*

Neither are the more foreboding forces of the security apparatus immune from targeting, those who would like us to believe them unthinkable to assault. After security agencies (including the director of Frontex), international politicians, delegates from the armament and surveillance industry etc. gathered in Berlin for the European Police Congress of February 2016, the counter-terrorism centre of the federal police was hit with molotovs and paint-bombs, and the street spiked to puncture tyres of any pursuit. As

those responsible say, such attacks can be a “small light in an otherwise pitch-black night”; when we who dream and fight for better days are pushed evermore into the margins by an order which consolidates its legitimacy with concessions and coercion, the importance to us of the courage of ideas in action – however minoritarian – only grows.

### **That Which Advances in Rebellion**

*“Facing what hinders freedom also makes us face ourselves: it is for us to determine, experiment, approach what we want to live. It is certainly not easy, but we have weapons that the powerful fear: SOLIDARITY among rebels against isolationism, SELF-ORGANISATION without leaders or hierarchy, individual and collective ATTACK on all everything involved in domination.”*  
*– poster on the walls of several French towns, February 2016*

The shadow cast by the spectre of atrocities like unfolded in Paris (and those in Afghanistan, Syria, etc. by some authoritarians or others, and the many more to come) may be long, but despite the State's attempts there is hope that it will fail to eclipse the other, more fundamental war. The year or so before was also marked by rebellions over killings by the police, as one example; in multiple places and days in the U.S., but also around France as mentioned above, and even cropping up again in the U.K. to a lesser extent<sup>[22]</sup>. Meanwhile, the State strategies of self-preservation sometimes have difficult bedfellows in the neo-liberal capitalist restructuring, that tends towards enclosures and privatisation which can sometimes undermine some of the 'soft', legitimacy-building aspect of counter-insurgency. (To be sure, sometimes counter-insurgency is brought in to 'clean up' a crisis of confidence left by neo-liberalism, and other times counter-insurgency pacifies a situation so neo-liberalism can then be smoothly enacted, but the relationship can be a troubled one.

How could we move within situations like these? Understandings of legitimacy-building and legitimacy-eroding are just part of the criteria by which we analyse social circumstances, one more yard-stick by which to judge how, where, when and why to use certain methods as well as their effectiveness in pursuit of lives worth living. Lessons can be drawn from the experiences of many varied struggles, experiments and repressions, and maybe links between these diverse situations could be of use to us. We remember, along with the authors of 'We Welcome the Fire, We Welcome the Rain', that *“there are a great many who have met one another, grown together, and been emboldened by*

*confidence in our abilities and relationships. These trajectories of learning have intertwined into something beautiful and ferocious here. Within this space there is room for all of us to contribute. Those of us who've found ourselves in recent years – in black blocs and graffiti crews, in anti-police riots and anti-austerity fights, in occupied plazas and buildings – have a great deal to share. Not as instructions or grand plans, but as proposals in each moment. Small suggestions which open more space: a call for a time and place when announcements are made, maybe barricades when people take the roads, maybe fires when barricades are built, maybe expropriation when facades are shattered. We have no interests in being specialists in fighting. Rather, we dream of moments which call on each of us to become everything at once; situations which demand that each of us become fighters and healers, caretakers and firebringers. We have no desire to lead, either from the shadows or from the megaphones and we will do everything in our power to combat and undermine those who seek to control and manage these outbreaks of joy and fury. We want to fight, side-by-side, in the first person, alongside those who want similar things. We want to build a type of solidarity where each of us can recognize our own struggles and projects in the struggles and projects of others. We want to find conspirators in this and to learn from one another. The interweaving and spreading of these attempts is what we call ‘insurrection.’”*

Avenues for sharing, discussing and sharpening perspectives and methods is one accomplishment of anarchists and other radicals, in our own limited way so far. Our enemies are well aware of this, as you can read in the Czech intelligence agency report 'Relations between extremists in Central and Eastern Europe and Greece': *“Extremist violence is considered a serious threat to modern European and global security, especially when linked to terrorism and other strategies of guerrilla warfare. Extremist environmentalists from different countries and regions are now in close contact and are mutually reinforcing. An important part of today's international extremism is the exchange of strategies and tactical elements. The emergence of extremism in one country or region is linked to the development of extremism in other countries or regions.”*

It's hard to know what will come in this changing world, what opportunities will arise or how to make it through the times when none seem visible to us. But experience tells us that even a little empowerment and picking-up of skills can have a huge impact in one's character or desires, and with our unconstrained lives

at stake, let's not be stopped by fear of failure.

*Let's attack the parts of the system we encounter in our daily lives by those means that we have the ability and desire to use.*

**– some anti-authoritarian barbarians already within the walls**



Frankfurt: opening of the European Central Bank

1. "17 October 1961. French police attack a demonstration of Algerian immigrants and kill perhaps 200 (the numbers have never been confirmed), dozens are beaten, thrown off bridges and drowned in the Seine, others shot by impromptu firing squads in the police station courtyards" (All States are Murder Cults).

2. The term 'barbarian' finds its Old French root in *Barbaria* (former European name for North Africa), the land of the Berbers, and 'foreigners' whose speech supposedly sounded like "bar-bar" to European ears with a latent threat of foreign invasion.

3. For example, the *FinSpy* program, which Egyptian insurgents reported finding upon storming the State security agency during the 2011 revolution. There are 32 countries suspected of using the program, made by Britain's espionage and surveillance outfit *Gamma International Ltd.* and costing €3 million, and networks between States are generated, sharing data. A so-called 'Trojan' file (which may have the appearance of a security update or browser plug-in), once downloaded to a computer or phone, collects information such as conversations, text, webcam footage, downloads, posts etc., for remote accessing by the operator.

4. "I encourage those citizens of the US who recoil at the atrocities ISIS inflicts upon those they consider 'infidels' or enemies of their way of life to contemplate the following seldom-recounted piece of American history: "In 1813 several hundred Cherokees enlisted under the command of a bush lawyer turned general, Andrew Jackson. Old Hickory, as he became known for his intractable personality, was forty-six, gaunt, shrewd, violent, one arm crippled by dueling wounds – the latest from a duel with his own brother. Of Carolina frontier stock, he hated Indians but was more than willing to employ them as high-grade cannon fodder. His Creek War, hailed by Jackson as a victory for civilization, was notorious for the savagery of white troops under his command. They skinned dead Creeks for belt leather; and Davy Crockett,

who was there, told how a platoon set fire to a house with "forty-six warriors in it" and afterward ate potatoes from the cellar basted in human fat." (Ronald Wright, *Stolen Continents: The Americas Through Indian Eyes Since 1492*) We now pay homage to Old Hickory, who later became the seventh president of the United States, by printing his likeness on our currency. Readers from fellow civilized nations: feel free to supply your own favorite "victory for civilization" from your homeland's illustrious history, and we'll show those jihadis how truly civilized people behave" (*Wilderness Before the Dawn*).

5. As an adjunct to their daily pathologising and narcotising, the American Psychological Association was exposed as collaborating with the U.S. regime to justify its 'Enhanced Interrogation' program following the disclosure of prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib since the '00s, by shooting down legal troubles threatening senior intelligence officials. Psychologists directly supervised simulated drownings ('water-boarding') of detainees to signal when they deemed them sufficiently broken-down to continue the questioning.

6. The Shengen Area comprises 26 European countries which agreed to both eliminate border controls with other Shengen members and to strengthen border controls with non-member States.

7. "The "mechanism" of the COP21 agreement calls for an "accelerated reduction" of carbon emissions to keep global temperature rise at 1.5 degrees. To get there, it summons a list of "shoulds" rather than "musts" with no actual "mechanism" of enforcement. [...] Relying on the good faith of some of the most heinous violators of human and ecological rights in the world sounds great when read off of an official document signed by those perpetrators, but when one steps outside into an abject police state at permanent war with its own population and countless other groups, sects, and parties, the clarity begins to fade into an overwhelming, terrifying, and stark sense of grey. [...] "The Paris accord is a trade agreement, nothing more," explained Alberto Saldamando, human rights expert and attorney. "It promises to privatize, commodify and sell forested lands as carbon offsets in fraudulent schemes such as REDD+ projects. These offset schemes provide a financial laundering mechanism for developed countries to launder their carbon pollution on the backs of the global south. Case-in-point, the United States' climate change plan includes 250 million megatons to be absorbed by oceans and forest offset markets. Essentially, those responsible for the climate crisis not only get to buy their way out of compliance but they also get to profit from it as well." [...] Among the problems with REDD++ have been the proposal to make palm oil plantations count as forests, so that companies can count as carbon credits the vast deforestation and pollution caused by the transplanting of native rainforest that have displaced Indigenous peoples and significantly imperiled the existence of orangutan and other endangered species in places like Borneo. [...] Rather than acknowledging the underlying bases for the climate crisis embedded within the processes of resource extraction, land seizures, monocultures, and industrial production operating through Schumpeterian "creative

destruction" and planned obsolescence, returning to the land and air the waste and detritus of useless and artificial life, the agreement acts as though a technocratic approach of all world leaders can coordinate on a massive scale a top-down solution to what is really a problem grounded in everyday life. The problem of mass-scale animal agriculture is overlooked, dams and hydroelectric, mining and rare earths, endangered species, plastics in the ocean are overlooked, nuclear pollution is overlooked – all in the teeth of a militarized police state that supports global warfare on a scale that menaces the entire planet" (*Grey Not Green: Technocratic Climate Agreement and Police State Terror*).

8. "Noise can mask mating calls, cause stress and prevent animals from hearing alarms, the stirrings of prey and other useful survival cues. And as climate change prompts a shift in creatures' migration schedules, circadian rhythms and preferred habitats – reshuffling the where and when of their calls – soundscapes are altered, too. [...] Sightless, earless and adrift in the open ocean, coral larvae seek to settle on tropical reefs by swimming toward the throbs of muttering fish and snapping-shrimp claws. Eurasian reed warblers en route to southern Africa at night flutter blind over pine forests, sand dunes and the Baltic Sea until, hundreds of feet below, the cheeping of other warblers signals the presence of sustaining wetlands. If those aural cues disappear, the species that heed them may be floating and flying without a compass. [...] Porpoises and whales have beached themselves fleeing the high-pitched shrieks of U.S. Navy sonar, researchers believe; they also blame the low-frequency booms ships use to search for oil and gas for fatally ripping through the organs that cephalopods like squid use to detect vibrations. [...] Subjected to constant mechanical whirring, certain primates, bats, whales, squirrels and frogs all change their cries. Many other animals, it seems, lack the physical equipment to adapt, and perish or move away" (*Whisper of the Wild*).

9. As an example outside the well-known sphere of modified crops, the U.K. firm *Oxitec*, based in Oxford, breed mosquitoes engineered so their offspring die before adulthood, so as to cause a population crash then released to breed with wild mosquitoes. This was explicitly sold as a measure to tackle dengue fever and other viruses exacerbated by global warming and the spread of urban environments around the world. *Oxitec* plan to expand the treatment to other insects persecuted by the agricultural sector in Europe and the U.S., and its founder was shortlisted for the European Inventor Award.

10. Held in a so-called 'marine protected area', Northern Edge defiled some of the purest and most nutrient-rich waters on Earth. Eskimo, Eyak, Athabaskan, Tlingit, Sun'aa, Aleut and other indigenous peoples rely on the area for nutritive, cultural and spiritual sustenance, and it is critical habitat for all Alaskan wild salmon and hundreds of other species including greatly endangered North Pacific right whales. The bombardment (tens of thousands of pounds of toxic munitions, and high-intensity sonar lethal to sealife) came during the key breeding and migratory period of the region, and most of the chemicals released are also present in the Gulf of Mexico dead-zone from BP's 2010 oil release atrocity [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.1 pg28**].



11. The ebola outbreak in West Africa has provisionally been linked at least in part to expanding palm oil plantations of the likes of Sime Darby (Malaysia), Equatorial Palm Oil (U.K.), Golden Veroleum (Indonesia) etc., with police eviction of indigenous peoples in Guinea to increase milling capacity. During the ensuing deforestation (and that which came before), fruit bats carrying the virus are forced from their habitat and into higher contact with humans, their gardens and domesticated animals, disturbing previous local practices which may have acted as a barrier to its spread.

12. "Climate change markets have helped rebrand and make politically feasible old and new forms of ongoing conflicts over conservation, REDD+, industrial tree plantations (ITP), and a variety of resource extraction projects. 'Climate Security' concerns are popularly envisaged as mitigating conflict, but in the ways we have outlined, end up generating it, through the political and economic structures they enlist[...] Agrawal and Redford's (2009) estimation of conservation-induced displacement in the range of 10–20 million in a span of twenty years does not take into account other climate change reinforced sustainable development projects – 'green grabbing' – that have been on the rise and are noted as a significant contributor to land acquisition and conflict. The popularised concern that climate change will induce and intensify conflict – climate-conflict nexus – can be regarded as solidifying a self-fulfilling prophecy that reinforces political and economic relationships around land control, which continues the industrial processes that ferment conflict and market processes dependent on usurpation of the natural environment. These measures are reinforcing ecological crises as they give the impression of 'win-win' solutions using the market and 'saving' the environment as their justification."

13. A demonstration in Basel, called "against militarisation, deportations, nations and borders", attacked police outside a deportation prison with projectiles and pyrotechnics, blinding some with laser-pointers, then rampaged through the district and trashed bank ATMs, numerous border patrol and police vehicles, and a local anti-migrant newspaper office. A car of ISS (who provide facility management to prisons Europe-wide) was burned. Four cops left injured.

14. In October 2015 'Anti-Marxist Movement HUSAR' coordinated their own intelligence-gathering with the police to raid a suspect of a recent incendiary attack on a prison guards building, also re-capturing Cristian Melinao of the Mapuche [ed. – see **The Intensification of Independence in Wallmapu**] who had escaped some time before the attack from his prison sentence for robberies to fund their ancestral struggle.

15. "The 'Trident Juncture' manoeuvres – mainly in Italy, Portugal and the Spanish State – will involve more than 36,000 troops from 30 states. They will be "the most important NATO exercise during 2015" and "the largest deployment of NATO forces since the Cold War", according to the Spanish Defence Ministry. There is a sinister sub-text to the exercises, in which NATO says it will implement the "lessons" it learned in the war of occupation in Afghanistan. The whole thing is looking very much like a dress rehearsal for

massive military intervention across the Mediterranean in northern Africa, so rich in the minerals and hydrocarbons needed to keep the industrial capitalist system churning. Although the pretext for the focus on Africa is the Islamist threat, and the war games will also send a belligerent message to Moscow, analysts think the main target of the US-led initiative is to combat Chinese influence in the continent" (The Acorn bulletin #15).

16. Such as Tascor, who run short-term detention facilities for the U.K. border forces stationed in Calais and Coquelles; and two of whose prison buses were smashed up in Bristol by the Informal Anarchist Federation 'Borderless Solidarity Cell' as a result.

17. "Leaving all the alibis aside, Science as it exists is inconceivable without its unbroken institutional, philosophical, and economic connections with policing, warfare, and industrialization. Its medical knowledge of bodies corresponds to the State's need to discipline, exploit, and torture those bodies; its funding and the areas of its advancement, its "discoveries," correspond to the need of states to wage warfare against their neighbors and the need of capitalists to get an edge on their competitors and their laborers. It is not merely a complex of academic institutions that has advanced alongside, and been corrupted by, the institutions of the modern nation-state and of capital investment. On the contrary, at no point is Science autonomous within and endogenous to those academic institutions. It has always been a primary motor for the expansion – material and spiritual, to borrow the tired dichotomy – of the present world system that has colonized the entire globe, put all forms of life to work, reengineered the landscape to favor production and social control, and that is now busy rewriting the very matrix in which life and existence unfold; therefore its development has not been an exclusively academic affair but a chief concern of all the institutions of power with which it is coterminous" (Alex Gorrión).

18. The high-tech combat training center (GefechtsÜbungsZentrum) in Altmark, Germany, where soldiers from NATO countries train for urban warfare. In 2012 construction began for a whole city (various buildings, streets, a subway and an airport) so as to better prepare for operations in neighborhoods, city centers, slums, industrial estates and shopping malls. "This city could exist anywhere in the world", said the G.Ü.Z. chief executive.

19. Ivan, Bruno, Damien, Inès, Franck and Javier were tried together in 2012. The charges stemmed from the following accusations: placing an incendiary in a police truck (Inès; her brother Javier; Damien); burning a series of signaling stations which paralyzed a section of the rail network (Javier); possession of manuals for sabotage techniques, a juvenile prison map and chlorate salts (Inès; Franck); possession of smoke-bombs and caltrops (bent nails for spiking roads to puncture tyres, for example those of police cars) en route to a demonstration at the Vincennes migrant prison which later was burned down by inmates in revolt (Ivan; Bruno; Damien). Bruno and Ivan spent 17 and 22 months on the run respectively, but were eventually recaptured and tried.

20. "We might here focus on two related developments: pre-emption, and punishment by

process. Pre-emptive tactics are those which stop protests before they start, or before they can achieve anything. Kettling, mass arrests, stop-and-search, lockdowns, house raids and pre-emptive arrests are examples of these kinds of tactics. Punishment by process entails keeping people in a situation of fear, pain, or vulnerability through the abuse of procedures designed for other purposes – such as keeping people on pre-charge or pre-trial bail conditions which disrupt their everyday activity, using no-fly and border-stop lists to harass known dissidents, carrying out violent dawn raids, needlessly putting people's photographs in the press, arresting people on suspicion (sometimes in accord with quotas), using pain-compliance holds, or quietly making known that someone is under surveillance. Once fear of state interference is instilled, it is reinforced by the web of visible surveillance that is gridded across public space, and which acts as strategically placed triggers of trauma and anxiety. Anecdotal evidence has provided many horror stories about the effects of such tactics – people left a nervous wreck after years awaiting a trial on charges for which they were acquitted, committing suicide after months out of touch with their friends and family, or afraid to go out after incidents of abuse. The effects are just as real as if the state was killing or disappearing people, but they are rendered largely invisible" (We Are All Very Anxious).

21. "It is in fact a discourse which has, ever since it began and until very late in the nineteenth century, and even the twentieth, also been supported by very traditional mythical forms, and it is often invested in those forms. This discourse twins subtle knowledge and myths that are – I wouldn't say crude, but they are basic, clumsy, and overloaded. We can, after all, easily see how a discourse of this type can be articulated (and, as you will see, was actually articulated) with a whole mythology: [the lost age of great ancestors, the imminence of new times and a millenary revenge, the coming of the new kingdom that will wipe out the defeats of old]. This mythology tells of how the victories of giants have gradually been forgotten and buried, of the twilight of the gods, of how heroes were wounded or died, and of how kings fell asleep in inaccessible caves. We also have the theme of the rights and privileges of the earliest race, which were flouted by cunning invaders, the theme of the war that is still going on in secret, of the plot that has to be revived so as to rekindle that war and to drive out the invaders or enemies; the theme of the famous battle that will take place tomorrow, that will at last invert the relationship of force, and transform the vanquished into victors who will know and show no mercy. Throughout the whole of the Middle Ages, and even later, the theme of perpetual war will be related to the great, undying hope that the day of revenge is at hand, to the expectation of the emperor of the last years, the dux novus, the new leader, the new guide, the new Führer; the idea of the fifth monarchy, the third empire or the Third Reich, the man who will be both the beast of the Apocalypse and the savior of the poor" (Foucault).

22. March 2015 saw four consecutive nights of disturbances in High Wycombe after the verdict for the death of Habib 'Paps' Ullah after a stop-and-search; 130 cars were damaged, scores with 'NJNP' (No Justice No Peace) sprayed on them.

# CLOSE SUPERVISION CENTRES

## – A Modern Form of Torture

[ed. – Posted to U.K. Indymedia by Sean Dunohoe, reprinted here with very minor edits for spelling and grammar. It's not hard to imagine the conceptual discrepancies between ourselves and the author (on rights, law, criminality etc.), so without further annotation we'll let the rest of the text speak for itself about these black-holes of modern democracy and their overseer's colonial-style divide-and-rule tactics.

**Close Supervision Centres (C.S.C.s), based on the American "Special Management Units", started in 1998 at Woodhill prison in Milton Keynes** to hold prisoners who fought back, encouraged others to do too, embarrassed the prison service, or were otherwise the most "disruptive and dangerous". Inmates who subsequently conformed had the possibility at first to rejoin the main prison population; not so with the C.S.C. above the "Exceptional Risk Unit" in Wakefield prison, where convicts are left entombed in their cells and allowed no human interaction. One subject to that regime, Kevan Thakrar (a regular correspondent to the 'outside' world and vocal opponent of the prison regime), reports that many are "unable to succeed in escaping this hell without first being driven insane, and only then do they manage to elude the fire by being sectioned under the Mental Health Act 1983 to a high security hospital in order to attempt to treat them for the damage the extreme environmental stress has caused. If these patients are successful in recovering [they] are then returned to the CSC to be broken again and again. **[Death] is contemplated daily by the CSC prisoners, and attempted routinely by those who realise it is the only way left for them to be able to leave...**"

November 2015, another inmate, Eddie Brown, hung himself inside the C.S.C.; reportedly at the encouragement of all the screws. **Additionally, a function of the regime is violent normalisation of 'othered' subjectivities**, such as the terrorisation of Muslim prisoners (including the latter-mentioned Douglas Vinter) by guards and other inmates until they feel compelled to adopt Christianity. From a November 2015 letter by Kevan:

*"Following each capitulation were celebrations and congratulations for another job well done by those running the unit and their puppets, then the transfer in of the next target in what is a systematic attack on Islamic prisoners. [...] None of this is new, HMP Wakefield has always been known to operate a racist regime enforced by an all white workforce, [with] the techniques learned through Psychological training which is mandatory for all CSC officers[...] Benefits and bonuses are given to racist prisoners, whilst others are kept in total isolation from each other and there is little action which can be taken against the culprits. [...] Publicity following the recent death of a prisoner at HMP Woodhill's Close Supervision Centre (CSC) [has] focused almost exclusively on the issue of transgender. Edward (Eddie) Latham had changed his name to Eddie Brown whilst serving time in Rampton secure hospital, and I am told very recently may have changed it again to Joanne Latham. [...] For almost two years, Latham had been confined within solitary confinement conditions which are well known to cause suicidal behavior as well as mental deterioration. Added to this was the common brutality and sadistic behaviors of both the local Woodhill CSC personnel, and the national CSC Management Committee who ordered Latham to be kept there. This experience left little to live for resulting in repeated suicide attempts in numerous different ways, all causing great amusement amongst those working there. [...] Self-harm and self-mutilation are and always have been at the highest levels of anywhere within the entire prison system at the CSC. Suicide attempts are routine with nothing but further unofficial punishment given to the victims by the CSC staff. It was not that long ago that CSC prisoner Lee Foye struggled so much with the extreme environmental stress that he began hearing voices & severed his ear off, then six weeks later was encouraged to cut off [the other] which like the first was done with razors supplied by officers."*

*We want the C.S.C.s not only "closed" but in ashes, though for us **the struggle against one prison must comprise a single part of the struggle against all prisons, at all times, and everywhere.***

There has for some time been serious concerns about the treatment of prisoners held in the so called 'Close Supervision Centre' (CSC) at Woodhill prison in Milton Keynes, and once again the segregation and isolation of what the prison system labels as "difficult" prisoners in a control unit environment has led to serious abuses of human rights and unlawful behaviour on the part of those "supervising" the CSC. That unlawful behaviour now threatens the physical safety and even lives of prisoners held in the CSC. **An incident recently engineered by staff operating the Woodhill prison CSC where a mentally ill prisoner was encouraged to attack another prisoner in what is a supposedly "closely supervised" environment indicates that a "divide and rule" strategy is now being officially applied in the CSC that threatens the lives of these prisoners considered especially "difficult" and "challenging" by the CSC staff.**

Douglas Gary Vinter is a prisoner serving a natural life sentence, which means he is unlikely to ever be released. His "difficult" behaviour, which usually took the form of smashing up his cell in impotent rage and despair, led to his being "selected" for the Woodhill CSC, despite a judicial review ruling that his prolonged segregation was unlawful because it was contributing to his deteriorating mental condition.

Lee Newell, also serving a natural life sentence, was "selected" for the Woodhill CSC because of his constant complaints about the behaviour of prison staff, who, he claimed, had targeted him for bullying and intimidation. Both prisoners after

"In the UK prisons unofficial violence is an institutionalised and "normal" way whereby prisoners are controlled and terrorised into conforming and it is customary for those officially employed to maintain prison "good order and discipline" to recruit and manipulate prisoners into controlling their fellow captives by any means necessary, even occasionally murder. The creation and manipulation of prisoner power hierarchies is intended primarily to "keep order" within prison society and has a very long brutal tradition. "Offenders"

are conditioned to the institutional reality of unofficial power and violence from a young age; youth detention centres, youth custody institutions and their predecessors the reform schools and Borstals are all characterized by violent inmate hierarchies and a knowing of ones place and a culture enforced by fear and often terror. Those officially charged with maintaining "good order and discipline" in such child prisons often derive enormous pleasure in grooming and encouraging bullies or "Daddies" to keep order on their behalf, thereby creating an assumption amongst child prisoners that power equals violence; a belief and behavioural trait that usually characterizes their future relationship with the community resulting in increasingly longer prison sentences for violence. Within such institutions small groups of gangs of inmates are empowered by the guards to enforce order, who then happily turn a blind eye to the violent initiation of potential "troublemakers" is the norms of the institution. In such institutions it is the "Daddies" who police and maintain order at whatever cost to the psychological and physical health and safety of the other child prisoners. [...] The brutalisation and even murder of young working class "offenders" in state institutions matters nothing to the ruling class who consider such young prisoners as merely scum to be tamed and broken."

– John Bowden [ed. – see *Return Fire* vol.2 pg64]



experiencing a CSC regime of solitary confinement, psychological abuse and the ever present threat of organised staff violence, repeatedly requested transfers on the grounds that their mental health was seriously deteriorating; their requests were denied by the “multi disciplinary management team” operating the Woodhill CSC.

The “multi disciplinary management team” at the Woodhill CSC are responsible for carrying out “risk assessments” on the prisoners held in the CSC and deciding what level or intensity of “supervision” they require, i.e. the number of staff, often in full riot gear, required to “supervise” the prisoners movement outside of his cell, and whether the “settled behaviour” of a prisoner can be rewarded by allowing him to share his one hour exercise period in a small outdoor cage with another CSC prisoner.

Claire Hodson, the “population strategist and specialist units manager” of the CSC and a member of the CSC’s “multi disciplinary management team” had recently confirmed that a significant proportion of the prisoners in the CSC suffered with serious mental illness either prior to being selected for the CSC or whilst confined there and subject to it’s extremely psychologically punishing regime. Joanne King, a psychologist employed in the Woodhill CSC, apparently is content to oversee the mental destruction of prisoners held in the CSC and was fully aware of the pleas of Douglas Vinter and Lee Newell to be transferred out of the CSC because of their inability to mentally cope with the brutal “behaviour modification” regime operating there. **Clearly, the so called “multi disciplinary management team” exist simply to legitimise a regime in the CSC that is intrinsically cruel and intended to completely disempower and dehumanise prisoners perceived as “troublemakers”.** The psychological consequences to those prisoners is obviously of no concern to those managing the CSC. For the uniformed staff actually enforcing the CSC regime, who operate with little or no real accountability in a hidden environment, an occupational culture has developed that prioritizes control and obedience of prisoners by any means necessary, and this has began to take the form of encouraging the most “difficult” and mentally disturbed prisoners in the CSC to vent their anger and rage upon each other.

After suffering the cruelty of the CSC regime for 3 months Douglas Vinter could endure no more and told the staff enforcing the regime that unless he was transferred soon he would express his despair in violence. A senior prison officer called

Bowen is then reported to have said to him *“Don’t hurt one of us. If you’re determined to use violence why not hurt Lee Newell”.* He was assured that the consequences to him of physically attacking another prisoner would be far less serious than were he to attack a member of staff.

**Fomenting violence amongst the most mentally disturbed CSC prisoners had become a tactic employed by “front line” staff in the CSC to deflect and manipulate the rage generated by the regime they imposed.** The senior prison officer Bowen assured Douglas Vinter that both his and Lee Newell’s supervision level would be reduced in order to allow them to share an exercise period in the outdoor cage, and in an unprecedented swiftness of time the “multi disciplinary management team” carried out a “dynamic risk assessment” on both prisoners and reduced their supervision level, thereby allowing staff to place them in the exercise cage together. Officers were then heard to be taking bets amongst themselves on who would prevail in the inevitable fight between Vinter and Newell; following the murder of a young Asian prisoner by his racist cell mate in Feltham Young Offenders Institute a number of years ago evidence [came out] that officers at the jail had organised and provoked fights amongst inmates [*ed. – regular ‘gladiator’ fights*] and then taken bets on the outcome.

**On the 27th November last year Douglas Vinter and Lee Newell were taken from their cells and placed in the small outdoor cage, where Vinter attacked Newell and beat him unconscious. An ambulance was called but delayed for an hour at the prison gates while the prisons security governor Angela Curtis insisted that it’s access to the CSC was made subject to various “security rules”.** Lee Newell lay unconscious in the CSC exercise yard for almost two hours before he was handcuffed and strapped to a stretcher, and then guarded by six prison officers in the ambulance; his supervision level was again increased to it’s usual “high risk” level.

Because of numerous skull fractures, bleeding of the brain and swelling, he was immediately placed into an induced coma on arrival at the hospital. He remains in that coma. It’s likely that he will die but if he does emerge from the coma he will inevitably suffer with severe brain damage.

The CSC management committee at prison service headquarters, composed of segregation unit managers from each of the high security prisons from which most of the CSC prisoners are selected, have decided that despite Lee Newell’s critical condition his placement in the Woodhill CSC remains appropriate. They have also

attempted to suppress all information to the media regarding what happened to Lee Newell, and also refused to inform his family of what happened to him.

Following his attack on Lee Newell, Douglas Vinter told prison officers who surrounded him in the exercise cage – *“This is what happens when you torment and wind me up. I told you I was going to do this and you didn’t care or listen. I told you I was deteriorating mentally and needed a transfer out of here but you ignored me. I am serving a natural life sentence, so what are you going to do now? Give me another life sentence?”* He then walked of his own volition to a separate unit and was placed into “special accommodation”, a sensory deprivation cell where he is now held in clinical isolation. **Claire Hodson and Alan Parkins, the Woodhill CSC governor, say that he will remain in “special accommodation” indefinitely, which means he will be denied all human contact, be fed through a small hatch in the cell door, sleep on the cells concrete floor, and be handcuffed through the hatch in the cell door before being allowed to leave the cell for a shower, during which he remains handcuffed, and one hours exercise each day.** Each time he leaves the cell he is surrounded by seven guards all dressed in full riot gear and holding shields. Alan Parkins has told him that he will remain in the sensory deprivation cell indefinitely, but reassured him that if or when he goes completely insane he will be able to plead diminished responsibility for the attack on Lee Newell when he stands trial for it. Parkins is determined to create the narrative of an irrationally violent prisoner who attacked another prisoner without reason or warning, thereby concealing the role and involvement of CSC staff in what took place.

Prisoners in the CSC who have voiced concerns about what happened have had their risk and supervision levels arbitrarily increased in an attempt to silence them, and the “multi disciplinary management team”, which includes a member of the supposedly “Independent Monitoring Board”, Mary-Anne Dixie, have given this their blessing.

The police who attempted to gain access to the CSC in order to interview prisoners in relation to the matter were prevented from doing so by Alan Parkins who has insisted that he must personally monitor all interviews and communication with prisoners.

All CSC staff [were] in some way involved in what took place; basic grade prison officers, governors, and the entire “multi disciplinary management team” have

personally reviewed the CCTV and camcorder footage of the incident and held a number of group discussions to decide on a version and account of their role in what happened, thereby prejudicing any future legal proceedings.

If he dies Lee Newell will be the second prisoner that died in the CSC last year [ed. – after weeks chained to a hospital bed, left missing an eye and with permanent brain damage from the attack, Lee lived].

Following the attack on Lee Newell the regime in the Woodhill CSC has been significantly hardened and made even more repressive, and the same officers who encouraged and facilitated Douglass Vinter's attack on Lee Newell are now telling the CSC prisoners that they should blame Douglas Vinter for the total lock down of the CSC regime.

What happened in the Woodhill CSC on the 27th November last year suggests a descent into plain criminality on the part of those "supervising" and managing the CSC and an inevitable consequence of the regime that allows those enforcing it to disempower totally those in their custody. The effective de-humanisation of any group absolves those enforcing it of any conscience, and recognition of the humanity of those over whom they exercise an almost omnipotent degree of power, and the relationship of power that characterises the treatment of prisoners in the Woodhill CSC will always be inherently and intrinsically abusive and render the lives of those prisoners extremely vulnerable.

*Close the CSC now!*



ed. – The comrades of Bristol Anarchist Black Cross also published a two-part series on the Close Supervision Centres in particular prior to this, available to read online.

## “INTO HER INNER CHAMBERS”



[ed. – Extract from 'Technocracy, Gender & Reproductive Technology' by David King, written for the webpage of the techno-critical Breaking the Frame gathering in Derbyshire, England. Examines the shifts in the patriarchal understanding of the European medieval age to the patriarchy of modernity, including the penetration of the industrial logic of 'quality control' and the fascistic values of eugenics, and how all this relates to reproductive autonomy for 'womankind'. Alongside some quibbles we have with the outlook of this author, we see the sex-gender system as an ideological spectre, not natural reality, but consider it vital to understand the atrocities carried out in its name, while considering who it benefits in what ways; and which false critics of patriarchy encourage technological/racial domination. As we prepare this article for print in January 2016, the U.K.'s Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority readies to give the verdict on permission to genetically-modified human embryos for experimentation, a key step on the scientist's path to the creation of future G.M. children.]

It is often assumed that the Enlightenment ideals of rationality, liberalism and progress through science are aligned with the liberation of women. Reproductive technologies, as part of medicine are also assumed to be an unalloyed benefit for women, giving them reproductive choice and control over their lives. Although there is truth in this, there is a darker side of the liberal agenda, which can be traced to the origins of modern science in the Scientific Revolution of the 17th Century. This revolution marked a shift in fundamental worldviews throughout European society, and the establishment of technocratic capitalist modernity.

### The Medieval World

[In the medieval worldview of Europe] the earth/nature was seen as female and as an inherently alive and inter-connected whole. There were different shades of this philosophy, including the alchemists' view of the world as a unity of opposing and equal male and female principles. While the male principle is active, the female was thought of as passive and nurturing. For example, it was thought that the heavens were masculine and fertilised the earth through rain (semen). [...] The medieval worldview played a significant role in restraining all-out exploitation of natural resources. For example, in the medieval worldview, our distinction between organic and inorganic substances did not exist: metals were thought to be formed by the secretions of the earth's womb. **As the market economy emerged and with it the demand for minerals, there were major debates in the 16th century about**

**the acceptability of mining, with opponents portraying it not merely as the sin of avarice but as the rape of Mother Earth. Proponents responded by portraying nature as wicked stepmother who refuses to nourish her children.**

Organic metaphors also permeated political thinking, with the image of the 'body politic' being taken very literally. While the nobility subscribed to hierarchical philosophies stressing the active rule of the head, vitalist thinkers like Paracelsus viewed activity and change as immanent to nature, which translated into a [radical] politics which led to his persecution by different states of Europe. In the transition period, in which the stability of the Medieval order was breaking down under the pressure of nascent market capitalism, the relationship between metaphysical ideas about nature, gender, politics and questions of political power were very significant. The break-up of the old order and accompanying social turmoil created widespread existential angst, with fears of chaos, anarchy, and even a crumbling of the laws of nature. **The destructive side of nature (plagues, famines, tempests) began to be emphasised and this was linked to male fears of the unruly and dangerous force of female sexuality.**

Thus the Judeo-Christian idea of the dominion of man over nature and women began to be emphasised, and was allied to a backlash against women who were attempting to escape from their medieval roles and carve out a place for themselves



in the new commercial economy. These politics can be seen clearly, for example in Milton's *Paradise Lost*. On the elite political stage, the conflict was played out in John Knox's *First Trumpet Blast Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*, a polemic against the three Catholic Queen Marys of Scotland and England which emphasised the Aristotelian orthodoxy that the male principle of spirit should rule over the female in order to maintain order in the cosmos. For women of the lower orders,

the male backlash took the more violent form of the witch persecutions, which pitted the hierarchy of the Church against [paganism].

### The Birth of Technocracy

The emerging mechanical and scientific philosophy of the 17th century crystallised first in the writings of Francis Bacon<sup>[1]</sup>, who as Lord Chancellor of England was personally involved in the witch trials. Bacon's major

harlot who must be forcibly subdued through science. In his utopia, *The New Atlantis*, he describes a fully-fledged political technocracy (i.e. a society ruled by scientists), ruled by the Father of its scientific institute, 'Salomon's House.'

Bacon's philosophy was echoed by the aristocratic founders of the Royal Society. In 1664, for example, Henry Oldenburg, the Society's secretary, stated that its intention was to, 'raise a Masculine Philosophy...'

whereby the Mind of Man may be ennobled with the knowledge of the solid Truths.' Despite their view

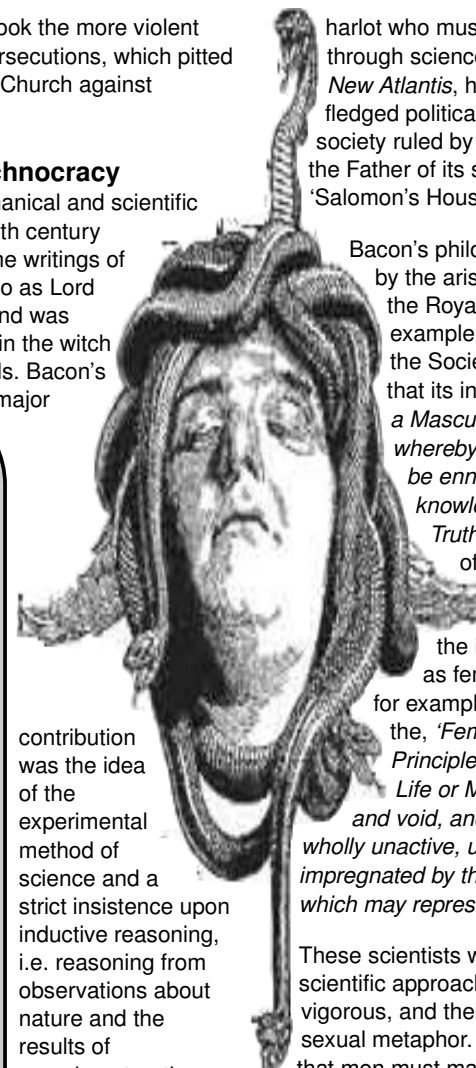
of nature as merely dead matter, such writers continued

the identification of nature as female. Robert Hooke,

for example, viewed matter as the, 'Female or Mother Principle,' which was, 'without Life or Motion, without form, and void, and dark, Power in itself wholly unactive, until it be, as it were, impregnated by the second Principle, which may represent the Pater.'

These scientists were clear that the scientific approach to nature must be vigorous, and their writings are full of sexual metaphor. Bacon proclaimed that men must make peace amongst themselves in order to turn their 'united forces against the Nature of Things, to storm and occupy her castles and strongholds'. Instead of remaining in the 'outer courts of nature,' Bacon exhorted his followers to 'penetrate further... into her inner chambers.' John Webster, a slightly later writer, argued that such an approach would be needed in order to 'unlock her Cabinet', and Oldenburg echoed this tone, arguing that scientists must 'penetrate from Nature's antechamber to her inner closet.' Although modern scientists do not openly express themselves in such terms, examples can be found in the writings of scientists throughout the 19th and 20th Centuries.

During this period, male doctors began the first of many waves of displacing women midwives from the management of childbirth. However, their scientific confidence was not matched by their understanding of how human reproduction worked. Echoing the inherited patriarchal assumption that the active principle was in the male 'seed', these writers insisted that the egg and the womb were no more than passive receptacles for the seed that made no contribution to the child's characteristics. It is rather ironic that my copy of Carolyn Merchant's *The Death of Nature*, the classic description of the



contribution was the idea of the experimental method of science and a strict insistence upon inductive reasoning, i.e. reasoning from observations about nature and the results of experiment, rather than the abstract logical theorising that had dominated the philosophy of the Middle Ages. Bacon, who was a great enthusiast for the new 'mechanical arts', first coined the mission statement of technocracy – 'Knowledge is Power'. **Criticising Aristotle's natural history approach to discovering facts about nature, Bacon stressed that nature would not reveal the secrets hidden in her womb and bosom unless she was 'vexed' through the interventions of the scientist, which he often likened to the techniques of prosecutors and inquisitors.** He often refers to nature as a

"The [medieval] wise woman, or witch, had a host of remedies which had been tested in years of use. Many of the herbal remedies developed by witches still have their place in modern pharmacology. They had pain-killers, digestive aids and anti-inflammatory agents. They used ergot for the pain of labor at a time when the Church held that pain in labor was the Lord's just punishment for Eve's original sin. Ergot derivatives are the principal drugs used today to hasten labor and aid in the recovery from childbirth. Belladonna – still used today as an anti-spasmodic – was used by the witch-healers to inhibit uterine contractions when miscarriage threatened. Digitalis, still an important drug in treating heart ailments, is said to have been discovered by an English witch. [...] So great was the witches' knowledge that in 1527, Paracelsus, considered the "father of modern medicine," burned his text on pharmaceuticals, confessing that he "had learned from the Sorceress all he knew." [...] The witch-healer's methods were as great a threat (to the Catholic Church, if not the Protestant) as her results, for the witch was an empiricist: She relied on her senses rather than on faith or doctrine, she believed in trial and error, cause and effect. Her attitude was not religiously passive, but actively inquiring. She trusted her ability to find ways to deal with disease, pregnancy and childbirth - whether through medications or charms. [...] The Church, by contrast, was deeply anti-empirical. It discredited the value of the material world, and had a profound distrust of the senses. There was no point in looking for natural laws that govern physical phenomena, for the world is created anew by God in every instant. Kramer and Sprenger, in the *Malleus [ed. – 'Malleus Maleficarum: The Hammer of Witches', influential witch-hunting manual of the time]*, quote St. Augustine on the deceptiveness of the senses: "Now the motive of the will is something perceived through the senses or the intellect, both of which are subject to the power of the devil. For St. Augustine says in Book 83: "This evil, which is of the devil, creeps in by all the sensual approaches; he places himself in figures, he adapts himself to colors, he attaches himself to sounds, he lurks in angry and wrongful conversation, he abides in smells, he impregnates with flavours and fills with certain exhalations all the channels of the understanding." The senses are the devil's playground, the arena into which he will try to lure men away from Faith "and into the conceits of the intellect or the delusions of carnality." " In the persecution of the witch, the anti-empiricist and the misogynist, anti-sexual obsessions of the Church coincide: Empiricism and sexuality both represent a surrender to the senses, a betrayal of faith. The witch was a triple threat to the Church: She was a woman, and not ashamed of it. She appeared to be part of an organized underground of peasant women. And she was a healer whose practice was based in empirical study."

- Barbara Ehrenreich & Deirdre English

misogynist philosophy of the Scientific Revolution, is described by its publishers as a 'seminal' (rather than ovular) work.

In Bacon's model of nature, as in that of the other key philosopher of the Scientific Revolution, Rene Descartes, matter is essentially passive and only moves or changes in response to external forces identified as the principle of spirit or God. This follows the earlier aristocratic models of society and the cosmos: it was no accident the first scientific society was named the Royal society. In the mid 17th century, with the work of Isaac

Newton and the founders of the Royal Society, a 'billiard ball' or clockwork model of nature came to dominate scientific thinking, in accordance with Descartes' and Bacon's mechanical model of the universe. It was this 'disenchantment' of nature that legitimated the technocratic drive for complete control and the capitalist projects of exploitation of natural resources without limit.

**At the root of the scientific attitude to nature is a distancing of the perceiving subject from his [sic] object (nature), a severing of relationship between the scientist and nature, which is precisely what scientists describe as necessary in order to obtain 'objectivity'.** In the 1660s, this gendered difference of approach was reflected very concretely in the famous experiments on the vacuum in which scientists placed a bird in a bell jar, and then evacuated the air, killing the bird. According to contemporary accounts, women observers protested vehemently against this, forcing the men to conduct the experiments in the dead of night after the women had gone to bed. It is this distancing of subject from object that, in the second wave of the women's movement in the late 20th century, feminists identified as the 'male gaze', through which men objectify women.

### Reproductive Technologies

The technocratic project of control of nature did not get to grips with human

"Our analysis must encompass the totality of our oppression, that is to say that we should never consciously overlook any part of life that capital has integrated itself into. [...] One aspect of life that we should not overlook is childbirth[...] The onset of primitive accumulation necessitated a new restructuring of power in Europe and an increase in potential laborers. This was at a time when a nation-state's power and wealth was partially defined by the amount of its citizens it had at its disposal. When empires needed these bodies they implemented new state regulations over childbirth. In 16th century Nuremburg, the penalty for maternal infanticide was drowning, and all over Germany the Pro-Natalist crusades went as far as punishing women who didn't show enough of an effort during childbirth. In France, a royal edict of 1556 required women to register every pregnancy, and sentenced to death those whose infants died before baptism after a concealed delivery, whether or not they were proven guilty of any wrong doing. The suspicion under which the midwives – leading to the entrance of the male doctor in the delivery room – stemmed more from the authorities fear of infanticide (the potential of losing their labor power and cannon fodder) than from any concern of the midwives' alleged medical incompetence. With the marginalization of the midwife, women lost the control they had exercised over procreation and were reduced to a passive role in child delivery, while male doctors began to be seen as the real "givers of life". Some midwives in Germany turned spies for the state in order to continue their practice. Most midwives rebelled, instead of adhering to the new guidelines imposed on them, they continued guiding women through the birthing experience the way they always had. Some of these unruly women were called witches, some were murdered, but most continued practicing, only less vocal this time. [...] An important thing to note here is that with all of the turn of the century arguments against midwives: that they were unclean, old-fashioned, ill-equipped, and dangerous; it was in fact in the hospitals where a rise in disease was occurring – puerperal fever (aka childbed fever – a fatal infection that was usually introduced by unhygienic obstetricians), complications (due to the hospitals rigid control of the movements of women's bodies), and fatalities (due to unnecessary interventions). Somewhat quickly the hospitalization of childbirth began to rise. Within a few decades most deliveries happened in a hospital environment. This provided an immense amount of capital to the industry (as everyone [ed. – without state subsidy] now must pay to come into the world). Also accomplished in this is medicalization of childbirth, and this is crucial to an anarchist analysis of childbirth, is the intense regulated control of the process of bringing life into the world. The state decides how (and in some cases when) you are allowed to enter the world." – *Childbirth and Social War*

reproduction until the beginning of the 20th Century, where it emerged in the form of the eugenics movement. In this period, technocracy was an open political movement of scientists and engineers, who argued that the problems of administering industrial society were too complex to be left to democratic processes, and that the running of society should be entrusted to their 'apolitical' stewardship. The eugenics movement was closely allied to the technocracy movement, and contrary to the idea we have inherited of eugenics as an extreme right-wing phenomenon, most eugenicists saw themselves as progressive and humanitarian. **Eugenics was part of the overall managerial tendency in politics that arose as a result of the failure of 19th Century *laissez-faire* capitalism to deal with the social turmoil of industrial mass society. At its centre was the technocratic concept of social control through control of nature, in particular the randomness and mess that arises from human sexual reproduction.** Eugenicists would always begin by asking, "How can we devote so much attention to the breeding of our farm animals, yet do nothing about human breeding?" But its target was women's bodies and reproductive capacities, not those of men.

The gender politics of eugenics appear contradictory unless it is understood as a form of technocracy, fundamentally aimed

at the rational control of reproduction. Some aspects seem very clearly anti-feminist and oppressive of women, for example the tendency to sterilise unwed mothers. It is not an accident that in the classic eugenic study of a poor white US family, the Jukes, which supposedly demonstrated that four generations of the family were criminals, 'feeble-minded', prostitutes etc, the ancestor from whom all these burdens on society were descended was a woman, Ada Jukes. If only she had been sterilised, the eugenicist argued,



society would have been spared the burden of the following generations. Likewise the Supreme Court case, which established the right of US states to sterilise people without consent involved a woman, Carrie Buck.

On the other hand, the eugenics movement (which was always composed of a large proportion of women) presented benefits to women: it was eugenicist women, notably Margaret Sanger in the USA<sup>[2]</sup> and Marie Stopes in England, who pioneered birth control for women, and who founded the Family Planning Association, for example. **Stopes and Sanger always argued that they were relieving women of the burden of multiple pregnancies and caring for huge families, yet it was also very clear that their efforts were targeted at the 'lower' classes.**

The integration of eugenics with the technological control movement of the 20th century (Fordism) is best captured by Aldous Huxley's 1930s novel *Brave New World*. It is most remembered for its vision of artificial wombs and artificial class differentiation through dosing the bottled fetuses with alcohol. In that world, the word 'mother' is a term of abuse indicating something disgusting, whilst women are simply not permitted to refuse sex.

**After World War II, when eugenics had acquired an extremely bad name, the efforts of eugenicists switched to population control in the Third World.** Here again, whilst control of their fertility was undoubtedly a genuine benefit for many women in those countries, the targeting of the reproduction of black women, who were supposedly creating a world population problem, and the coercive nature of many population control programmes reveals the eugenic character of that movement. In the 1970s and 80s the targeting of poor women and women of colour with dangerous long term contraceptives such as Norplant and Depo Provera continued these policies. Although it is often assumed that racist and coercive sterilisation programmes are a thing of the past, recent scandals in Israel<sup>[3]</sup> and the USA<sup>[4]</sup> show that this is not the case.

Throughout the 20th Century, whilst overt eugenics has declined [ed. – before the covert re-launch as trans-humanism in the 21st], human reproduction has become an increasingly technologised process, in which pregnancy and childbirth have become increasingly medicalised and

hospitalised and obstetrics and gynaecology have become the domain of mainly male doctors, with midwives performing an increasingly subordinate role. Technological interventions in reproduction have included hormonal contraception and fertility drugs as well as the disastrous experiences of drugs such as DES and thalidomide. Technologisation of reproduction has created its own logic of quality control, through the development of ultrasound and other prenatal screening programmes. In 1979, IVF was first achieved by Robert Edwards, a committed eugenicist and board member of the British Eugenics Society.

The response of feminists to reproductive technologies has varied depending on their relation to technocracy. Thus, for example, in the early 1970s the radical feminist, Shulamith Firestone, tried to develop a kind of Marxist approach in her book *The Dialectic of Sex*, which argued for the use of technology to liberate women from the burdens of reproduction as the only way to achieve equality for women. Most notoriously, Firestone argued that as in Huxley's *Brave New World*, scientists should develop ectogenesis, i.e. artificial wombs for growing babies outside the body.

In contrast, in the 1980s an international network of feminists calling itself The Feminist International Network for Resistance to Reproductive and Genetic Engineering (FINRRAGE), developed an eco-feminist critique of reproductive technology, arguing that it is part of the patriarchal attempt to appropriate and control women's bodies. Some of these writers theorised that this drive to control women's fertility originates in fundamental male insecurities stemming from men's marginal role in the reproductive process, and argued that the technologisation of reproduction was leading to the removal of the last truly woman-centred aspect of human life from female control. Further generations of feminist writers and scholars have continued to struggle with the contradictions of technocratic progress, control and choice, and women have fought against medicalisation through the natural birth movement for example.

*Some Current Gender Issues in Reproductive Technology*

**IVF:** Although IVF [ed. – *In Vitro Fertilisation*] has now been practised for over 30 years and millions of women have undergone it, there is still a lack of research on the long-term health consequences for women. IVF is a stressful and invasive procedure with

“Geneticists are busy everywhere mapping the genetic pool of humans, animals and plants in order to discover so-far-unknown genetic 'defects'. I should not be surprised if, in the near future, a whole new range of diseases were to be declared. The ideology of both eugenics and sociobiology will provide the criteria for what will be understood as 'healthy' and what as 'defective'. These new hereditary diseases will provide a large market for gene therapy and prenatal diagnosis. The aim of this whole enterprise is to adapt the human being to survive the destructions which *Homo faber* and technological progress have wrought on the environment.” – *New Reproductive Technologies*

“[In his wartime novel *Arrival and Departure*, Arthur Koestler] gives one of its characters, a philosophising Nazi of a kind that really existed in many parts of Europe at that time, a speech giving full vent to Nazi aims: “We have embarked on something – something grandiose and gigantic beyond imagination. There are no more impossibilities for man now. For the first time we are attacking the biological structure of the race. We have started to breed a new species of homo sapiens. We have practically finished the task of exterminating or sterilising the gypsies in Europe; the liquidation of the Jews will be completed in a year or two. Personally I am fond of gipsy music and a clever Jew amuses me in a way; but we had to get rid of the nomadic gene, with its asocial and anarchic components, in the human chromosome[...] We are the first to make use of the hypodermic syringe, the lancet and the sterilizing apparatus in our revolution.” This murderous vision was not confined to Nazis. In less virulent forms, the same view of human possibilities was held in the thirties by much of the progressive intelligentsia. There were some who found positive features even in national socialism. For George Bernard Shaw, Nazi Germany was not a reactionary dictatorship but a legitimate heir to the European Enlightenment. Nazism was a rag-bag of ideas, including occultist philosophies that rejected modern science. But it is a mistake to view it as unambiguously hostile to the Enlightenment. Inasmuch as it was a movement dedicated to toleration and personal freedom, Hitler loathed the Enlightenment. At the same time, like Nietzsche he shared the Enlightenment's vast hopes for humanity. Through positive and negative eugenics – breeding high-quality people and eliminating those judged inferior – humanity would become capable of the enormous tasks ahead of it. Shaking off the moral traditions of the past and purified by science, humankind would be master of the Earth.”

– *Straw Dogs*

significant short-term health affects, notably Ovarian Hyper-Stimulation Syndrome. This condition, in its mild form, can affect up to 30% of women, and there is no clear consensus about how many women are affected by the medium and severe forms, with figures ranging from 1 to 8%. In these cases, blood vessels become leaky leading to the collection of a large amount of fluid in the abdomen. Although figures are unclear, there may be one death per year from OHSS in the UK, but there is no systematic monitoring of the condition. Feminist critics have argued that the standard IVF approach, which uses large hormone doses to produce 10 to 15 eggs, many of which will be of poor quality, imposes unnecessary risks on women. It is sometimes suggested that these high doses are used in order to create a supply of surplus eggs, which can be used in research.

**Egg donation:** These concerns about hormone treatments are especially sharp for women who are donating eggs to other women, since they are not themselves aiming to become pregnant. Such women undergo significant risks and there have been major controversies about the exploitation of women in egg donation. For example, in the 1990s and 2000s, a commercial egg trade operated in Europe, with women from Eastern European countries donating eggs in return for small payments to “fertility tourists” from Western European countries. In some cases the clinics, which were making large profits from this trade, subjected the donors to extremely high doses of hormones, with resultant damage to the donors’ health. There is some evidence of overlap between the criminal networks that traffic in Eastern European women and the egg donation trade. In 2009 the UK changed its policy on egg donation, allowing payments of £750 to egg donors, with the aim of encouraging UK women to make up the shortfall in supply in the UK. Critics such as the No2Eggs Exploitation Campaign argued that these financial incentives were likely to lead to women on benefits and students with large debts taking the risks of egg donation, for purely financial rather than altruistic reasons.

**Surrogacy:** In the UK, commercial surrogacy is not permitted (although substantial ‘expenses’ payments can be made). As a result, an international surrogacy trade has developed centred on India and the Ukraine, with many of the same concerns as those raised by the trade in eggs. In India, whilst clinics are making large profits, surrogate mothers are paid only a small proportion of the overall fee, and often have to sign contracts stipulating that the clinic is not responsible for any damage to the woman’s health as a result of pregnancy and childbirth. The women are often coerced into surrogacy as a source of income by their husbands or

“Technological development proceeds from what it had already transformed and used up towards that which still remains untouched. It is in this sense that [women’s bodies as sites of regenerative power] are, in the eyes of capitalist patriarchy, among the last colonies. These sights of creative regeneration are transformed into ‘passive’ sites where the expert ‘produces’ and adds value. Nature, women and non-white people merely provide ‘raw’ material. [...] From the dominant standpoint, as Claudia von Werlhof has pointed out, ‘nature’ is everything that should be available free, and/or as cheaply as possible. This includes products of social labour. “*The labour of these people is therefore pronounced to be non-labour, to be biology; their labour power – their ability to work – appears as a natural resource, and their products as akin to a natural deposit.*” A number of artificial shifts are thus achieved through fragmenting knowledge. The sources of regeneration and renewal of life are transformed into inert and fragmented matter, mere ‘raw material’ to be processed into a finished product.”

– *Reductionism & Regeneration*

fathers (in India, such work is seen as similar to prostitution, and are obliged to reside in dormitories at the fertility clinic during pregnancy.) In essence, the situation seems little different from baby-farming, and is a particularly unpleasant example of the exploitation of people in developing countries by wealthy Westerners.

**Sex Selection:** The development of ultrasound scanning in the 1980s has enabled the widespread abortion of female foetuses, particularly in India and China. These practices, driven by traditional patriarchal preference for sons as well as complex social factors, have extended the traditional phenomenon of female infanticide and death by neglect of young girls. The result is that in some parts of India the ratio of boys to girls can be as high as 125 boys for every 100 girls, and it is estimated that over 100 million women are missing from the world population as a result of sex selection. In turn, this is leading to significant social problems, including large numbers of men unable to find wives and the resulting increase in trafficking of women into these areas. In the 1990s, India legislated against prenatal sex selection, but the law has never been properly enforced, and the large sums of money to be made in this industry has meant that the problem continues to grow. It appears that the practice has now

spread to some Eastern European countries, such as Georgia.

### Conclusion

The purpose of this post has been to relate issues in reproductive technologies to the overall regime of technocracy, which has been a central element of capitalist modernity[...] based on principles of control and authority over the unruly female that are closely similar to those of traditional patriarchy.

**These fundamental dynamics of technocracy have been played out in the development of reproductive technologies under the banner of eugenics in the 20th Century. The overall trend towards growing technological medical control has followed from the obvious offence that unregulated human reproduction represents to a technocratic social order.**

[...] It is also often argued that these technologies give women more *choice* (that great shibboleth of consumer capitalism), and it cannot be denied that, in some ways, they do. **But like all technologies, they also control us by controlling what the options are, and through the social pressure of a society which thinks that high-tech and control are always best.** No-one has to be forced by the state to undergo pre-natal testing and the result – the termination of 90% of pregnancies involving Down Syndrome, for example – is a foregone conclusion, without anyone having to take responsibility. One thing that placing these developments in an overall framework of technocracy does allow us to understand, however, is that these benefits are often technofixes – technological solutions to social/political problems that fail to address the real causes of the problems.

Provision of contraception to Third World women is a case in point. The suffering of women under the burden of so many children is caused by a combination of patriarchy – men’s insistence on their sexual rights within marriage and producing children – and poverty which makes it a rational strategy to have many children. Instead of addressing these issues, the population control movement of the mid 20th Century descended upon these countries with its technology – contraception/sterilisation, often applied coercively.

A consistent feature of technofixes is that they seem sensible within the overall technocratic order, and so perpetrate that order and the interests that benefit from it. For women in industrialised countries, contraception may have reduced the risk of unwanted pregnancies and sexually liberated them, but it also created a situation in which it became an expectation



that they should always be ready to have sex with men who wished to, rather than genuinely putting women in charge of their sexual lives and reproduction.

One simple thing we can say about the whole process of development of these technologies (as has often been said about technology-led development of Third World countries) is that it is hardly driven by the express wishes of its intended beneficiaries. Rather, it is driven by the logic of technocracy, which may sometimes *partially* help women in *certain* ways.

[T]here can be little doubt of the trajectory of perpetual reproductive and genetic control technologies – not merely the free-market eugenics that is developing right now, but a world in which sex is separated entirely from reproduction so that both may serve as forms of social control, as Huxley predicted. Ultimately, as the 'transhumanists' hope, both may become entirely redundant as humans finally achieve the masculine dream inherent in technocracy from its beginnings – the escape from the material, from embodied existence altogether, as we become entities of pure spirit running in computers. That vision is not merely anti-female, but anti-human.

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1. ed. – Bacon viewed science and capitalism as divine. In addition to his part in the witch-hunts, he was a principle counsel for the colonisation of Virginia, and viewed resistance to the land enclosures going on in Britain as high treason, personally torturing captured fighters for months. While claiming seeking to enlarge the "bounds of Human Empire to make all things possible," he violently crushed those who reached for another life.

2. ed. – Actually, according to Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, "at about the time that Margaret Sanger's mother was a little girl, some elements of [the Popular Health Movement in the United States] were already pushing birth control". Additionally, she made racist statements about aboriginal Australians, lectured to the women's auxiliary of the Ku Klux Klan, and supported restrictions on immigration.

3. ed. – It was uncovered that thousands of Ethiopian immigrant women were being routinely injected with Depo-Provera (a "last resort" contraceptive not otherwise given, that stops menstruation and has been linked to fertility problems and osteoporosis) every three months in Israeli clinics, despite the denial of the Minister of Health. Women were started the jabs while still in transit camps in Ethiopia, some without being told they were being given birth control and many having no idea of the side-effects. Those who knew they what they were being administered risked their immigration to Israel being blocked if they refused, and receiving no further healthcare in the camps.

4. ed. – Coercing inmates of Californian prisons into sterilisation, which was uncovered during 2006-2010. Targeting of black and brown populations for sterilisation with various degrees of medical or financial coercion has been common practice in the U.S.A., where 25-50% of Native American women were also sterilised between 1970 and 1976 (priority selected for being "full-blooded Indian women"), at least a quarter without consent.

## BRISTOL, BRITAIN'S FLAGSHIP 'SMART CITY'

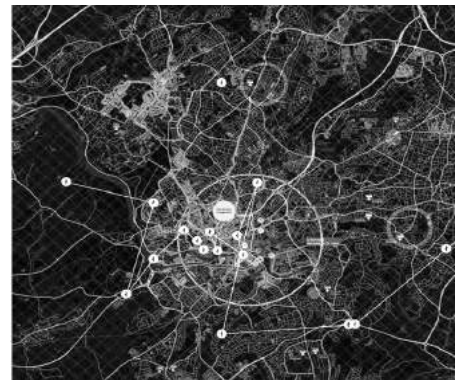
[ed. – Also see the supplement to this volume of *Return Fire*; 'Smarter Prison? – Call for War on the Technology Multinationals', online at [325.nostate.net/?tag=return-fire](http://325.nostate.net/?tag=return-fire) along with other volumes.]

*"We're creating an environment where in a year or two, not five, the whole world will look at Bristol for the future of smart cities."*  
– Dimitra Simeonidou, High Performance Networks Lab, Bristol University

The city of Bristol, south west U.K., has begun a multi-million pound experiment to create the 'smart-city' of the future, which would cement Bristol as a global leader in the telecommunications world. The wider area of Avon (mainly the 'post-industrial' estates of Bristol and Bath) already hosts the largest digital technology sector in the British Isles outside of London, and receives funding from the government as such.

City authorities and allied technological entrepreneurs are working to kit out Bristol with a city-wide 'digital fabric' of the very latest in sensor and connectivity technology, to make it the world's first open 'programmable city'. A high-speed fibre-optic network (making use of disused cable ducting owned by the council) is being combined with a new 'city operating system' that will power an experimental network. In the coming spring of 2016, 1,500 sensor-equipped lampposts are being launched around the city; the vast majority of Bristol will be covered in a Radio Frequency (RF) mesh. This is predicted to revolutionise the way that emergency response, traffic management and other municipal services are handled, and track certain vehicle locations, with eventual alleged trickle-down 'benefits' such as informing residents of parking spaces and air pollution (ahem, from those parking spaces) in an increasingly mechanised and technified environment.

The 'Bristol Is Open' collaboration (between Bristol University, Silver Spring Networks and the city council) are running the project in partnership with NEC, the Japanese IT giant, to hook into other sensor-based technologies for the cities of the 'Big Data' future. 1,200 of the lampposts, along the 'Brunel mile' connecting the central train station with the harbourside commercial district, will act as WiFi nodes in a city-wide 'canopy of connectivity', and the remaining 300, also WiFi enabled, are to be used to test more advanced smart-city capabilities. This data will be managed and processed on the \$18 million BlueCrystal2 supercomputer at the University of Bristol. The supercomputer will run CityOS, an operating system designed specifically to handle communications throughout the smart-city network, designed by Professor Dimitria Simeonidou. As of March last year, the nascent project had already received £5.3 million in funding from the government's 'connected cities' plan, with a total of £75 million-worth of infrastructure and technology available from the city



council, university and a number of commercial partners.

This is the vision that NEC have for eventual life in such a city, according to their website: "A display on your dashboard window alerts you that weather conditions have made your usual route to work less favorable and, subsequently, reroutes your trip to the office based on real-time calculations of optimal conditions. As you pull into a public parking garage, another alert notifies you of the closest parking spot, determined by an estimation of your workplace based on your established commuting patterns. As you approach the office, you receive a reminder that today is Election Day. "Would you prefer to vote at a physical terminal (requiring 15 minutes of travel), or simply to cast your vote using your personal mobile device?" The decision was easy, and after a few taps, you select candidates for mayor, city council members, and citywide legislation. Such a description of a technologized city may sound somewhat far-fetched, even futuristic. But thanks to efforts currently underway in several major Western cities, such a vision is not one of the future but of present reality. Indeed, urban centers have increasingly adopted technologies like Big Data, the Internet of Things, and distributed sensors to produce what many are calling the Smart City of the future."

As well as investigating the potentials for a 'smarter' Bristol, this project is explicitly a test-run for implementing smart city technology around the world. The network has a built-in emulator that allows it to simulate any city in the world; data from New York could be taken and run on Bristol's network as if it were real. The system can then be exported and used elsewhere. **Essentially, Bristol is becoming a city-wide laboratory for Capital's urban favoured environment.**

The sensors will collate vast amounts of raw data, which the council is already equip with various 'Big Data' processing platforms to analyse; Bristol has already opened up almost two hundred of the city's data sets on traffic flows and energy use, crime

trends, targeted advertising, generating new innovative businesses, as well as encouraging citizens to interact with the city in new, digitalised ways. 'Acoustic detection sensors' have also been mentioned; similar uses have been made of microphone-equipped lampposts in major cities of the United States, with audio recording and gunshot detectors linked straight to police targeting 'high crime areas', to be combined with surveillance video. As opposed to the reactions which their use in obtaining convictions have earned across the Atlantic, as a precursor to the Bristol Is Open initiative the PAN innovation team began a four-week project in Bristol during 2013 called Hello Lamp Post, to introduce smart-city technologies more 'softly'. The project's co-creator, Ben Barker, was featured in media at the time. *"Smart cities, where technologies play an important role, tend to be perceived as high on efficiency yet low on warmer, human elements, Barker explains. "Our starting point was a desire to use the city's existing infrastructure to encourage human interaction through storytelling and story sharing." "* In a bizarre mix between Artificial Intelligence and a chat forum, users were offered the opportunity to 'communicate' with street furniture like lampposts, postboxes, and bus stops via text message by using the repair numbers found on these objects as SMS codes. The object would "wake up" and respond in kind with a series of text messages, *"sharing interesting content about that specific location left by others who've come before"*.

**Quite how this counts as human interaction escapes us, but then again we must be missing out on the 'smart' adaptation to a world where everything 'of worth' has a code number, where communication is something that happens through screens, where engagement with each other and the more-than-human world shrinks to an amputated and isolated interface with an algorithm.** (Perhaps the banal and never-ending conversation about nothing which continuously unspools on the social network feeds can hint at the 'warmth' enabled by communication in our era.) The scale of this anthropocentric reduction can be read in Barker's claim that *"what's most interesting about this is that it will be very much an organic, living, evolving thing shaped and re-shaped according to how the people use it"*, as if the total limitations to any relation with a life outside the cybernetic maze were not inherent in the framework. If the consequences of PAN's initial experiment seem trivial, consider the calibre of its sponsors; including IBM, HP, Toshiba...

The managing director of Bristol Is Open, Paul Wilson, imagines a city in which emergency services arrive before anyone has placed a call, as well as using the grid for everything from keeping an eye on *"isolated elderly citizens"* (because, while on the daily treadmill, who has time to spend

with elders in actual person today, and wouldn't an algorithm be just as good?), to *"monitoring pollution levels, carbon emissions and energy consumption[... it is the] mother of all big data systems"*. (One could be forgiven for thinking of stipulations to punish those who don't recycle rigorously enough, or who consume their prescribed ecocidal products or power supplies 'inefficiently', etc...) Such networks are touted as potentially allowing various services which, in mass society, are deemed too complicated for human-scale self-management - such as monitoring one's health via a panorama of apps, to 'smart bins' which will communicate directly with the authorities when they're full. This is forecasted as a step further into the landscape in which everything which can be impregnated with microchips coalesces into an ambient environment, in constant communication with itself and the State; the so-called 'Internet of Things', where, of course, the people (human or not) become simply the 'things'.

**A glance to other 'smart city' models unfolding currently, can inform us of the directions for Big Data (because the global techno-industrial innovators are certainly paying attention to each other).** In Santa Cruz, U.S.A., computer systems analyse historical data to work out the prime places a 'property crime' (a.k.a. class war) is likely to occur at any given time, and direct police to the vicinity automatically. In Amsterdam, Holland, the Smart City Initiative provides a wireless network offering 'serious games' linked to domestic smart energy meters, to domesticate youngsters into the techno-rationality required for the 'eco-industrial' consumer of the future. **NEC themselves have worked for years in the fields of facial recognition technology, military hardware, crowd behaviour analysis technology and Artificial Intelligence, as well as mobile phone and nano-technology breakthroughs, and the Smart Cities provide a playground for their application.** For example, as they again boast on their website; *"NEC's internationally acclaimed biometric identification technologies are now being used on smartphones at South Australian Police and Northern Territory Police to fight crime and enable immediate identification. Biometrics in combination with access control and video monitoring systems will ensure Smart Cities are able to rapidly respond to safety incidents when required."*

The 'Bristol is Open' network means it is most likely that unfolding hi-tech projects (driverless cars specifically are often mentioned) will always come to Bristol first before being rolled out across the country, due to the unprecedented level of connectivity. The system already allows terabites-per-second data transfers for collaborative research and development programmes between global universities (Bristol Univeristy itself having, among other

things, a long history of military, vivisection and genetic-engineering scientists).

Meanwhile, Bristol Is Open has been in talks with leaders from China, India and Singapore who are interested in the model. Even in the more prosperous countries, hunger, homelessness, toxic chemicals in the water supply, the lack of affordable housing are all back on the agenda. **The global elites see it as a high priority to develop 'solutions' for the problems posed by rampant urbanisation, population pressure and 'resource' depletion. Of course the solutions will be only more technology, more control, and more greenwashing** – Bristol itself hosted the title of 'European Green Capital' for 2015 – and more profits for the same as usual. Many technology corporations are now taking on previous responsibilities of the State, and become key gateways to city services, along with so much else.

Almost two hundred years ago, in the midst of the urban squalor of the time, the man who gave his name to the 'Brunel Mile' where the most advanced of the Bristol is Open technology will be premiered was overseeing the construction of the well-known Clifton Suspension Bridge. Islambard Brunel was one of the most important figures of the Industrial Revolution, and the blight of his lauded works have changed the face of the English landscape. (One of his many other famous achievements was the first steam-ship to engage in trans-Atlantic service, smoothing the way for the continued colonisation of the Americas.) However, only days after the ceremony which launched the works was over, rioting broke out in Bristol after a local magistrate threatened a mob with imprisonment while he was opening the new Assize Courts, and the works were stopped. For three days the rioting didn't stop (during which the palace of the Bishop of Bristol, the Mansion House, and wealthy homes were looted and destroyed, along with demolition of much of the gaol), and Brunel himself was sworn in as a special constable. Finally order was restored after cavalry charged with drawn swords through the mob in central Queen's Square, but the uprising had seriously dented commerial confidence in Bristol, and construction of the bridge was much hampered.

At the dawn of the new industrial revolution of Big Data technologies and the converging sciences, a handful of attacks on university laboratory constructors, 'green' technology firms and civil order and tranquility itself have bloomed in the night around the city of Bristol in the last few years. Once again the investors, developers, financiers and technicians present themselves to those of us who, wherever we are, will not tolerate the scientifically-rationalised dystopia they have in store for us.

*War on all things Smart*

# SPOILT FOR CHOICE

[ed. – A text from Italy, written to introduce an eponymous pamphlet detailing the contractors and businesses within the Italian borders which are involved in the MUOS military satellite installations of the U.S. military. Aside from the Italian project, the MUOS consists of three other ground stations (in the U.S., Australia and Hawaii) and five satellites, giving the possibility to coordinate and command the whole crewed and non-crewed military juggernaut on land, sea and in the air from a distance. The military base in Niscemi, where the Italian satellite installation is underway, is in a supposedly-protected cork oak forest. This nature reserve has already been used as one of the main bases for NATO drones in the Mediterranean, for example in the war on Libya. For the record, contrary to the assertions in this piece, we ourselves doubt that capitalism can 'find solutions' for any serious noxiousness that it produces, but these comrades ask us harsh but necessary questions about possible recuperation of environmentalist-centred struggles, which after all capitalism and the state are by this point well-practiced at...]

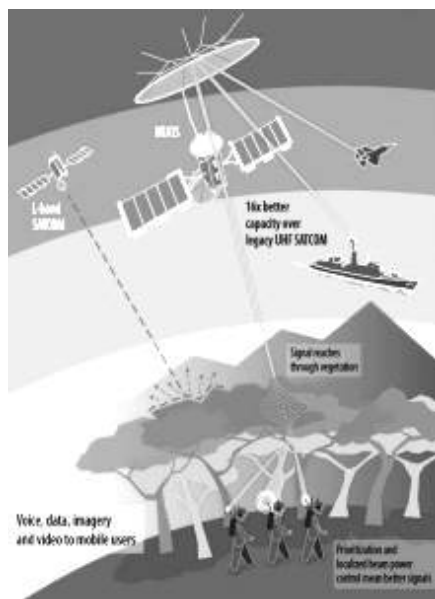
For months now we have been hearing about the MUOS and protests developing in the territory of Niscemi (Sicily) where there are already numerous antennas and one in particular under construction.

We have heard the diatribes of outraged politicians of every hue and the technicians and professors rushing to draw up reports and publish studies on the dangers of electromagnetic pollution and its impact on health and the environment, or on its absolute harmlessness. Words and speeches, sinister political commitments and populist deception.

Interventions by devious people are never lacking when there is a need to take the piss out of people or exploit their possible dissent.

If we venture into what the MUOS actually represents, we see right away how the views of politicians and scientists, authorities and institutions of all kinds and various hacks are aimed at recuperating any dissent concerning this project, which in reality is but one aspect of the problem of war and militarism.

The MUOS (Mobile User Objective System) is a modern system of satellite tele-communications of the US Navy, consisting of five very high frequency geostationary satellites (SATCOM) and four ground stations, including one in Niscemi with three huge satellite dishes 18 metres in diameter and two antennas 149 metres high. **Its intended functioning is to comprehensively co-ordinate the US military systems located all over the world, in particular drones, unmanned aircraft also stationed at Sigonella.**



The MUOS program, managed by the United States Department of Defence, is still in its development stage. Three of the four ground stations have been completed, while that of Niscemi is currently under construction and, it seems, in the completion phase. Of the five satellites, only the first was put into orbit in February 2012. It is expected that the latest satellite will be launched by 2015. Then the system will be fully functional [ed. – actually, the fifth and final satellite is expected to join it in orbit in July 2016, and the constellation is expected to be fully operational in 2017].

The MUOS system will integrate naval, air and land forces on the move anywhere in the world. Intended mainly for mobile users, the MUOS will transmit the voices of the users, data and video communications operating in the UHF frequency band, a frequency band lower than that used by traditional mobile networks. The MUOS will allow the military to communicate in disadvantaged environments, such as woods or forests.

Apart from the project in act, there are 41 operational antennas at the US military base at Niscemi whose aim is transmitting with military submarines since 1991.

**The US military bases and antennas that have been functioning for years are an old problem. The MUOS project is a new one.** These problems intertwine within the broader bleak horizon of

militarism and war, showing how technological development is moving towards the honing of military techniques, making the tools of war more functional



and incomprehensible. Looking at a huge antenna, you cannot imagine what is going on behind that mass of concrete, iron and metal wires: communications between soldiers juggled around by vile military strategists and used to bomb and subject millions of people, drones in action, piloted and guided battleships, helicopters and military aircraft. In a word, *silent and constant war*.

**The complexity of strategic equilibrium, the vast range of the arms market today, the interpenetration of political and military dynamics at the supranational level, technology at a high level of development and acceptance, mean that war, aside from the gory images sporadically and pathetically formulated by the media, is meandering subtly through every aspect of our existence, taking shape under our noses, above our heads, all around us.**

Let's ask ourselves why, despite the apparent scope of repression of a project like the MUOS globally, what is being pointed to is its impact on the landscape, the effects of electromagnetic waves on health, the business interests revolving around the project. Environmental destruction, disease, pollution are certainly not things that we like, but they are only some of the aspects of the machine's oppressive rule.

These are issues for which capital itself can find solutions: disguise the antennas, move them into the asphalt jungles rather than nature reserves, develop scientific methods to diminish the damage caused by electromagnetic waves, bring out laws to make the passage of money in

construction projects transparent, or even to ensure that the people themselves can gain something in financial terms! Here's how fear of getting ill, or seeing one's land destroyed or rendered unproductive are fears that are recuperable. Recuperable, like all fears. What is the point then in joining the chorus of those who raise the spectre of the environmental Holocaust, joining the already dense ranks of "terror"? This would result in being forced to entrust one's hopes to the tools made available by the enemy.

We believe that talking about MUOS means to speak of war, the problem is not disconnected from the overall social situation, but definitely connected with the "normal" conditions of oppression that we deal with on a daily basis. **War is the vital condition, the normal existence of power, as well as social control.** The problem of MUOS then – war and militarism – needs to be seen in a certain light. We intend to make a precise discourse.



We do not want to limit ourselves to highlighting the atrocities of war, the dynamics and the interests of economic, political and military colonialism. We intend to say more. We believe that in a perspective of struggle against militarism, war and the technological development that supports them, it is necessary to make a careful and detailed study of the various types of military presence in the area and their function in the sense of repression (barracks, prisons, military institutions and structures, war industries or those linked to this sector, war propaganda apparatus, companies related to the development of military projects etc.), set out the correct analysis and indicate the means and objectives. We believe it is essential to project ourselves towards a perspective of attack against humans and structures that make war possible.

## BRINGING THE BATTLEFIELD HOME TO THE MILITARY & THEIR COLLABORATORS

**18.01.16, Porto Alegre, Brazil:** "[T]he rule of the machine is not ours..." *Wild Anti-Authoritarian Vandals* place an incendiary device against a tank stationed outside an army barracks. It is attacked again shortly after, and is withdrawn. "We are definitely unsuitable for the functioning of the society based on the rule over all, over the earth, over all beings. [...] This action is not an isolated case, we are brothers in this action and intention with a flurry of actions around the world"; mentioned are the occupations and blockades against a Monsanto plant in Argentina, Andean indigenous struggles, etc.

**13.12.15, Rethymno, Greece:** *Anarchists carry out an incendiary attack against the Military Officers Club, to point out that "the role of the army is none other than repressing (we are aware that the army plays a decisive role in repressing migrants and refugees at Evros and the islands), cultivating a national esprit among executioners-citizens who are eager to swallow any nationalistic propaganda, and making sure the Greek military staff have excellent cooperation with their colleagues at NATO. For all the above and even more reasons, we chose to bring the fire there where they peacefully sleep and eat."*

**24.10.15, Pont-de-Buis, France:** *Report-back from the day, during a mobilisation against police weaponry that contextualised this demonstration at the NobelSport weapons factory: "Three hundred people descend slowly toward the gates. The crowd stops as it arrives at the entrance to the bridge, with some folks sitting on the ground, others pointing green lasers at the cops' eyes. [W]e release fireworks, rockets, rain down on them with railroad ties, bolts and stones, as if attempting to shatter the screen put in place for us. In the end, Molotov cocktails send it up in flames. As we slowly return, clamps and grappling hooks are passed through the crowd, which at this point is proceeding directly alongside the outer perimeter of the factory. Pieces of fence are ripped down, others carefully cut from top to bottom. A portable angle grinder goes to work on a gated entrance to the factory. Tear gas begins to rain down, half of it bouncing off the inner fence, before falling back toward the bewildered cops. Rocks and torn-up concrete again showers the police, with the occasional burst of flames. Finally, the demonstrators come together at the intersection of the street leading back to the camp, with a common élan: we arrive together, we leave together."*

**06.10.15, Santiago, Chile:** "[D]irect attacks against the institutions and representatives of power continue to propagate the need for individual and collective revolt for the destruction of the existent social order as our search for freedom continues. Armed with these ideas transformed into a few grams of gunpowder, a few liters of gasoline and a trigger mechanism that allowed us time to make a safe exit, we launched an incendiary attack [in the early hours] against the Chilean Air Force Personnel Command Religious Service building located on Cienfuegos street..." *Informal Anarchist Federation / International Revolutionary Front (F.A.I./F.R.I.) 'Fire & Consciousness'*

**23.02.15, Kent, U.S.A.:** *Two passenger vans of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (college-based program for training commissioned*

*officers) burn on the Kent State University campus. The Lieutenant Colonel orders all Armed Forces cadets to wear civilian clothing while on campus afterwards.*

**05.11.14, Valparaíso, Chile:** *Masked fighters attack the Naval Telecommunications Subcentre with rocks and molotovs, injuring a Marine. Naval Guard open fire as the assailants escape, but without reports of anyone being wounded.*

**27.08.14, Bristol, U.K.:** *In the build up to the NATO summit in South Wales (alleged to be the most important since the fall of the Berlin Wall, with the world facing an unprecedented number of security crises), anarchists set fire to a minibus and car of the army and air force cadets. "In recent years, Schools Commissioner Elizabeth Sidewell suggested that every school should have a combined Cadet force "to increase the armed forces everyday contact and influence with young people" in order to ensure the continued support of the population. The presence of the military even in schools is presented as just a natural part of 'community' and that competition, discipline and top down obedience are necessary characteristics."*

**28.11.13, Tokyo, Japan:** *Yokota U.S. Air Force base, part of the long running occupation of Japan, is attacked with an improvised twin rocket launcher. The weapon consists of two metal tubes dug into the ground, with their upper ends pointing towards the base, connected to a simple timing device. There are no injuries when the rockets strike the base.*

**04.11.13, Teramo, Italy:** *Before a presentation of a new book about the 'heroes of war' in the town hall, locks are glued and tags left in hostility to the military and in remembrance of Augusto Masetti. (The latter, conscripted into the army to take part in the colonial expedition in Libya, with the cry of "Long live anarchy!" shot a Colonel who was addressing Bologna barracks in 1911.)*

**23.09.13, Bandung, West Java:** *An 'Indonesian Fraction' of the Earth Liberation Front (E.L.F.) use two incendiaries to torch a factory for bulletproof vests for military and police. "For their loyal services as guard dogs for the domestication of life, they are equipped with combat equipment that is used against free will and the aspirations of wild life [in] the face of the war that is addressed to their masters."*

**10.03.13, Brussels, Belgium:** *Considerable fire damage to an officeblock occupied by Siemens, as well as by Fujitsu and Cytec. Comrades of the area remind us that "Siemens is a big player on the international market of industrial technologies destroying the planet (from weaponry to nuclear, from factory technologies over train transport to household appliances); Fujitsu excels in the technological development and telecommunication transforming the world into a mega-machine with the human being as an accessory, while Cytes is a chemical plant producing high quality plastic like you can find everywhere on the fields, beaches, in the rivers and in the middle of the oceans."*

**15.07.12, Toribio, Colombia:** *About 400 indigenous people destroy communication towers of the military base after the president announced that they will not demilitarize an inch of the region, and fill in all the trenches in the area (supposedly a nature reserve) to restore ecological balance. This, despite pledges of the an 'indigenous leader' that the people wouldn't attack the army or steal their equipment.*



# 'TORN FROM OURSELVES'

**06.06.12, Hannover, Germany:** *A few weeks after European Union troops in the German-led mission to Somalia are permitted to fire on so-called 'pirate positions' on land, antagonists cut a hole in the fence to access the supply centre of the German Army, setting a large fire. Of the vehicle fleet, six big transport vans, three smaller vans and four cars are destroyed. "[W]e still see ourselves confronted with a German army which wages wars also starting from Hannover, in order to secure resources and to command trading routes, an army which trains assiduously in order to repress revolts and insurrections. [...] An army [which] is going to be deployed against the inner enemy. The deployment of Tornados against the demonstration in Heiligendamm [ed. – against the G8 summit of world leaders] has been a mere spectacular opening. [T]he German army strengthens its recruitment attempts in schools, universities and jobcentres. Everywhere the military pushes itself into the middle of society, resistance is possible."*

**11.06.11, Butovskiy forest, Russia:** *Arson of an underground service booth containing electrical measuring and control devices providing utilities to a military intelligence site. Ten days prior, two more military service booths had been burned. "[M]ore than 800 trees were cut during earthworks for this [supply line] to even appear in the forest. To hamper service brigades further, we also spiked the road they use for maintaining the system." All actions by F.A.I./E.L.F. 'International Network of Action and Solidarity'.*

**31.03.11, Livorno, Italy:** *A package bomb from the Informal Anarchist Federation is delivered to the Ruspoli barracks of the Parachutist Brigade Commando, which serves in Afghanistan. The blast injures the Lieutenant Colonel, chief of general staff of the Brigade, leaving injuries to his face and legs and leading to the amputation of three fingers of his hand.*

**31.10.10, Trento, Italy:** *Five hooded anarchists disrupt a conference being held at the Faculty of Sociology on security and the role of Italy in 'peacekeeping' missions ("the twenty-one theatres of war in which – from the Middle East to Africa – Italian troops are currently engaged") in the presence of two officers of the Carabinieri national military police, throwing red paint and smoke bombs. The professor of the Faculty of Law and one of the officers are taken to the hospital. "War needs a wide complicity of weapons factories, military bases, research centres (also universities, including Povo), lies in the mass media, conferences of propaganda. We do not want to be complicit with the massacres of democracy. That's all. We will not leave those who live in war in peace."*

**23.10.10, Dhaka, Bangladesh:** *Around ten thousand people of forty villages torched an army camp in Rugganj, at the outskirts of the capital, against the land-grabbing efforts of the army to build quarters for their officers. Some ruling party leaders along with several high police officials were beaten. The army evacuated their members from four camps by helicopters.*



[W]e must come to a place where we can say that we do not know for certain what gendered existence was like before civilization. And yet this revelation in no way alters our certainty that gender as we know it begins with civilization. If we invoke an orientation to an outside of civilized gender, then we are actually invoking another mystery, an ineffable which evades definition and capture. What would it mean to participate in life or death struggle against gender without knowing what existed before it? This would mean pursuing an outside which presents itself to us as shadows and chaos. It would mean fighting for the *wild*, without recourse to the *natural*.

**[...] What we've elsewhere called queer desire is a tendency toward this primordial chaos. The task is to live it.**

The journals of countless missionaries, explorers and anthropologists show that their accounts are tainted by their civilized attitudes toward gender and sexuality, but also that one of their primary operations is to force those attitudes upon the people they study. In *Witchcraft and the Gay Counterculture* [ed. – see **'To Create & Maintain Their Wealth' / 'Sensuality, Magic & Anarchist Violence'**], Arthur Evans points to several of these, including a rather humorous example of the Greek historian Diodorus Siculus' disgust at the behavior of Celtic men in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC: *"Although they have good-looking women, they pay very little attention to them, but are really crazy about having sex with men. They are accustomed to sleep on the ground on animal skins and roll around with male bed-mates on both sides. Heedless of their own dignity, they*

*abandon without a qualm the bloom of their bodies to others. And the most incredible thing is that they don't think this is shameful."*

All of this points to the great flaw of anthropology in regard to the question of gender. As the existence and universality of gendered categories is taken for granted, their accounts (and often their actions) will always function to enact a violence upon a wild range of human experience, severing it from its whole context and recounting that experience as an amputated and gendered one. **This isn't to say that we shouldn't read these stories. Instead it instructs us on how to read them.** If we can glean any useful direction from them, it is by reading these scientists as we would read any other enemy; critically, and with attention to the secrets hidden between the lines. And even when we can distill this or that, we still only have one story, from one culture, in one moment. To universalize these stories as representations and truths about all of humanity, as is often done by primitivist anthropology, is to falsify our understanding and erase an infinity of other possibilities and stories of people beyond civilization's snares. It is a reverence for this infinity which sets our inquiry apart from a *scientific* one. Science, after all, is also one myth among many. It is different only in that it refuses all stories but its own.

Some interpret these stories to mean that Patriarchy is one of the first pillars of civilization to emerge from domestication. Others glean that the gender division is the first duality, which makes domestication possible. Both versions draw circles around a third possibility:

Gender *is* domestication.

The two supposedly distinct phenomena appear as mutually constituting because they are one and the same phenomenon. Earlier we said that domestication is the capture of living things by something non-living. It is also the process where capture is internalized by living beings who are then shaped into pre-determined roles.

*"When a path seems familiar to us we should go off it and look for the unknown, the wild, the free one. We must glance at the horizon and say: 'I am coming to you even if we never meet'."*

– Giannis Naxakis  
[see *Return Fire* vol.2 pg74]





The non-living thing is immortal and continues long after its captives are dead, and that it is constantly accumulating new lives in order to reproduce itself. **Gender is precisely this non-living institution which tears individuals away from themselves and reconstitutes them as a pre-determined role.** Gender would be an empty husk if it wasn't for its constant capture of new bodies; bodies which in turn give it life. Isn't the first incursion of Civilization into the life of a wild newborn always to proclaim its gender? It is the first separation which gives rise to all others. Gender is the cipher through which Leviathan categorizes and understands each and every one of the beings trapped in its entrails. A whole destiny of experience is inscribed on our bodies from it.

**We should also remember that we previously identified a theme where domesticated people invoke the image of those they are not and never were to justify their own machinations and violence. In gender, we see all the ways that the gender binary is naturalized as sex and projected into pre-history as a way of explaining and rationalizing (essentializing) all of these experiences of violence. We are told those assigned female are meant to be mothers, and therefore it is in their nature to endure pain, to be caretakers, to submit to external authority. Those assigned male are virile hunters and warriors, violence and rape are supposedly intrinsic to their nature. Homosexuals are aberrations in nature, and thus they are fated for exile in their short, brutal and diseased lives. Every mask of the natural is only ever a lie told by Leviathan to justify its own activity.**

An understanding of *gender as domestication* is supported by the inquiries of a handful of anti-colonial theorists of gender such as María Lugones, Andrea Smith and Oyèrónké Oyèwùmí. Smith, for example, horrifyingly illustrates the use of sexual violence as strategy of Leviathan's conquest of the Americas. More so, she argues that colonialism is itself structured

by sexual violence. Lugones, as another example, argues that gender itself is violently introduced by colonial civilization. She says it is consistently and contemporarily used to destroy peoples, cosmologies and communities in order to form the building ground of the 'civilized West.' She argues that the colonial system produces different racialized genders, but more importantly *institutes gender itself* as a way of organizing relations, knowledges and cosmic understanding. This is useful because it refuses a universal or natural understanding of Patriarchy that lacks a critique of racial and heteronormative colonialism. Instead, her argument helps us to describe gender as something that spreads, consumes and destroys. She describes this process as the Colonial/Modern Gender System. This system entails the naturalization of the sexual binary, the demonization of a racial and hermaphroditic other, and the violent eradication of everything outside civilization: third genders, homosexuality, gynocentric knowledges and non-gendered existence, etc. Oyèrónké Oyèwùmí in *The Invention of Women* describes how gender was not an organizing principle in Yoruba society prior to colonization. She says that patriarchy only emerges when Yoruba society is "translated into english to fit the western pattern of body reasoning." She locates the dominance of civilization's gender system in its *documentation and interpretation* of the world. "Researchers always find gender when they look for it."

Within [ed. – specifically European] colonialism, new subject categories were created by western Civilization and were racialized and engendered as the foundation of the new colonial state. **This creation process is composed of several operations: the introduction and entrenchment of gender roles, the imposition of Male gods, the formation of Patriarchal colonial government, the displacement of people from their traditional means of subsistence and the violent institution of the Family.** These operations serve as a revision which recasts and genders tribal life and spirituality. **This engendering does more than create the victimized category of women, but also constructs men as collaborators in domestication.** Lugones cites the British strategy of bringing indigenous men to English schools where they would be instructed in the ways of civilized gender. These men would work within the colonial state to deprive women of their previous power to declare war, bear arms and determine their own relationships. She also cites the Spanish

strategy of criminalizing sodomy among colonized populations, intertwining it with racialized hatred of the Moors [ed. – *Muslim colonists of the majority of the Iberian peninsula between the 8th century until Christian re-conquest eight hundred years later*] and other 'primitive' people.

These theorists employ stories and examples of 'third genders' not as a literal description of a three gendered system, but instead as a place holder for the infinite range of bodily possibility which exists outside the colonial system. They argue that domestication has to be imposed as gender in order to disintegrate all the communal and free relationships, rituals and overlapping means of survival. **And as the civilized ideal of racial gender is naturalized, everything outside of itself is fair game for capture, domination and reshaping. Colonialism itself is often described through the racial and sexual metaphor of the white male explorer uncovering and pillaging the dark female continents, forcing her to submit and planting the seed of civilization.**

From this perspective, we can recognize all the incidents of gendered and racial violence in our lives as *repetitions of this first capture*. Sex work, abusive relationships, body dysmorphia, marriage, sexual abuse, familial constraint, date rape, gang rape, queer bashing, psychiatry, electroshock therapy, eating disorders, domestic labor, unwanted pregnancy, fetishization, emotional labor, street harassment, pornography: **each instance is a moment where we are torn from ourselves, taken by another, captured and determined as a brutal repetition of the primary rupture which denied us a life lived by and for ourselves.** In this schema, the assimilation and medicalization of queer and transgendered people can be understood as a re-capture of rebellious bodies. Police murder and racist vigilantism can likewise be understood as functions of this capture.

It is worth noting here that to understand *gender as domestication* is crucially different from understanding *patriarchy as a consequence of domestication*, in that the former is a break from the trap of essentialism. None of the above is limited to one subject of the gendered world. Rape, for example, is not solely the experience of women (as is often claimed by various regurgitations of second wave feminism), but is a disgustingly widespread experience among people of all genders. The assertion that any form of gender violence is the exclusive property of one category of people would be laughable if it weren't for the litany of horrors which serve to disprove it. More sinisterly, these type of essentialist assertions obscure and shame those who experience an entire range of

very real experiences of gender violence. **Situating gender as domestication is a way to understand gender violence outside of an essentialist and white framework.** Without this understanding, all theories which attribute some natural dimension to sex/gender (from eco-feminist to Marxist feminist) are structurally unable to account for the violence, capture, and exclusion experienced by anyone who deviates from the gender binary or the heterosexual matrix. These ideologies will expand to pay lip-service to queer and transpeople, but they never alter the structure of their theory. This amounts to little more than the liberal politics of inclusion. If, however, we understand gender as something which captures us, rather than something natural to us (or extracted from our biological existence), we can begin to analyze all the methods of domination experienced by queer or transgender people. Brutality and exclusion come to be recognized as the policing methods by which individuals remain captured; assimilation and exploitation represent a more sophisticated capture. From here I can see the line which binds together the boys who called me *faggot* as a teenager and the gay men who would pay me for sex a few years later. Everything about the refusal of gender follows from this. The criticism of identity, assimilation, medicalization or any technique of the self becomes meaningful once it is placed in this continuum.

[...] In the same way that gender splits bodies and marks them for circulation, race further elaborates this separation. Those captured as black women, for example, were circulated within the slave system and marked as hyper-sexual, perverse, and strong; justifying their rape, hard labor and forced reproduction. The children they produced were taken from them and circulated, while they themselves were forced to wet nurse the white children of their masters. **The racist figures of the mammy and the sexually aggressive woman were (and still are) put to use to justify the circulation and domination of the bodies of black women.**

[...] It is up to us to locate this dynamic of bodily and spiritual domestication as being the foundation of all gendered violence, and not simply of the violence against women. We've already said that no gendered violence belongs to any one category, but it bears repeating. This dynamic is at much at play in the systematic abuse of young boys by priests as it is in the gang rape in military barracks and fraternities, as it is in sex slavery in prisons. **The circulation of bodies is obvious in these extreme instances, but it is also more subtle: in advertising and pornography (gay and straight), in dating (of the monogamous or polyamorous varieties), in sex work and**



Air past its sell-by date  
 expired soil  
 not swimming  
 dead in the water  
 stuck in limbo  
 lying in-state  
 lay-by breakfast  
 fast-food vomit  
 open-air concert  
 paying through the nose  
 a bird's-eye view  
 of a clearfelled landscape  
 dead-end job  
 suspended in time  
 crash-course in love  
 marriage in outerspace real-estate  
 double-yolker battery-egg  
 to free-range twins  
 with restricted living

solar-powered electric chair  
 eco-friendly execution  
 greenwash propaganda  
 cardboard funeral  
 for an ethical death  
 wind-powered hearse  
 is the direction forward

a readily complying crimestopper  
 in the age of speed-dialing  
 your fingers are only millimetres  
 away from the SatNav  
 to help you locate your grave  
 they say every screen opens up  
 yet another window of  
 opportunity  
 (all eyes fixed)  
 another nail in the coffin  
 that seals/steals  
 your imagination.

**service work, in the technophilic ways we cruise, and in the ways we learn. It is present in the 'my' which always corresponds to boyfriend, wife, daughter, partner.** It is what remains unspoken in initiatory rites of secret orders of husbands, rapists and jailers. All of it – from the most abominable to the most minute – is the unending dynamic of bodily capture, spiritual submission, and circulation.



Windows broken, slogans painted at Haliç University in Istanbul, Turkey, 01.05.14



# A FLOURISHING MOVEMENT & A LABORATORY OF REPRESSION

– Interview with a Mexican Comrade

Translated from the French-language anarchist journal *Des Ruins* #1

1. Can you introduce yourself?

I align myself with an anarchism of revolt, of rage and action that leaves full scope for individual autonomy that, in general, [organised] structures know how to stifle so well. I have many doubts about organised anarchism and difficult relationships with it. In theory, I think that an organisation with clear anarchist principles (like the Spanish CNT [ed. – *National Confederation of Labour, anarcho-sindicalist trade union*]) can be a good tool. In practice, it's obviously more complicated. In any case, it's an eternal debate and there have always been points of contact between tendencies, more than we usually say.

In any case, I think that the existing organisations offer an anarchism that's dusty, distant from action. As for me, I therefore remain committed to evolving, according to affinities with groups or conscious individuals, in maintaining an affirmed libertarian position, within social movements if there should be this work. Generally speaking, I consider that many current professions of anarchist radicalism are often smokescreens allowing them to make surprising leaps from the basic principles, and to display a beautiful demagoguery in the discourse and historical interpretation of their own movement.

While the re-appropriation and critical reevaluation of anarchist history – the struggle against the demagogic discourses – are important issues, not in the aim of leaving people in total doubt (which is what so many professionals of pseudo-deconstruction do so well), but rather to clarify strong collective and individual perspectives, to struggle with more relevance and sharpen our weapons. These objectives can only be achieved through trusted libertarian relationships between individuals and by a discourse of rupture.

2. From here in France, we often hear more spoken about – and contacts are equally more numerous from – Chilean, Argentine or North American anarchism. Can you try to identify some specificities and similarities of the Mexican movement with these other countries?



After the Magonista's defeat<sup>[1]</sup>, the institutionalisation of the Mexican Revolution and the integration of the labor movement in the '20s, the Mexican anarchist movement of action had more or less disappeared. There was a certain libertarian revival from the '90s, particularly through the punk scene. The anarchist movement today consists of a fairly large number of collectives, mainly in a few big cities. Libertarian thought and practices are developing very rapidly and evoke a lot of interest.

As for the difference with other countries on the continent, the production of theory here is still very weak, without doubt due to anarchism oriented towards action being relatively new, the difficulty of getting a hold of materials, the absence of spaces to meet (they can be counted, for the country, on the fingers of one hand). There are many exchanges, discussion, and relationships between individuals and collectives of different tendencies (anarchist and anti-authoritarian): at the same time because the state of mind is very positive and open, and also, in my opinion, because the lines of these groups are still very vague. Relatively often, there are positions or actions that one could find to be very surprising in a country where an anarchist presence is more rooted, and sometimes very ambiguous things. In a country where the struggles are part of daily life, where the social movement is large and active, that knows a strong history of local resistance or guerrilla movements, there exists a real dynamism, of experience, a strong involvement of individuals on the ground. **It seems**

to me that the primary specificity of Mexican anarchism is to be in its ties to communitarian struggles, in particular the region's indigenous peoples. With the recent furthering of the process of indigenous autonomy in the majority of the regions of the country, these ties are strengthening. Which poses quite a few questions.

3. We can easily affirm with certainty, then, that the anarchist movement in Mexico is a young movement. I imagine that this implies both some qualities and some faults. We could, for instance, lament the lack of critical or theoretical analysis, which probably must be felt in practice. But on the other hand, Mexico being a particularly socially violent country, the level of violence that comes from the movement is very symptomatic of this. We could take as example the group *Individualidades Tendiendo a lo Salvaje (ITS)* which claimed several assassinations of scientists [ed. – actually to date there has only been one confirmed fatality from actions they've claimed; see *Return Fire vol.1 pg71*], or several attacks signed by the FAI [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.2 pg44*] or [the Mexican chapter of] the CCF [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.1 pg40*] of which the level of intensity is probably higher than in the rest of the world. Thus, we find ourselves with an inverse situation to many countries, where the practical experimentation is much more developed than the more theoretical and sometimes detached. Could you share your feelings on this with us, and try to describe the reception that armed-struggle-ist theories could have amongst comrades?

It is certain that the practices suffer from the lack of theoretical analyses. It seems to me to be a fundamental point, even if things evolve and improve. There remains, in Mexico, including in the anarchist movement, a certain admiration for the movements of armed struggle of the guerrilla variety. These movements were very strong in the '70s-80s, and continue to exist, several which are active in the country. We sometimes find, in certain



11.06.11: Thirteen capitalist stores destroyed in Ciudad Juarez at Las Torres shopping centre, after an arson by Conspiracy of Cells of Fire (Mexico) / Informal Anarchist Federation 'Chihuahua Section'

communiqués of activist groups, some pronounced militarist emphasis a bit problematic for some anarchists. But in the majority of cases, these communiqués more resemble those coming from [anarchists in] Greece or elsewhere. The case of ITS is a bit different: like they clearly say in a recent interview with Contra Info, they don't claim to be anarchist. And the possible comparisons stop there.

It doesn't seem to me that the social violence known to the country actually evolves the practices of the social movement or of the anarchist movement (taken as a whole) towards being more violent. These consequences are, however, important: infiltration, weakening or quasi-devastation of the centres of struggle in certain parts of the country. **The insurrectionalist practices have only recently known a certain popularity, in the poor neighbourhoods of Mexico City for instance. There are probably, at least in part, a very logical response to the military occupation these neighborhoods (and the country in its entirety) are known for, where it is practically impossible to go for a walk without finding yourself in front of units of diverse and varied armed forces. And perhaps also to the recent establishment of narco-traffickers from cartels, who enormously weaken social links, make difficult collective struggle and favour clandestinity.** The practice of violence is part of the Mexican social movement, and even more so indigenous communities. Armed communities are far from the exception. Their very solid 'formation' is born from diverse experiences (colonisation, the Mexican revolution, guerillas, etc) which makes their preparation and their capacity for action truly impressive. Which is why comrades frequently visit them and draw teachings from them.

4. In fact, in regards to the struggle of indigenous populations, they are rarely critical of nationalism, or the concepts of a "people", of "nation", of spiritual leaders or earthly leaders, who are however very often present in these communities. We know that numerous comrades, from South America to Canada, are implicated in their struggles, but don't always demonstrate a critical attitude towards these conceptions. Is this also the case in Mexico? And could you tell us more on this subject?

I think that there is a lack of critical reflection among many anarchists, of all tendencies, on what could be encompassed in certain community demands. It seems to me that it is too common, that this exists for a long time in the movement, and that it touches the fairly

taboo question of demagoguery: **the need to get closer, to be involved in the struggles, often meaning a casualness concerning our own conceptions, a lack of affirmation of what we are and what we want, under the argument of opening, of solidarity with the oppressed, to not shock people, etc.**

It is essential, in my mind, to refine our analyses and our positions on this theme: to know what

we support in the struggles and the demands, and what seems to be contrary to us to the idea of freedom, emancipation, etc. Indigenous communities make up perhaps the *avant-garde* of the Mexican social movement. The fact remains that numerous demands, conceptions and workings are problematic: identitarian demands, forms of traditional authority, idealisation of the community, internal inequalities, etc. Whether many hope to hide them or only mention them quickly to minimise the effects doesn't change much.

The virtual absence of critical texts on Zapatismo [ed. – *culture of acclaim around the Zapatistas*<sup>2</sup>], for a movement of such a large scale, that many know from experience (the communities welcome many people), that in general publishes texts of weak theoretical and analytical content, says a lot about it. Or the European analyses of different indigenous struggles, often strongly tinged with essentialism, and which display schematic readings of the indigenous world. This is filled by many more contradictions and issues that don't give a hint of these texts. We only rarely mention the infiltration of ideologies in the communities (socialism, Marxism, etc), the relationships with "modernity" and the outside, their long tradition of organisation (and the phenomenon of bureaucratisation of their structures), the forms that take the universal tension between people and community (the important departure of youth towards the US, including in Zapatista communities, for instance, the aspirations, the forms, the "deviances", etc.)

I think that the demands focused on culture, costumes, traditions, very present in Zapatismo and in the struggles of the communities, often obscures ambiguous notions for those who are attached to individual freedom: religion, practices tainted by authoritarianism (concerning age, status, for example), detainment of people in frameworks and defined

practices. In Juchitán, in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, where a very strong struggle is taking place against the wind turbines, several demands of the Popular Assembly of the Juchitán People are very conservative: strengthening (Catholic)

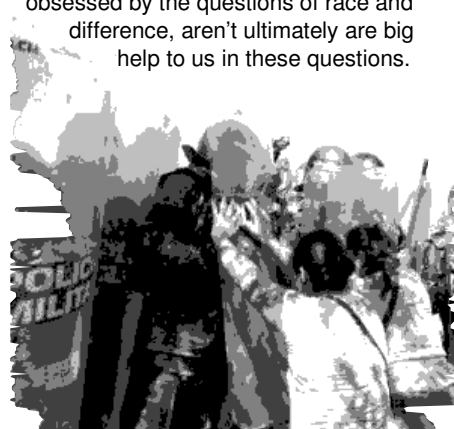
religious practices, wearing traditional Zapotec clothing. And their seeing in the *Muxes* (trans people) the testimony of an astounding freedom of morals, that reveals a very limited

analysis of Zapotec society to us. I don't believe that the objective is to leave out indigenous struggles or to denounce, with a very intellectual venom, the peculiarities of communities.

Its necessary to know them, to understand them. The processes that unfold are interesting, like many practices, activities, understandings. Many comrades who struggle there demonstrate an impressive courage and persistence. **But more of a critical perspective (that we invoke everywhere else) is essential. At least we don't want to continue to visit communities where it happens that we, anarchists, are quietly served by women, where we kindly assist elder's councils (which in the demagogic language transforms into "assemblies") or in traditional marriages, and keep quiet about our differences and reject them as secondary seems to us fitting, appropriate and coherent. All this implies a confrontation of ideas, the preparation, the rejection of the idealisation of other societies (of which many of us have a penchant for). It's much more difficult that the outrageous simplifications which we are used to on minority societies.** And the "anarchist anthropologists", the university thinkers and the new libertarian "currents", obsessed by the questions of race and difference, aren't ultimately are big help to us in these questions.



Volcanes city bus torched by anarchists, in solidarity with the fight against wind-power megaprojects in Istmo de Tehuantepec and the "artificialized life that arises from 'civilized progress'..."





5. It's very interesting... This "demagoguery" that you speak of, we find it over here especially in the struggles on the side of migrants or homeless people, or any other "category" of which the struggle is generally related to the immediate needs rather than to more general aspirations. But even if we could believe that the inspiration of these struggles today is uniquely the Left, we would be mistaken, since the autonomous movement of the '70s and after generally centered its struggles on the issues of needs too (through rent or electricity strikes, auto-reductions [ed. – public collective shoplifting] inspired by humanitarianism, etc.), a tradition which we, anarchists, are a few of those trying to take apart today. But it's a tradition that doesn't exist in Mexico, for instance. One wonders a bit, as a result, what are the most prominent tendencies in the radical milieu in Mexico? Do the anarchists have lots of theoretical space to move and create, or is the terrain already, as it is here in France, undermined by tendencies barely critical of authoritarianism?

It's a difficult topic. What you say is true, and at the same time the problem of the relevance to participate in movements and those of methods of intervention is always posed to anarchists. What is quite embarrassing, in my mind, is rather that which currently occurs a bit everywhere in the world: a barely critical active participation, the lack of highlighting of our practices and clear aims. It seems to me that Mexican anarchists have a fair bit of room to move: organisations that have long ambiguous history, are authoritarian and alienating don't exist here. Authoritarianism comes rather from the substantial number of Marxist organisations. In certain cases, this can come also from anarchist groups or collectives more or less juvenile, lacking



Mexico City clashes during 31.08.13 demonstration after the opening-up of the oil market to big business; see Return Fire vol.2 pg58

the experience and with vague principles. It seems to me that the main problem remains the lack of assertion mentioned above. Many anarchists, for example, participated in recent school teacher's movement, without this participation being translated by an important theoretical or practical contribution: or a distancing regarding the strategies and reformist functions of the CNTE<sup>[39]</sup>.



There exists an enormous difference between the aim of the "democratisation" of structure, very strong the Mexican social movement (tied to their verticality and control from above), and anarchist aims. This can create confusion, and anarchists have

the largest interest in distinguishing themselves from it. In a general way, the small "self-managed" projects, cooperatives, and "socialising" activities occupy a very important place in the movement. Of course, it poses the same questions and has the same limits as in France, even if one can't bring them all together under the same banner, or reject them all entirely. But it is certain that many conditions seem gathered in order for anarchist to be able to develop in an important way in Mexico. What remains to be seen is how.

6. Exactly! There is the Mexican state who in this moment appears to have understood that anarchism is in process of quickly developing, and one saw quite a few instances of anti-anarchist repression pile up on each other these last months. Could you give us several clarifications and briefly summarise all these matters? We speak of the climate that this repression establishes among the comrades? And especially, do you think that this repression affects the growth of the movement, or the opposite?

There were so many cases in 2013 that it would be long to list them. Mexico is a true laboratory of repression, and the state has a long experience of infiltration and co-optation of movements.

**For some time now, it particularly puts emphasis on the repression of anarchists: there are arrests during all the demonstrations,**

**movements and important events (in addition to more targeted arrests), and often convictions. It is important to specify that the media regularly insist on the danger that the encapuchadxs (hooded ones) in the demonstrations represent, and one saw many times over different tendencies of the Left reproach them by their own account.** The result of these politics is a certain stigmatisation of anarchists for their "violence"... There are several tensions between groups around the question of violent actions, a bit like elsewhere. And the same sectarian arguments are sometimes used against those who carry them out. It's true that the anarchist milieu, just as the rest of the social movement, is quite infiltrated. This doesn't justify the accusations of certain anarchists against the comrades, even if they may make errors or lack experience.

The most recent news to date is the extended detentions (despite the absence of proof against them and the legal limit of detention) of Mario "El Tripa" López and of Carlos, Fallon, and Amélie (accused of terrorism) [ed. – for more recent info, see *"Towards the Unknown"*]. Mario González was sentenced in January to five years and nine months of mandatory imprisonment for "attacks on the public order" [ed. – i.e. rioting; he is now free]. Eight [other] comrades arrested during the commemorative march of October 2nd<sup>[4]</sup> are awaiting their sentencing. It's clearly a matter of making examples. These cases add to the already very numerous cases of militants from diverse tendencies that are regularly imprisoned or assassinated. **Nothing indicates a priori that this repression affects the growth of the movement, even if it can weaken certain groups. The country is used to a high level of repression, and individuals who frequent the revolutionary milieus understand these risks.** On the whole, despite their disagreements (and the accusations mentioned above), the anarchists, thankfully, show much solidarity with prisoners.

7. To stay on a shitty subject, could you recount what happened when a false communique was issued about the so-called death of a comrade in Mexico? This non-event, a serious thing for me, provoked quite a few lively polemics, here and probably elsewhere as well. Also, a bit of time has passed, do you have more info today on the why and how (and who) of this somber story?

The matter remains very shady, and the members of the collective responsible for the diffusion of this false info rejected responsibility... without having clearly established what happened and explained their error. What this betrays, is above all a

lack of experience and of principles in the internal workings of certain collectives, which manifests through, among other things, an unrestrained poorly controlled use of social networks. One imagines that this could contribute to other levels... The lack of responsibility of certain individuals unfortunately leaves the way to all speculations, especially knowing the degree of infiltration of anarchist milieu in Mexico.

8. Could you also tell use some thoughts on the Che Guevara occupation where international and informal anarchist gatherings took place some time ago?

There is a long history of battles between the university, Leftist organisations, and more-or-less self-managed and anarchist collectives for the management of this occupied space of UNAM, the largest university of the country, in Mexico City. This has manifested in the past, and again more recently, by very violent events (in February the anarchists there were attacked by a very well armed Leftist group). If it is evidently necessary to denounce these attacks (which was done), it seems to me equally necessary that the anarchist presence in such a large space poses numerous questions for us: it is situated in the university, implies a permanent presence (notably during the night), to permanently be on the lookout faced with the administration and its strategies of co-optation and infiltration or faced with other organisations, a working relationship with self-proclaimed self-managed groups who aren't necessarily clear on their practices and aims. What are the issues? On what basis? It seems to me that the defense of the space against the elements that would want to seize it often prevents that the question is asked on the basis of strategy. It's necessary to do this as to have a critical analysis of the organisation of the Informal Anarchic Days of December 2013<sup>[5]</sup>.

9. What are, in your view, the most important objectives that anarchists in Mexico must give themselves?

Developing a critical analysis of the existent and some clearer anarchist positions in relation to the questions asked in the radical milieu: social movements (Zapatismo, autonomies, syndicalist struggles, self-defense groups<sup>[6]</sup>, etc.), strong influence of the university milieu or "counter-cultures", technology, commerce, cooperatives and "self-managed projects", management of collective spaces like the Che occupation. Because for the most part of these questions, the positions and practices of anarchists separate

themselves still too little from the influence of the milieu of Leftists, reformists, etc. and occasionally leads to certain ambiguities. To strengthen the contacts and regular exchanges with the comrades of Spanish speaking countries. To leave the university milieu to which all the tendencies of anarchism still remain very confined and to continue on the direction of presence in the neighborhoods. To continue to communicate around the forms that the strategies of repression of the Mexican state take, of its current harassment against anarchists, and on the support of imprisoned comrades.



1. ed. – Reference to a series of insurrections for 'Land & Liberty' leading into the Mexican Revolution, of which the part-indigenous (Zapotec) anarchist Ricardo Flores Magon was an instigator and intellectual contributor. The rebellions were betrayed by reformists, and Magon died in prison in the U.S.A.

2. ed. – E.Z.L.N. is the Zapatista Army of National Liberation. (Zapatismo was originally an early-twentieth century peasants movement inspired by Emiliano Zapata Salazar, the main



leader in the state of Chiapas during the Mexican Revolution.) Here are some thoughts by Carlos López (see 'Towards the Unknown') on the matter. "An example of these inconsistencies is the EZLN where a clear contradiction is shown in that many anarchists, or anarcho-zapatistas, of alleged anti-authoritarian posture, support and identify with this army, of communist tendency and authoritarian structure. These anarcho-zapatistas are influenced by slogans such as "command by obeying", and we say that command always

generates power and therefore there will always be someone to obey, despite the Zapatistas saying that "it is the people who command and the government that obeys". It is goes without saying that I do not refuse to acknowledge the worthy struggle undertaken in 1994 by the EZLN against the State, earning hundreds of supporters all over the world for their cause; and it happened that many anarchists were captivated by the "Sixth Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle", but the disappointment of realising that an authoritarian practice continued to exist, despite the alleged libertarian discourse, soon arrived."

3. Coordination built by "democratic" unions of the SNTE (Unique Union of Education Workers), a corrupt and bureaucratic organisation. There develops all the tendencies of Leftism of Mexico.

4. In reference to the massacre of students on October 2th, 1968 in Tlatelolco in Mexico City. [ed. – An estimated 300 shot down by military and police during a demonstration 10 days before the opening of the Olympic Games, in a country wracked by rising social tensions. The event is considered part of the Mexican Dirty War, when the government used its forces to outright suppress political opposition.]

5. ed. – Comrades from as far away as Greece, England, U.S.A., Italy, and Chile attended the event, during which Cuban anarchist Gustavo Rodriguez was kidnapped by federal agents, tortured, interrogated and deported to the U.S.A.

6. A complex "popular" movement recently emerged in the narco-state of Michoacán to struggle against the presence of several cartels.. with quite an unclear articulation, the strong influence of landowners who arm their agricultural workers... in which we certainly see an attempt at capitalist recomposition of the regions, although the movement isn't limited to this.



Police guard the wrecked property of the Italian Embassy, bombed 13.12.11 in solidarity with Italy's anarchist prisoners, by 'Autonomous Cells for Immediate Revolution - Praxedis G. Guerrero' (see Return Fire vol.2 pg61)



## 'TOWARDS THE UNKNOWN'



[ed. – Some background; on January 5th of 2014, two groups of coordinated people in Mexico City attacked the Ministry of Transport & Communications (who had instituted a violently-opposed fare hike for the city metro the month before) with rocks and molotovs, while torching several vehicles of the adjoining Nissan car dealership. The anarchists Carlos, Fallon and Amélie were arrested in the streets nearby. **The next year consisted of imprisonment, court cases and, in the case of Carlos, hunger strike along with other Mexican anarchist prisoners.** Solidarity was felt across the world, from attacks on Mexican consulate and banking institution property in North America, benefit events like skill-sharing and alternative therapies in Italy or punk gigs in Canada, to banner-drops and car-burning in England, France and beyond.

Fallon and Amélie wrote after their initial trials, where the judge "handed down a sentence of seven and a half years' prison on charges of "Arson to a public building with people inside," this for the damage caused to the "Mexican communication and transport offices". The "people inside" are the two federal pigs that were in charge of the security of the place. [Then] we received the second sentence for the common court charges of "damage to private property in a group" and "breach of the peace". These charges relate to the attack that occurred at the car dealership of Nissan. It being on the corner [of the Ministry] where we burned the cars. [W]e carry on, with strength in our hearts and shitting on justice and the State. We do not expect anything from the law, even if we really want to get out of here. [...] Fire to civilization, war on society. Until freedom and beyond!"

Finally however, their conviction for the Nissan damages was upheld, but they were acquitted on appeal for the other part of the action, and bailed out of jail. Fallon and Amélie were deported from the country fairly swiftly. **In numerous letters from inside, the 5E3 (three-of-the-5th-of-January, the date of the action and arrest) and Fallon and Amélie in particular made clear that they should not be confused with Leftist so-called 'political prisoners', and rejected the approach of "presismo" (described as pejoratively referring to "a form of victimisation and idealisation of "political" prisoners, and of making anti-prison**

**struggle a specific, partial one and in which the main activities are characterised as assistance to "political" prisoners and prison reformism").**

Following their release, the Cruz Negra Anarquista México (Anarchist Black Cross of Mexico) wrote some thoughts. "The fact of having been acquitted of one of the charges, rather than speaking of innocence and guilt, it indicates that the State did not construct its repressive theatre very well and that is why it has ended up collapsing, as happened with the accusations of terrorism that [the 5E3] faced for the first 40 days of their arrest when they were held in the National Centro de Arraigos. **We think it is likely that the State is sharpening its sights for the next repressive blow and therefore invite you to constantly think well about our security practices and at the same time remain prepared, because we are sure that the anti-anarchist campaign of the Mexican State will continue.** It fills us with joy to know that our comrades are in the street again! Yet we miss other prisoners!"

Indeed, not long afterwards, another anarchist prisoner who had recently been released, 'Tripa' (see **Return Fire vol.1 pg98**), was re-arrested and threatened with more jail-time. **He chose to avoid the judicial controls and go into clandestinity; and Carlos followed suit not long after. What follows is his letter on this decision.**

We also follow it up with a translated text which was written by Mexican comrades before any of the 5E3 released a letter (you can find a booklet online of more of their own words compiled by the counter-information site Act For Freedom Now!) regarding the assault on the Ministry of Transport & Communications. **We respect the stance presented in such a situation, to extend the attack by furthering the discourse around the target. Strength to Carlos, and importantly also his courageous accomplices who together thwart the authorities (and are often forgotten when we honour those roaming as illegals – an amnesia in which we see a reproduction of the patriarchal neglect of the relationships which truly nourish and enable our struggles; as Carlos reminds us below, "taking care of our own is also an insurrectionary act".) Love and courage for the other comrades we feel close to, who aid and abet their own.]**

"When we decide to turn our lives into propaganda by the deed and not only through words, fighting to the death against power complicates our existence to the point of reality where the enemy wants to see us annihilated and/or behind bars. [...] For this reason, we think it's necessary to reflect on clandestinity from our anti-authoritarian perspective, which is not static, but is constantly enriching and developing as praxis (theory-by-action) freed from all ideological limitations. [T]here have existed and exist today anti-authoritarian comrades who at some time in their lives decided to go into clandestinity, not because it is a superior form of struggle (in fact, for us it is not), but for the need to escape the enemy's claws and continue the practice of anti-authoritarian propaganda with their lives in permanent fugitivity. Having overlooked these experiences or having not glimpsed them as a possibility, we see the counter-productive state which results from taking up a position only when something affects us in the flesh, having had to hand the experiences of others. That's why we want to rescue, share and reflect on them, tightening them with our own practices and perspectives of struggle." – *Lying in Wait*

Comrades, I am writing these few lines to let you know about my present condition of life, which I have decided upon from a very particular perspective following a series of situations that have arisen in the recent context of individual and/or social struggle and the repression against it.

There is a long list of comrades who have been harassed and investigated for anarchist activity recently in this country, more specifically in the centre and the south, putting them under surveillance to observe their movements and the people with whom they organise, sending vile bastard informers to gather information, accusing foreign comrades of financing struggles and so on. Also at the time of the arrest that led me to prison with my comrades in affinity Amélie and Fallon, there was an attempt to link many people of the libertarian/anarchist milieu with our case (5E), upturning some houses to find "evidence" (without success) and thereby have more arguments to mount a serious blow within the anarchist scene.

This resulted in the subsequent [re-]arrest of comrade 'Tripa' (and the persecution of other comrades who also had to move away). Fortunately he was able to count on

the timely response of the comrades of GASPA <sup>(1)</sup> to get him away immediately because the prosecution was not clear, and after his quick decision to go on the run there was not much choice since he was accused on the basis of his "criminal" history and linked to the investigation of terrorism, sabotage and other bullshit that they wanted to pin on us, so he did not have many alternatives.

For similar reasons and being able to choose freely, I decided to take the road of going on the run, mainly for my own safety and that of other comrades, due to the tracking that had been put in act. **I am not the first nor will I be the last to do so, choosing a path of struggle that consists partly of taking back my own life, but which also carries the violent, frontal and refractory side against all authority.** You don't need to be a scholar to realise that you will be targeted by the investigators and prosecutors trying to connect to you/implicate you in any question of direct action generated in the battlefield. And in my case, on bail and signing in, it is certain that they would have me at their mercy to take me in whenever they felt like it, **a pleasure that I was not prepared to give them**, at least as far as I could.

Besides not having the least intention of collaborating with that fucking little legal theatre that would have continued after my release I decided from the first moment of my physical release not to become their prey by being controlled through periodic visits to the place I was supposed to present myself to display my horrendous signature for a further year and a half. So I decided not to present myself before the judges the next day, to break with this thing that I see as tracking.

This does not mean that I am walking away from the struggle or regret what I will have to live in order to carry it out. On the contrary, it will continue to be the main personal factor pushing me in this insurrectional position towards *the*



*unknown of freedom.* From "outside" it is also possible to continue the daily life of permanent attack in its extensive forms and content, seek to continue my projects from elsewhere but with the same vision, **being clear that it is not my intention to take my struggle to voluntary**

**clandestinity or to seek a specialised or higher form of attack, but just to know that these are some of the consequences we face and undertake to move along**

**these paths of conflict**, to do things by what we believe and how to make this possible and necessary.

I always knew that fiercely opposing the forms of subordination and ideological content that the technicians of the democratic lie employ to maintain their privileges and status quo, would bring with it circumstances adverse to what any "normal" person would wish for their life. But as I do not want to be that kind of normal person and accept being another slave, I indulged in doing it this way, as would any irreducible seeking life from his *[sic]* way of seeing things.

From the point of view of comfort it would be much easier for me, after getting out of prison and walking in the street, to see my family and friends and be with my darling daughter; as well as being with comrades and affinities of various tendencies to continue to act together. But realising that this is not a game and that the struggle must be to the end, it is necessary to give it the seriousness it requires because sometimes we must make decisions that can be painful due to the physical distance from those we love. That is why I do not consider going on the run to be the only solution, but the one closest to how I see things. I have seen fit to do so, among other things, as I said, to avoid monitoring and attempts to connect me with future violent acts similar to those for which I was imprisoned, and these being linked with other comrades and whoever I could have contact with. Because we know how the State and its minions use the law, but all this is not in terms of fear, but starts from the fact that **taking care of our own is also an insurrectionary act.**

**Part of my individual insurrection consists of**

**breaking with any form of attachment, and a large part is the constant destruction of any personal/social relationship emanating from the hated enemy State/Capital and any authority, against which I declare myself at war within the range of my ability.** Such



relationships as are reflected in the alienated society that reproduces what it learns in its educational and religious institutions, its media and

economic/technological production, and its ways of behaving in various aspects of everyday life that all lead to domination. Hence my need to not participate in the legal game or be a "good citizen" who can demonstrate that the punishment imposed by the laws and their mentors works. To hell with all that!

That's why I'd rather die than seek any concessions, mediation, assistance or pact with the very enemy I wish to destroy, understanding that everyone has their perspectives and ways of doing things, respecting what each one does in their struggles, and supporting those with whom I feel an affinity or at least show some hostility towards the enemy; but this is my choice and I stand by it.

Without saying anything more, a big hug to those who come to read me, especially my friends, comrades in struggle, members of my family and all those who identify with the struggle against power in each of its facets. The struggle continues, not seeing the situation as a premise of the end, but only the **continuation of acting freely.**

**FREEDOM TO ALL PRISONERS IN THE WORLD!**

**SOLIDARITY WITH THE COMRADES ON THE RUN; MAY THE WIND BLOW AWAY THEIR TRACKS!**

**FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF POWER IN ALL ITS MANIFESTATIONS!**

**SOLIDARITY WITH THE COMRADES ON HUNGER STRIKE!**

**SOCIAL WAR EVERYWHERE!**

**LONG LIVE ANARCHY!**

**– Carlos 'Chivo' López**

*From some corner of the world*

*April 5th, 2015*

**WHY ATTACK THE MINISTRY  
OF COMMUNICATION &  
TRANSPORTATION?  
– The SCT, Anarchists & the  
Struggle for Land**

**5E: About our imprisoned  
anarchist comrades**

On January 5th 2014 anarchists *compañerxs* [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.2 pg34**] Carlos 'El Chivo' López Marín (Mexican), Fallon Poisson and Amélie Pelletier (Canadian) were arrested in Mexico City under suspicion of being responsible for the attack on an office of the Secretary of Communication and Transportation (SCT). Carlos was placed in the East Prison and Amélie and Fallon were brought to the Prison of Santa Martha after being held for 40 days during special investigation that failed to incriminate the three on terrorism charges. It was then that our *compañerxs* were faced with two separate criminal proceedings; one local charge for attacking the public peace and aggravated damages (for an attack on a Nissan dealership) and for not reaching bail, and another federal charge for Damages to Another's Property (for the attack on the Secretary of Communication and Transportation).

**Whether they are guilty or innocent matters little to us.** We have always maintained this as our irreducible stance against jails and all psychological and social influence that their existence can generate. Solidarity with those who defend their thoughts and actions, confronting the system of death and domination – even with wind and tide against them – this is what interests us, and we therefore want those we support to feel our sincere complicity and sisterhood [*sic*], to know that their cause is ours as well. We proudly acknowledge their steadfastness in cooperating as little as possible with the authorities and maintaining above all their dignity as anarchists.

There has always existed a debate regarding whether or not to claim responsibility for actions of attack and sabotage. Many actions are claimed through the use of communiques explaining the motives behind the attack. Many [other] *compañerxs* have asserted, in alignment with the idea of "propaganda of the deed", that actions should speak for themselves and that the responsibility rests on the movement to look to grant explanatory objectivity through reflection and analysis of said actions. **Knowing there isn't a communique for the action against the SCT, we would like to approach the why of an act like this, attempting to give projectuality to our struggle for liberation.**

**Why attack the SCT?**

Without a doubt no state institution deserves any respect whatsoever. All form part of this complete social-artificial system of domination, but it would be worth analysing what this institution is responsible for so that one can decide to give way to action against it.

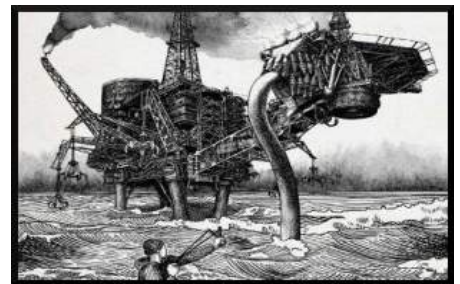
*In accordance with the organic law of the Federal Public Administration, under article 36, the SCT is responsible for the following functions:*

- To form and conduct the politics and programs in furtherance of the development of transportation and the according communications necessary for the country.
- To regulate, inspect, and protect public services including mail, telegraph and their diverse services; conduct the administration of federal electric and electronic communications and their connection to similar public services provided by private telephone, telegraph and wireless services state and foreign, as well as public remote data processing services.
- To grant allowances and permission prior opinion of the Interior Minister (Mexico), in order to establish and maintain telegraph and telephone systems and services, systems and services of wireless communication for telecommunications and satellites, of public remote data processing services, experimental radio stations (amateur and cultural) and broadcasting stations (commercial and cultural), as well as monitoring the technical aspect of the functioning of such systems, services and stations.
- To regulate and guard the administration of national airports, grant permissions for the construction of private airports and watch over their operations. To construct federal railways, platforms and terminals for the establishment and function of rail systems, and to maintain technical surveillance of their functions and operations. To grant allowances and permissions for the work of auto-transport services on federal highways and to maintain technical surveillance of their functions and operation as well as assure their compliance with respective provisions of the law.
- To construct, rebuild, and maintain marine works, ports; to dredge, install maritime signs, and supply the service of information and security for maritime navigation.
- To build and maintain federal roads and bridges, including those running internationally; as well as the stations and centers of federal auto transportation.
- To build federal airports and cooperate with state governments and municipal authorities in the construction and maintenance of works of this type.

– To regulate the construction of work in the republic. Among others.

**Translating the legal into the language of dispossession and destruction**

Given the above points, we can figure out how this institution functions on the capitalist stage in Mexico, fostering technological and industrial "progress". The SCT is the state institutional link that is working to advance the communication infrastructure both in urban and rural areas, as well as other natural areas in order to maintain the flow of production and goods. In other words it is directly responsible for the destruction of natural places and the consolidation of new webs of power and slavery.



**The brutal logging of trees, the displacement and murder of animals and communities is a consequent part of their activities in the construction and application of highways, whereby moving their dirty goods with the intention of generating fruitful political and economic results. These have always been the primordial motive of these highway projects and which in many cases are built with the firm finality of ensuring the advancement of so-called "mega projects" that are nothing more and nothing less than those industrial undertakings – dams, hydroelectrics, thermoelectrics, mining, wind farms, etc. – that the system continues needing in order to give energetic support to its vast and irrational mechanism of production and consumption, that due to the brutal harm of their extractive advance, left to nature, will need more sources to exploit.**

Knowing that the facts have been repeated, not only in the length and breadth Mexican geography but throughout the whole world, we highlight some cases.

– In Tepoztlán, Morelos, there is a project for the application of the Pera-Cuautla freeway in order to facilitate the works for the construction of the "Morelos Integral Project" that consists of two thermoelectric plants and one [gas] pipeline in the



community of Huexca, municipality of Yecapixtla, that has been assigned to the Spanish businesses Abegnoa and Elencor. Carrying out this plan will affect 50,400 hectares of land and diverse types of regional plants and animals, in addition to making a cut at the base of the hills of Chalchiteptl, Cematzin, Yohualtepetl. The construction of the thermoelectric plant is aimed to be build on 45 hectares surrounding the indigeous town of Huexca and is calculated to consume 24 million litres of water a day and return 50% of this water to the Cuautla river contaminated with bleach and sulfuric acid.

– Another case is the expansion of the Toluca-Naucaipan freeway to accelerate the flow of goods between industrial sectors, that will level a large part of the forest of Agua Otomí-Mexica. It will also dispossess the communities of ñañhú ñuhú, Otomí, that covers the land from Tequixquiac to Villa de Carbón and will bring with it the annihilation and destruction of hundreds of species of animals, vegetation, and wetlands that are already in danger of extinction. All this to make way for rights of construction for the company Autopistas Vanguardia S.A of C.V.

– The construction of airports that, like all urban projects, carry with them destruction and dispossession of the earth, such as those that have generated the conflicts of Atenco<sup>[1]</sup>, which at this moment are being reactivated.

### Internet, community radio, mail: interpersonal communication in the hands of repression

We understand well that the means of communication and information like the internet, e-mail, cellphones, etc. do not guarantee total security due to political intervention as much national as foreign – it's worth noting the recent addition of internet spying programs coming sanctioned by the Attorney General of the Republic<sup>[2]</sup> – with the passing of the "Telecom Law", the SCT returns to the stage as responsible for furthering repression and dislocation of movements through spying – now without judicial order – on inconvenient or subversive individuals and groups, through the internet and telephone companies such as Telmex, accessing their personal information and using geolocation surveillance tools, as well as suspending the flow of communication and information to conflict zones and areas of resistance. This directly affects community and pirate radios, free means of counter information that serve as nodes of communication between diverse struggles that arise in the country<sup>[3]</sup>.

### The motives abound, the problem is the system

We have described only a few facts that unmask what to uncritical eyes are just buildings with people doing administrative work. Of course we don't want to make a reductionist call, that the SCT is the only state institution that participates in the growth of domination. **Each and every one of the component state sectors functions as a distinct and specialised part working in conjunction and cooperation to advance the**

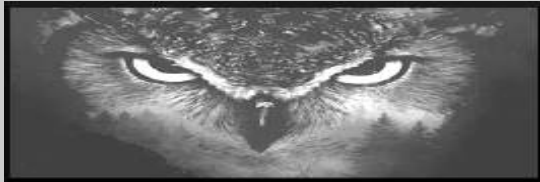
**system of capitalism. In turn, these institutions are inevitably controlled by a group of people at the top of the social class pyramid increasing their cravings for money and power.** It is worth mentioning the "flaco favor" (disservice) that contributes to a majority democratic citizen population – with their respective exceptions – who live uncritical lives, without questioning the depths of the consequence of the system, or who simply lack an interest in nature and freedom, who look only to participate in a logic-based life in the recurring cycle of the current order: birth-obedience-work-consumption-death.

### To spread direct action and solidarity in defense of the earth

Therefore, as with our *compas* Carlos, Amélie and Fallon, we continue thinking that direct action brings results, not only to combat the advancement of capitalism but also to make explicit to our imprisoned *compañerxs* that the struggle continues with strength and solidarity. For sure we can wonder about errors made, or the form or timing of the action [*ed. – the SCT was attacked in evening hours with molotovs*], but what remains clear in the unfolding of this action is that legal avenues are the

trap of the state, in order to co-opt and divert our struggles towards a path of reform and passivity. While the administrative shackles and legal meditations make fools of us, the companies destroying the earth continue to advance in the functioning of their task.

“Even when you imprison our comrades or catch us, the actions will continue. Each time stones or molotovs are thrown, butane gas bombs are placed, cars are burned, animals are freed, or graffiti is left behind, our idea will be there, breaking your order, your peace, your tranquility, your laws, in order to defend our desires.” – *E.L.F. Mexico State*



We take advantage of this new space to send warm brotherly/sisterly greetings to Carlos, Amélie and Fallon, hoping as well that this will be a contribution to the struggle. We put out an open call to anti-authoritarian projects of communities in resistance to find accomplices, to spread direct action and self determination throughout the struggles in defense of the land: against machinery, institutions, tools of repression, jails and all of the infrastrucutre that the SCT and all state apparatus are deploying under our noses, those which are **always vulnerable to attack.**

*Destroy prisons!*

*Mexico, June 20th 2014*

1. *ed. – Mass resistance against a planned multi-billion-dollar airport (to 'modernise' the country) near Mexico City, on Nahau indigenous land. Police and government officials were ejected from the region in 2002, police vehicles burnt and 19 government officials and police taken hostage in exchange for prisoners of the struggle. A 3-day army-backed siege followed.*

2. *The PGR acquired software called Finfisher to intercept information that passes between internet and computer as well as other devices such as mobile phones. This software has been utilised to disrupt resistance in Pakistan and repress revolts in Egypt.*

3. *With this we do not wish to say that before this law the government wasn't carrying out this type of action, neither do we attach a reformist vision that desires to return to the way things were or make up for state violence. Rather we see well that the advancement of this type of law as another step in the constitution of a military-police state, that made its first moves by putting the military on the street and militarising the police. This puts at risk any and all projects of liberation.*



The graffiti reads; "You wanted fire?"

# PORTRAIT OF THE INVISIBLE WOMAN IN FRONT OF HER MIRROR

As a child, I dreamed of being the Invisible Woman. I told myself that invisibility would be the only wish that I'd ever be making if one day I would get a rub of the magic lamp. No need to get dressed in the morning to go to school – no need to even go to school! – no need to go to the hairdresser, to be clean and cute, to please and be polite... Sitting at my desk in the classroom, I told myself that as Invisible Woman I'd be profiting to the maximum from my gift, to satisfy all my desires. I fantasied about serving myself with impunity from the candy shelves at the grocery store, going to see all the films at the movie theater and visit all those mysterious places forbidden to little girls, like my mom's room or the boys dressing rooms.

Growing up, I realised the hard way that not only does invisibility not exist, but to be visible is a curse. Being seen, named, it is to have your life stolen.

**First, I had been constrained to be a "girl"**, this inferior and weak being that has the right to only exist in relation with others, that must seduce at all costs and take care of everybody while continuously smiling, that must be *proper*, not saying dirty words, not getting her dress dirty, being perfect in all aspects while above all not being too clever, because nobody likes a girl who is too cunning.

**Then, I learned with stupefaction that I was "Chinese"**, an object of curiosity, exoticism or mistrust, that is asked continuously where she is from, if she likes eating cats, if she has a bad eyesight because of her funny slanting eyes, if she knows how to say dirty words in "Chinese", when one does not pull her ponytail, or not approach her only to disown her

"Systems of oppression based on gender, race, and so on are sociologically real, but ultimately rest on other people imposing a particular spectre - treating another person not as a unique one, but as an instance of femininity, or "just another X." Such systems entail valuing a particular category to the exclusion of others, leading to violence against those excluded. However, the subordination of one spectre to another is not the base level of the problem; the problem is that spectres do not liberate or empower those who belong to the category they value, because those belonging to the category are valued only as instances of the category, not in their full, unrepresentable being." – *Against Identity Politics*



afterwards, so to detect an eventual smoke plume of foulness or *chow mein*; if not to be considered, straightforwardly, as an incarnation of the Yellow Menace that threatens the survival of the White and Christian nation.

**Later I became, to my great despair, a "lesbo"**, a "pussy-licker", an object of sexual fantasy within the scope where such a condition serves to excite the carrier of the phallus (since every lesbian is so only because she was mis-fucked and really wishes secretly to experience the true ecstasy that a dick may provide), when she is not a perverted being who threatens the very foundations of the family and civilisation with her vice. When, later, I was seen in the arms of a man, I immediately switched to another camp, that of the undecided "bi", flighty, unattached, couple-breakers, HIV propagators, unable to admit their homosexuality therefore strictly unworthy of any trust.

**All this is only a prelude to what was waiting for me when the time came to ensure my survival. I first became a "human resource"**, a despicable being, by definition unproductive and selfish for they demand to be paid sufficiently as to be able to survive, a being who's continuously suspected to be a shoplifter, fraud, that we can downgrade to the rank of subhuman by dictating how she should be busying herself, selecting who she'd have the right to be with, and by demanding obedience and marks of servility in regards to her superiors and clients.

**In a clumsy attempt at escaping the hell of Work, I quickly ended up as a "whore" and a "pornographer"**, so to say, either a threat to public health, order and manners, or a victim (often too alienated and idiotic to be aware of it) of patriarchy and the centuries-old male oppression, who purportedly maintains the system's exploitation by refusing to be a nice victim and letting herself be saved by the great charitable souls who know better than herself what is good for her.

**At last, I ended up learning with stupefaction that I was an "intellectual"**, which, in the corner of the planet where I'm living, means that I am a contemptible being who has lost contact with reality and whose parasitic activities are a pest to the competitiveness and prosperity of the nation.

**This is why I have become "anarchist"**, in a more or less conscious effort to throw back to the face of those who were looking at me an image that is was more fitting to what I considered to be the real me. To my damning; for as "anarchist", I thus became a terrorist, an apostle of violence, a window breaker, doubled with a bomber, all the while being a pathetic and naive dreamer, unaware of historical laws, some immature and not at all serious rebel - if not some ignoramus of limited intellectual capacities who will never change anything to society and only harm public debate.

**At that point, I had no other choice than to yell "fuck that" and turn back to my childhood dream by becoming "Anabraxas", the invisible man/woman.<sup>[1]</sup>**



Never will you see Anabraxas on the telly. Never will you hear her voice on the radio. That's because she is neither on civil registers, nor at the revenue service, nor on electoral lists, as her name isn't engraved either on some plastic ID card, or on a tombstone. Anabraxas is no-one to the eyes of the Leviathan. It is a child dead at birth, the bride of the unknown soldier, a spectre, an empty shell, a jacket with holes which lets the air penetrate. If the one who's hidden behind Anabraxas is so mysterious, if she insists on remaining invisible and out of reach, it is because that is the price to pay to remain at a good distance from the flesh-shredding cogs and wheels of society.

Anabraxas focuses on one sole task: to create my life and build my relation with the world and others accordingly with my own terms – in other words, to reappropriate my existence here and now, to the extent of my own capacities. Anabraxas is a tool allowing me to challenge all the identities they are attempting to enforce upon me since I was born. I have only one cause: my own. Evidently, I wish with all my heart that anyone does the same, for when individuals are revolting and uprising against their own oppression, the produce of it is called "insurrection".

If Anabraxas is invisible, it is because I have made the tactic of insurrection mine, that is one of vanishing. **Insurrection is the liberation of a space, a time, by individuals refusing their exploitation, their servitude and the institutions that exert it.** It can strategically take several forms, such as the temporary autonomous zone, nomadism, the lines of evasion. It can be tiny or large scale, last only a few minutes or an entire life. **It is both the blow struck against the institutions and the direct experimentation of a life as it should be lived, so to say, without constraints and without hinders.**

Insurrection is the opposite of sacrifice and morality. The insurgent does not act for *the common good*, for *the liberation of all*, for *the building of a better world*, but to give ourselves the means to go from survival to

life, to taste, be it only for a few seconds, what it is to truly be alive before being thrown into the cold hands of death. **The time and space of insurrection is lived like a sexual intercourse - no exchange, only giving; a temporary**

**association to collaborate towards a common and precise goal;** no purpose, no meaning in the activity other than the pleasure taken from taking part in it; the construction of desire and the realiation of ourselves through the *egoist lust for the other*. And it is through the multiplication and accumulation of the insurrectional experiences that devices of power will be eventually brought down.

Insurrection eludes public space, the places of mediation and reification, the spaces conceded to liberty by power. The individual taking part in it takes on the devices of power, lives, lusts, then returns to the invisible. In a society striving to *expose everything*, where being seen equates with being recognized, integrated and controlled, where the summit of social success is stardom – which means, continuous mediation, without any other object than the transformation of the individual into merchandise – there is no escape other than elusion, vanishing into invisibility.

Until the time when, finally, it is possible to be living, wholesome and free, in broad daylight.

1. – *The entity was originally named in this text as its author, Anne Archet, who is not me, the translator, but given that her amazing works are all in (Quebecquer) French, I thought it to be more proper to a more global, non-French readership to use my nickname "Anabraxas", for I also identify with most of the context and reasons that led her to take a facetious identity. She fully consented to this name change.*



"I have a horror of not being misunderstood." – Oscar Wilde

"Arthur Cravan said that genius needs horns to protect itself. No doubt, though, he was completely unaware of the invention that two policemen bumped up against on January 8th, 1910. They were trying to arrest a thin young man who, on the say-so of a snitch, had been talking at the "Caves moderne" about "knocking off a cop." As the bells of Saint-Merri rang out at 8:30, thinking they recognised in the shadows the individual they sought, the policemen tackled him, only to let him go immediately while they screamed in pain, their hands covered with blood.

Underneath his cape, on his biceps and forearms, the young anarchist Jean-Jaques Liaboef wore leather armbands studded with long, spark spikes.

Thinkers of any intensity must be equipped with devices of this kind in order to *avoid apprehension*. [...]

Priding myself on not occupying any easily locatable position on the desolate horizon that people shamelessly call the "intellectual landscape," I know I have little chance of being heard, and even less likelihood of being understood. Furthermore, my natural repulsion for any kind of affiliation keeps me at a distance from the countless pressure groups that our era urges everyone to join. It seems that the single great requirement of life today is that we indiscriminately identify ourselves as something – as a woman, a Breton, a sportsman, or even a paedophile – just as long as we renounce all claim to being *an individual*. But I have neither self-interest nor party to defend. I do not

have the slightest concern about protecting my intellectual authority, something I have never even wished to possess. I have never been in any real danger of falling into this trap, because I have been truly impressed only by the magnificent invention of a revolt waged by a few select individuals against the "unacceptable human condition." These individuals have always been too dedicated to their dreams to waste any effort trying to play a role in the world, unless doing so would completely change the cards dealt there. To my eyes, though, their intractable refusal – conscious or not – to stick to the status quo is the only thing that can still give meaning to an existence apparently condemned to having less and less."

– Annie Le Brun

## **sources if not already cited: (anonymous if unlisted)**

'Torn From Ourselves'  
– from Bædan #2

'Why Attack the Ministry of  
Communications & Transport?'  
– by *Destruye las prisiones*

Articles referenced by title throughout this chapter in *[square brackets]* which do not appear in the previous pages appear in the other chapters of this volume.

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**Anarchist Library** (multi-lingual, open-source catalogue of print-ready texts) [theanarchistlibrary.org](http://theanarchistlibrary.org)

**Anarchy in Italy** (translations of classic insurrectional and individualist pieces) [sites.google.com/site/anarchyinitaly](http://sites.google.com/site/anarchyinitaly)

**Anarchy, Secession, Subsistence** (rejoining rebellion with the land) [anarchysecessionsubsistence.blogspot.ca](http://anarchysecessionsubsistence.blogspot.ca)

**Anarchy Radio** (streaming and downloadable hour of global news and anti-civilisation analysis, every Tuesday) [johnzerzan.net/radio](http://johnzerzan.net/radio)

**Antidéveloppement** (Canada, bi-lingual) [antidev.wordpress.com](http://antidev.wordpress.com)

**Attaque** (France, multi-lingual) [attaque.noblogs.org](http://attaque.noblogs.org)

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